

**PRESS RELEASE**

**March 8, 2010**

**Unicom graduates raise over £5k for Children in Need**

For photography see [www.unicomimages.co.uk/](http://www.unicomimages.co.uk/)

Jump, bake, wax and quiz; that's what three Unicom staff did to raise an impressive £5,145 for BBC Children in Need.

As part of their graduate training scheme, which aims to develop innovative and creative managers over a 12 month scheme, the current graduates from Manchester-based business telecoms firm Unicom were set an Apprentice style challenge of raising as much money as they could, in as creative way as possible, for Children in Need. Unicom agreed to match every pound they raised.

Although terrified of heights, Patrick McLaughlin, 24, plunged 12,000 feet from an aeroplane in a sponsored skydive; Chris Mullen, 22, created a range of quiz sheets and competitions to test his colleagues general knowledge; Holly Almond, 23, organised cake sales at Unicom's Manchester headquarters, as well as drafting in male colleagues for a sponsored leg wax.

Chris Earle, operations director at Unicom, commented: "It has been great to see the initiative our team of graduates have shown in their fundraising efforts. The quizzes, cake sale and leg waxing created a buzz around the office and Patrick has even conquered his fear of heights on his fundraising quest.

"We are always eager to support both national and local charities. As well as the community support schemes we recently launched, we will be donating money to worthy causes throughout 2010. Children in Need is a great case, we generally focus our charitable work on children's causes."

Unicom employs 500 staff at its ten UK offices located in Manchester, Nottingham, Crawley, Milton Keynes, Ipswich, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Leeds and Sheffield.

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## Notes to Editor

### About Unicom

[www.switchingon.com](http://www.switchingon.com)

Unicom, a trading name of Universal Utilities PLC, is a telecommunications service provider specialising in the small business market. It currently provides telecom, broadband and website services to 80,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £45m, and employs 500 people at its 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has attracted its business customers by offering discounts of up to 60% off BT's prices, at the same time as keeping customers on the BT network. Unicom currently supplies in excess of 450 million minutes of call time to its customers each year. Unicom differentiates itself by offering a high standard of personal customer service, with no premium rate 0845 or 0870 numbers, no recorded messages or menus, and no overseas call centres. Unicom boasts one of the highest customer retention rates in the industry.

Unicom has a directory enquiry service, 118 777. Based on calls from a BT or Unicom telephone line, 118 777 is 28% cheaper than 118 118, and 53% cheaper than 118 500. Calls from other networks may vary.

Unicom was ranked 26th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89th in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. In September 2007 it achieved a ranking of 95th, and in September 2008 a ranking of 88th, in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index.

In October 2009 Unicom became ISO 9001:2008 certified and was also awarded the Customer Service Excellence, the Customer First and the Investors in People certification by independent assessors.

For the year ending April 2009, Unicom reported pre-tax profits of £11.2m on a turnover of £44.5m (with profits up 14.3% and turnover up 7% from April 2008). Unicom expects profits to be in excess of £12m on a turnover of more than £48m for the current year.

Unicom is a patron company of The Outward Bound Trust.

Contact Emma at RMS PR for further details:

[emma@rmspr.co.uk](mailto:emma@rmspr.co.uk)

**0161 927 3131**