

New retail platform from gsmExchange

Trader auction site gsmExchange has launched a new global sales tool to put mobile phone retailers in search of well-priced stock in touch with suppliers across the globe.

The new web platform, called phoneLot, allows smaller transactions than passed by trade site gsmExchange, which typically facilitates deals for more than 200 handsets.

The new service allows members without the scale to gain entry to the gsmExchange platform to buy from selected international distribution companies that have the logistics capability to process a higher volume of smaller orders.

It enables the Irish-based firm to reach a broad new retail audience that has to date been rejected from membership of gsmExchange, and which is typically interested in orders of 10-100 handsets per month from distributors.

Essam Bishara, managing director of the gsmExchange

group, said phoneLot starts with a base of around 20,000 retailers in the UK, Europe and the US. It has around 60 distributors located in various markets already signed up as sales agents on the platform.

Bishara said: "The majority



Bishara - global retail channels

of these types of company have been looking for a product and we have not been in a position to serve them. We have had a considerable number of applications from them nonetheless - they are smallish retailers, by and large, looking to order 10 handsets per month, say, instead of 200."

Membership is €25 for buyers, with discounts available for those taking long-term subscriptions to the service.

Bishara said gsmExchange members must meet strict criteria to qualify for phoneLot, including a long trading history, sundry company registrations and the capability to fulfill retailer orders.

Bishara unveils the new platform this week at trade fair CeBIT in Hannover, Germany.

It runs alongside gsmExchange and also gsmLeads, a platform to put tier-two manufacturers in touch with a global trade audience seeking out ways to differentiate their portfolios.

Uplands in contra deal with TOYM

O2 dealer Uplands Mobiles has struck an agreement with repair company Turn On You Mobile to connect Turn On You Mobile customers to O2 with a BlackBerry Bold 2 9700.

In exchange, Turn On Your Mobile will offer repairs to Uplands' O2 customers - both its regular base and its expanding O2 Joined Up base.

Turn On Your Mobile will offer further BlackBerry devices via Uplands in due course. Customers will also be offered a 12-month subscription to Telmap Navigation and six months free voice rental on the tariff they choose.

Uplands will email Turn On Your Mobile's 150,000 customers to notify them of the O2 upgrade offer.

Uplands managing director Paul Hooper said: "We wanted to work with a service specialist with real breadth of offering. Turn On Your Mobile provides this. Not only does this produce real opportunity and value to us, it comes at a time when we are working closely with O2 on building strong collaborative working practices through both its corporate and SME teams directly. I cannot think of another network that would be happy to work with indirect in the same meeting room, and discuss customers openly, share numbers, performance and potential."



Wish wins Voda/Yes award

Wish Communications last week scooped a double award as part of Yes Telecom's Partner of the Year acknowledgements for 2009

The Northamptonshire based B2B dealer, a Yes Telecom Strategic Partner, announced today it has been recognised for its achievements for its quality of connections and acquisitions.

Wish, who was named Yes Telecom Partner of the Year in 2008, won the Yes Telecom Acquisition Award 2009, after consistently connecting between 700 and 1,000 Vodafone lines per month throughout the year.

It currently has around 16,000 customers on Vodafone, accounting for 95 per cent of its base. It hopes to double this figure to 30,000 by 2011.

Wish has also been awarded Yes Telecom's partner of the year equivalent, The Q Factor Award, which measures a number of categories including volume, data penetration and account management beating 500 dealers.

Wish Communications managing director Mike Hallam said: "Our Strategic partnership continues to strengthen with Vodafone and we are delighted that our ongoing success reaches a level that warrants the recognition of Yes Telecom in two major areas.

"Acquisition will remain our key focus for a number of years, this coupled with, Customer Retention, Account Management and additional service sales drive the medium term goals of Wish and Yes Telecom alike."

Avenir rejig for fixed line push

Airtime distributor Avenir Telecom has appointed two dedicated fixed line sales staff as part of an internal restructuring to target convergence.

The airtime distributor has consolidated its IT, warehouse and client services teams as a single 'operations' department.

Operations will be managed by Adrienne Watt, who previously managed client services. It will consist of two dedicated

sales teams for hardware and airtime.

All hardware will be managed by accessories sales director Stuart Balaam, whilst all airtime business, including retention and fixed line sales, will be managed by sales director John Pett.

