

MEDIA RELEASE

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Commercial property investment part of Unicom's expansion plans

Photographs available at www.unicomimages.co.uk

MANCHESTER-based telecoms provider Unicom is bucking the trend by investing in commercial property as part of its continued expansion.

The business telecoms firm, based in Northenden, has bought premises on Leestone Road at Sharston Industrial Estate for £339,000 as it continues to increase staff and customer numbers.

The 507.97m² space – which is split into three buildings – will now be renovated to house part of Unicom's administrative operations and a growing workforce.

Operations director Chris Earle said: "We see the downturn in the market as an opportunity to grow and diversify and this investment is testament to our determination to continue to expand.

"As well as working to increase our market share from 80,000 to 100,000 business customers over the next 12 months, we also have several new products in the pipeline. This new market would see us employing a substantial number of additional staff at our Northenden office."

Unicom, which was founded in 1998, has helped more than 300,000 businesses save more than £500 million off their utility bills.

It currently employs 500 staff at its Manchester headquarters and offices in Birmingham, Ipswich, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

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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 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 2008 Unicom became ISO 9001 certified.

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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