

# **UNICOM PRESS RELEASE**

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## **95% OF SMALL BUSINESSES SAY GOVERNMENT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THEIR CHALLENGES.**

An overwhelming majority of small business owners and operators say the government doesn't understand the challenges facing them.

That is the key finding in a survey conducted by Unicom, which specialises in telecoms and telephony for small businesses.

Unicom asked a cross section of its customers ringing in to its call centre: "Do you believe that the current government understands the challenges that face small businesses today?"

95% of the 165 businesses asked said they believed government does not understand the challenges that face them.

"The small business community is a massively accurate barometer of the overall opinion of business and industry as a whole, because small business owners and operators are on the front line when it comes to the effects of government economic and business policy," said Tony Eagleton, Finance Director, Unicom.

"It will be interesting to see what's in today's budget for the small business – but I think it's clear that most small businesses don't believe the government understands them or what they do for the country as a whole."

## **About Unicom**

Unicom, part of Universal Utilities PLC, is a telecommunications service provider specialising in the small business market. It currently provides telecom, broadband and website services to 70,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £40m, with 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has 70,000 customers, primarily small or owner-managed businesses with telephone bills of approximately £1,000 a year. The specialised nature of the telephony and broadband products offered by Unicom provides significant savings for its business users.

Based in Manchester, it has regional headquarters in Birmingham, Ipswich, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

Unicom has attracted its small 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 small business 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 was ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89<sup>th</sup> in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96<sup>th</sup> in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. In September 2007 it achieved a ranking of 95<sup>th</sup> in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index. The company employs 500 people.

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