

UK's Small to Medium Businesses Baffled by Telecoms Terminology

Submitted by: Spreckley Partners

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Tiscali survey finds almost half of small businesses may be relying on consumer broadband solutions

Tiscali Business Services UK, a subsidiary of Tiscali the internet communications company, announced today results of a survey of 250 small to medium businesses (SMBs) from across the UK showing that over half are confused by the jargon and acronyms used to describe telecoms services and solutions.

Almost two-thirds of respondents found it difficult to compare different broadband solutions – making it difficult for them to choose the right broadband package for their business. Close to half the SMBs involved are not confident they are using the best, most cost-effective broadband solution for their business.

As the survey shows that a staggering 38 per cent are using a consumer broadband solution (a figure that jumps to 49 per cent among businesses with less than 10 employees), this lack of confidence is well founded. Consumer products do not offer the levels of bandwidth, technical support and security that businesses of any size require.

Nathan Francis, General Manager of Tiscali Business Services stated: "Broadband offers many benefits to SMBs. However, if they aren't getting the right broadband package to support their specific business needs because of confusing technical jargon, it is a bad thing for everybody concerned – the supplier, the carrier, the UK economy – but most of all for the small businesses."

SMBs recognise the value of broadband, with 37 per cent stating access to broadband is "important to the success of small businesses" and over a quarter (26 per cent) considering it "Key" to the success of small businesses.

Francis continued: "Educating small business to ensure that they get the right, most cost-effective broadband solution for them must be the priority of suppliers to this sector and the UK government. This is certainly going to be a key area of focus for Tiscali in the next 12 months and beyond."

According to the latest statistics from the Small Business Service, a DTI agency, over 95 per cent of British businesses employ less than 50 people – and over 80 per cent have less than 10 employees – highlighting the importance of the small business sector to the UK.

Broadband can offer a small businesses a number of significant benefits because digital information, in form of emails or documents, can be sent much more quickly than with dial-up, modem based alternatives. Also, because larger files can be downloaded or sent to clients very cost-effectively, broadband can enable small businesses to compete with larger rivals when it comes to speed of response or delivery of large documents, images, video or music files and so on electronically.

Summary of findings:
(250 SMB respondents)

Do you feel confused by the jargon and acronyms used to describe types of telecoms and networks vendors and their services/ solutions?

Yes 51%

No 47%

Do you find it difficult to compare and contrast different vendors broadband solutions?

Yes 67%

No 29%

Are you confident that you can/ have chosen the best broadband solution for your business in terms of overall cost-effectiveness?

Yes 52%

No 45%

Do you think access to broadband is:

Key to the success of small businesses 26%

Important to the success of small businesses 37%

Of benefit to small businesses 23%

Unnecessary for most small businesses 4%

About Tiscali UK Business Services

Tiscali UK forms part of Tiscali SpA., headquartered in Cagliari, Italy. The UK company was launched in July, 2001 following the acquisitions of Liberty Surf, World Online and LineOne. Most recently, Tiscali UK acquired Tiny and Gateway ISP. Tiscali UK is positioned within the UK market as the 4th largest ISP.

Tiscali S.p.A., (Nuovo Mercato, Milan: TIS, Nouveau Marché, Paris: 005773), is the European Internet Company providing access, content and business applications, as well as innovative communications services. As at 31 March 2004, Tiscali had over 8 million active users of which 1,240,000 were broadband customers.

Tiscali's corporate website can be found at www.tiscali.com

Tiscali UK Business Services, a leader in ADSL wholesale, has a focused product portfolio enabling customers to choose from IP Virtual Private Network and Managed Hosting solutions, ADSL and Leased line access, Streaming Media, Virtual Internet Service Provision and Telephony services.

Visit the Tiscali UK Business Services website: www.tiscali-business.co.uk

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