

UNICOM PRESS RELEASE

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UNICOM HITS 500 MILLION CALLS, 1 BILLION MINUTES.

Telecom service provider Unicom, which specialises in small business telephony provision, has hit a double milestone.

One of the company's 60,000 customers has made the 500 millionth call routed by the company since it launched, and at around about the same time Unicom also completed 1 billion minutes of call time sold.

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

"We add around 20 million calls and something like 40 million minutes of talk time every month," said Chris Earle, Operations Director of Unicom.

Unicom credits its growth and success to a call centre with a difference – a 'normal' phone number, and UK-based people answering incoming calls in around six seconds.

"We're a relatively small business with a small, closely-knit and efficient management team – and we are absolutely clear in our minds about what makes the difference to our customers: a UK call centre with real people answering the telephone, 98% of calls answered within six seconds, and managers and directors who are hands-on and accessible," said Chris Earle.

"Our customer retention level is currently running at 86% against a sector average of around 70%. Of the 14% we lose, only a third go to competitors, the remainder being businesses that close or move premises for one reason or another, which is obviously beyond our control."

Unicom's 60,000 customers are 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.

"We've not actually had a price increase since we started offering our telecom services in 2001," said Chris Earle.

"We use BT's infrastructure and network, so beyond the occasional glitches any provider can expect, our service is as robust as they come."

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 60,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £40m, with 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

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 26th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89th in the Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96th in the Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. The company employs nearly 500 people, primarily in the Manchester area.

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