

MEDIA RELEASE

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Unicom launches Aspire to Inspire staff training programme

For photography see www.unicomimages.co.uk

BUSINESS telecoms company Unicom is investing in its staff for the future by launching training support programme Aspire to Inspire.

The Manchester-based company, which has offices at Sharston Industrial Estate, has launched the programme to fund employees in study and qualifications outside of their normal work duties.

Employees are being encouraged to approach Unicom management and present a case for receiving external training which will have a direct and positive influence on their role at Unicom.

Operations director Chris Earle, who pioneered the Aspire to Inspire programme, said this gives staff the chance to realise their ambitions.

“Aspire to Inspire will enable our staff to work on their own personal skills set which in turn will have a positive impact on us as a business.

“In the first stage, we ask staff to identify any external training or study they are interested in completing and then we decide whether this will be beneficial to the individual and the organisation.

“We will also ask participants to share their new knowledge with the rest of the team to inspire others to continue learning and developing.”

Recruitment and HR assistant Aurelia Bowerbank is the first employee to embark on the Aspire to Inspire scheme, studying for a CIPD Certificate in Personnel Practice.

She said: “I couldn’t afford to complete this qualification without Unicom’s help. Aspire to Inspire has given me the opportunity to develop myself, both personally and for the company, and I look forward to learning new skills to assist with our recruitment drive. All new employees will be made aware of the scheme as early as the interview stage to demonstrate our commitment to staff and that the positions available offer a long term role within the company.

“It’s good to know Unicom is committed to me as an employee and will help me in my desire to develop and progress.”

Visit www.switchingon.com for further details about Unicom.

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Notes to Editors

About Unicom

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 35% 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.

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