

UNICOM PRESS RELEASE

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UNICOM SALES UP BY 13.5% TO OVER £50M

Photographs available at www.unicomimages.co.uk

Telecom service provider Unicom, which specialises in business-to-business connections, has reported a 13.5% rise in sales and a 11.8% increase in profits to the end of April 2010, its eleventh trading year.

The Manchester-based business saw turnover increase from £44.5 million to £50.5 million, with pre-tax profits at £12.7 million compared to £11.2 million to the end of April 2009.

"2009/10 has been another excellent year of trading and forecasts for 2010/11 are equally positive – we're expecting turnover to reach £55 million by increasing our market share and profits are projected to rise to well over £15 million. Our new mobile product will start to make an impact later in the year, but we will see the full benefit in terms of growth the year after" said Chris Earle, Unicom's Operations Director.

"We attribute our continued success to the fact that we provide our customers with highly competitive prices – fixed for three years, and we ensure that all customers genuinely receive the highest possible levels of customer service," said Earle.

"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 three seconds, and managers and directors who are hands-on and accessible."

"Our customer retention level is currently running at 88% against a sector average of around 70%. Of the 12% we lose, less than 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 has 85,000 customers, primarily small or owner-managed businesses with telephone bills of approximately £700 a year. The specialized 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 service in 2001," said Chris Earle.

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

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, mobile and website services to 85,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £50m, 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's mobile customers only pay for the calls and services they actually use, the package also offers one complete bill and one contact number for all telecoms services.

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 in 2009 was also awarded the Customer Service Excellence, the Customer First and the Investors in People certification by independent assessors.

For the year ending April 2010, Unicom reported pre-tax profits of £12.7m on a turnover of £50.5m (with profits up 11.8% and turnover up 13.5% from April 2009). Unicom expects profits to be in excess of £15m on a turnover of more than £55m for the current year.

Unicom is a patron company of The Outward Bound Trust.

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