

Small Business Decision Makers Spend Over Two Months a Year Out of Office

T-Mobile research highlights need for mobile communications as senior staff spend a minimum of 11.5 weeks away from team members every year

- **60 per cent** of small business senior decision makers that we spoke to spend a minimum of five hours out of the office a week – equivalent to **32.5** working days a year.
- **42 per cent** of small businesses consider they pay too much for their mobile communications plan and yet **77 per cent** do not have a plan that balances the cost of phone calls, mobile emails and text messages.
- **65 per cent** also do not have the means to control the cost of international calls from mobile phones.

London, UK – 23^d April 2008: T-Mobile research today reveals 60 per cent of small business senior decision makers spend a minimum of five hours a week out of the office – the equivalent of 32.5 working days a year. When combined with the average UK holiday entitlement of 25 days, small business directors and managers are potentially out of contact for over two months each year – hampering their teams' ability to get quick decisions when required.

The research, undertaken by YouGov on behalf of T-Mobile, surveyed over 540 small to medium-size enterprise (SME) owners across the UK, uncovering a range of challenges they face when trying to strike a balance between their employees' need for and the cost of mobile communications. With senior staff frequently on the road, the ability to stay in contact with employees and customers whilst on the move, be that via phone, email or text, is now more important than ever to keep the wheels of UK business turning. 72 per cent of respondents highlighted that mobile communications is critical for directors and board members, management and team workers.

Despite the popularity of mobile communications, 42 per cent of SME directors surveyed consider they pay too much for their mobile communications plan. However, it seems many are missing a trick as 77 per cent do not have a flexible plan that balances the cost of their employees' changing monthly voice calls, mobile email and text usage – making it very difficult for them to judge monthly requirements and opening them up to the risk of 'bill-shock' if they exceed their allowances.

Another concern is that 65 per cent of respondents said they have no mechanism in place to control the cost of international calls from employees' mobiles – again opening themselves up to excessive bills.

James Caan, CEO of private equity firm Hamilton Bradshaw and Dragon for BBC Two's Dragons' Den said: "Myself and my team are now more reliant than ever on our ability to communicate with each other and our customers on the move. It's not until you actually add up all of the time spent out of the office that you realise it has the potential to put a real strain on business resources. I literally couldn't run my businesses without mobile broadband and email. It's critical to my employees' ability to react quickly to opportunities and to ensure the right people can be reached at a moment's notice when important decisions need to be made."

Oliver Chivers, Head of Business Marketing at T-Mobile UK, said: "What's also of concern is that SMEs are either paying too much or do not have policies in place to control the cost of mobile communications. This technology is there to support the business, not place a strain on the bottom-line. The survey

uncovered that nearly a quarter of small businesses haven't reviewed their mobile comms plan in over a year, with 17 per cent completely unaware of when it was last checked."

Chivers added: "Mobile communications has moved on from bundles of minutes and texts - now it's about mobile internet, email and data sharing. Any business must ensure its mobile plans include quotas for voice, email, texts and international calls in order to support their employees' changing needs and to guard against unnecessary bill-shock."

On 11th February 2008, T-Mobile announced new price structures for its Business 1-Plan tariff, strengthening its position as the mobile price plan of choice for business. The Business 1-Plan tariff enables companies to reap more value from their mobile communications investment by building a truly flexible allowance of voice, data and texts – removing the complexity surrounding costs by providing one simple plan tailored to meet employees' exact mobile communication needs.

Business 1-Plan also includes calls from the UK to Europe and North America as T-Mobile recognises that many business transactions are no longer confined to the UK. T-Mobile now offers the web'n'walk Stick making it easier than ever to access fast mobile broadband for internet and email on the move at speeds of up to 3.2 megabits per second.

As a testament to T-Mobile's confidence in Business 1-Plan, T-Mobile is challenging businesses to compare the tariff with its current mobile phone provider via its tariff checker on: www.t-mobile.co.uk/business

Business 1-Plan is available through T-Mobile's business channels. The price plan is available on the high street via T-Mobile stores across the country. For more information visit: www.t-mobile.co.uk/business.

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Figures unless otherwise stated are from YouGov. Total sample size was 541 Owners, proprietors, Board Level directors, and senior directors within SMEs (1-249 employees). Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 12th March 2007. The survey was carried out online.

Absence from office calculations made by T-Mobile using YouGov data.

About T-Mobile UK

T-Mobile is one of the world's largest mobile operators with more than 119 million customers worldwide and is the service provider of choice for 17.3 million customers in the UK, making it one of the largest networks. T-Mobile has a range of innovative products and services such as Flexi, a unique tariff with flexible pricing; UFix, a tariff that combines pay-as-you-go and a monthly contract and web'n'walk, which enables customers to surf the internet on the move. Competitive high-speed Mobile Broadband tariffs include access to the largest worldwide Wi-Fi network, with more than 1,000 HotSpots in convenient locations in the UK and 27,000 worldwide. Network coverage is among the best in the UK at over 99 per cent of the UK population. T-Mobile operates an advanced 3G HSDPA-enabled network capable of supporting mobile broadband speeds of up to 3.6mb per second, rising to 7.2 in the summer of 2008.

