

UNICOM PRESS RELEASE

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CALL VOLUMES PLUNGE BY 40% DURING CHAMPIONS LEAGUE COUNTDOWN.

Call volumes from small businesses in the 0161 area fell by almost 40% during the countdown to Manchester United's Champion's league showdown with Chelsea.

Unicom, which specialises in telecoms for small business, monitored call volumes during the build-up to the match – and call levels started to tail off by as early as 10am, with a 40% reduction in the last hour of the working day compared to a normal working day.

Overall, call volumes from small businesses in Manchester were down by 12.57% for the day.

"It's rare that we see anything like that level of fall-off in calls from one day to the next, and this was one of the biggest drops offs we've seen in the Manchester area in the history of our business," said Tony Eagleton of Unicom.

"There was clearly a mass exodus from small businesses in the area from around about lunchtime, then the lines went very quiet – around half as many calls as normal – as 5pm approached.

"Interestingly, call volumes between 2am and 3am on the morning of the game were double the usual level, which we suspect was due to a number of businesses dealing with food and drink orders for later that day, and quite likely cab and minibus firms dealing with passengers for the first flights to Moscow."

“There was also a 40% increase in call volumes in the hour after the game, presumably due to United supporters wanting to share their good news”

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

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 12 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 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 in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index. The company employs nearly 600 people.

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