Avenir confirmed the restructuring has resulted in two sales staff leaving the business. It has hired two new dedicated

fixed line sales staff as it looks to push convergence sales. The two new staffers started work last Monday (February 8).

Avenir said the changes have been made to realign the business with market trends, and said it will look to build on last year's success with O2, which named it 'partner of the year' and the biggest seller of its Joined Up fixed line proposition.



THE SHARP END
Jez Harris

New T-Mobile tariffs

T-Mobile has launched a new range of consumer tariffs, replacing its previous Combi and Flex tariffs. Tariffs start at £15 per month (on 24-month contracts), with one inclusive 'booster'. These boosters give users an unlimited option of text, on-network minutes, landline calls, internet access, BlackBerry email, or a choice of international bundle options. They are also available as extras, chargeable at £5 per month each

and users can have as many as they require.

Comparing new £25 per month two-year deals against Orange, the new T-Mobile 'Pay Monthly £25' plan seems very good value, both for the customer and the dealer. On Orange a comparable Racoon tariff pays £172 commission with eight per cent ongoing (base commission).

On T-Mobile the same tariff will earn the dealer £50 more upfront as well as pay 15 per cent ongoing. The customer also receives 200 more cross-network minutes as well as 200 more texts.

All in all these new tariffs seem great value for money and should be worth considering by dealers who seem to be having their consumer commissions cut back to near-nothing by the other networks. It's a shame

"If in doubt, and you need to check with your supplier about their clawback policy, do not mention your customer by name"

T-Mobile has such onerous clawback terms and will clawback over the slightest issue and point blank refuse to reverse or look into any clawback.

Recessionary clawback

On the subject of clawback, a few dealers have mentioned they have been receiving clawbacks for customers of theirs that have gone out of business due to the recession.

It's one thing that dealers get clawbacks for customers that have gone out of business even though they have the correct proofs, but some dealers reckon they have mentioned to their distributors the names of customers that have gone out of business and then later found they have been clawed back by their distributor - raising concerns it is the distributor that has imposed the clawback on the dealer rather than the network imposing the clawback,

and the distributor passing it on.

So if in doubt, and if you need to check with your supplier on whether or not they will impose clawbacks in certain situations, make sure you do not mention your customer by name, just in case.

iPhone software locks

Apple has yet again released a very minor update to the iPhone firmware - now version 3.1.3. This minor release does however relock the iPhone if it has previously been unlocked.

Although Pwnage Tool, the popular iPhone unlock solution, has been updated to help combat this update, the latest release only works on iPhones with earlier boot ROM versions. This applies to the iPhone 2G, 3G and 3GS.

So for the time being at least, unlocking the iPhone is a bit hit and miss whilst you try and figure out firmware versions and boot ROM versions.

It will not be long before the unlocking community will again release a much simpler solution that will work across the board. Having said that it won't be long before there will be yet another Apple firmware release as Apple will soon launch its iPad, which is an oversized iPhone that is supposed to revolutionise the computing

industry, e-book industry and become the ultimate gaming machine and web browser all at once (see page 26-27).

Low-price stationary

Having moved from a retail shop to offices I needed to renew my stock of letterheads, compliment slips and business cards. I searched around and found what I believe to be a great deal on business stationary pack that included a thousand of each. I thought I'd pass on the details so others can take advantage of these prices too.

I ordered a thousand business cards, compliment slips and A4 letterheads and went for the slightly better 120g paper. The artwork was included free of charge as I knew roughly where I wanted to go with the design layout. I asked the company for a price on including the artwork files in electronic format too so I could use them on my website's email templates and even on posters, and these guys said they would give them to me in whatever format I needed.

The total cost for all this was £158 including VAT, plus £4.99 for 24-hour delivery - which no-one else could get near such pricing.

The company concerned is Instant Print of Newcastle. Contact me for more details if you need them.

Orange vs T-Mobile

A comparison of comparative 25pm two-year deals - Orange Racoon and T-Mobile PayMonthly

<p>400 mins + 300 texts</p>		<p>£172 comm. + 8pc ongoing revenue</p>
<p>600 mins + 500 texts</p>		<p>£222 comm. + 15pc ongoing revenue</p>