

NEW: Worldwide Directory of Mobile Network Operators, 2nd Edition, September 2008

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MVNO Directory - November 2007

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This 2nd edition builds upon the success of the 2006 edition.

Featuring further entries within the active MVNO profiles chapter, details of planned MVNOs which are yet to launch and a further section with information about rumoured MVNO operations.

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Just released: *New global mobile operators directory*

The Worldwide Directory of Mobile Network Operators 2008

Released September 2008 | Blycroft Publishing

This directory contains over 730 MNOs and 3,200 named contacts across 4 regions. We have also gathered a significant amount of subscriber and network technology information. Visit www.MNODirectory.com for further details. Also see our MVNO Directory at www.MVNODirectory.com for a global directory of MVNOs.

ARTICLES

1. **Vodafone Denies Job Cuts At Crazy John's – Australia**
October 21, 2008

Vodafone Australia has denied reports of any job cuts or massive changes at Crazy John's, the mobile phone retailer in which it bought a controlling stake last month. Before the acquisition, Crazy John's was operating an MVNO service, which was struggling to boost subscriber numbers. Another of its offerings, a prepaid mobile service targeted at the female youth market managed to attract only a few thousand subscribers. This had led Vodafone to explore all options to streamline operations at Crazy John's. Consequently, Vodafone has identified various cost-cutting measures and also plans to hire a new Chief Financial Officer at Crazy John's.

Commenting on the development, a spokesperson from Vodafone, said: "Vodafone Australia is developing plans that will explore how best to maximize the success of both Vodafone and Crazy John's. For competitive reasons, we will not provide more detail on our retail strategy".

Crazy John's, before the buyout, was operating as an MVNO using Vodafone Australia's network. Post-acquisition, Brendan Fleiter, Chief Executive Officer at Crazy John's, announced the company's plans to further expand into Western Australia, Southern Australia, Queensland and NSW. However, Vodafone Australia has not confirmed which of these plans will be implemented.

2. **Lebara Mobile Launches '50% Free' Top-Up Scheme – UK**
October 21, 2008

Lebara Mobile, an MVNO operating in the UK, has launched a new scheme '50% Free' for its customers. Under the scheme, customers buying top-ups for their pay-as-you-go SIM card will receive a free credit (subject to a maximum of 50%) on their purchases. The scheme will run until the end of 2008.

Commenting on the offer, Robert Gaskin, UK Country Manager for Lebara Mobile, said: "In the 12 months since launch we've established Lebara as the UK leader in providing high quality, low cost international mobile services. We are now offering our customers even greater value on all their calls. I firmly believe that our exciting new offer, combined with extensive retail availability, will also help us attract new customers to extend our market leading position". The company is also launching a marketing campaign in the UK to promote its new scheme.

3. **Lycamobile Signs Payzone For Top-Ups – UK**
October 21, 2008

Lycamobile, an ethnic market MVNO, has entered into an agreement with Payzone, a UK-based independent network of retail payment outlets, to enable customers to top-up their accounts from any Payzone terminal for amounts ranging from GBP 5 to GBP 50.

Commenting on the agreement, Paul Charmatz, Managing Director of Payzone, said: "The international calling market continues to grow and our unique demographic makes us the fastest growing provider in this ethnic-centered space. Payzone is working to collate the most popular MVNOs for its retailers so they can participate in the growth of this profitable market".

Miling Kangle, Chief Executive Officer of Lycamobile, said: "We are delighted to work with Payzone and with their network of more than 30,000 retailers; Lycamobile customers will have even greater access to convenient places where they can top-up their credit". Lycamobile recently launched a GBP 10 million marketing campaign to promote its services and aims to attract 1 million subscribers in the UK within one year of its launch.

4. Smartlink Receives MVNO License – Jordan

October 20, 2008

According to a report published on EyeofDubai.com, Smartlink Communications has secured permission from the Jordanian Communication Regulation Authority to receive an Individual Public Communication License. This is the highest communication license that any company can receive in Jordan. With the help of this license, the company will be able to offer MVNO services in the country.

Smartlink has plans to become active across the MENA region and could become a serious contender for a pan-regional MVNO.

5. Petrol To Launch MVNO Service – Bulgaria

October 20, 2008

According to investor.bg, Petrol, a leading fuel retailer in Bulgaria, is planning to launch its MVNO called Petrol Mobile. The company will utilise the network capacity of Mobiltel, a Telekom Austria subsidiary. Earlier this month Mobiltel were allocated a block of one million numbers (having prefix 098) by the telecom regulatory authority in Bulgaria.

Petrol is expected to roll out its services on October 22. The company will specifically target the lower end of the market by providing basic prepaid voice and SMS services only. Petrol will distribute its prepaid package for leva 7.68 (USD 5.26) from all of its fuelling stations. They will operate a flat tariff plan with call charges of leva 0.29 (USD 0.19) a minute and SMS charges of leva 0.12 (USD 0.08) per text.

Earlier this year, Communications Regulation Commission (CRC) auctioned a mobile spectrum license. Petrol were interested to acquire the license. However, owing to a very high auction price (starting leva 38 million (USD 26.07 million)), the company did not bid. Later, CRC scrapped the tender altogether.

6. France Telecom Inks Deal With Hits Telecom – Uganda

October 20, 2008

France Telecom has entered into an agreement with Hits Telecom Uganda to provide mobile services in the country. The two entities will form a new joint venture company, Orange Uganda Limited, in which France Telecom will have a 53% controlling stake. The new company will control the existing GSM network and telecom assets of Hits Telecom. France Telecom will absorb all of Hits Telecom Uganda's employees.

According to France Telecom, Uganda provides major growth opportunities with a population of around 30 million and a less than 17% mobile penetration rate as on March 2008. Last year, Hits Telecom Uganda had obtained GSM 900/1800 license in Uganda. The company proposes to provide cellular, WIMAX, international gateway, MVNO and data transmission services in the country.

Hits Telecom also has interests further afield including a 51% share in a Spanish MVNO. This move could signal changes with the Spanish MVNO and further plans.

7. Megasoft Bets Big On India – India

October 17, 2008

Megasoft, an IT services company, expects to generate worldwide revenues of between USD 25 to 30 million from its mobile services domain, with India's telecom sector accounting for USD 3.7 million. According to G V Kumar, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Megasoft, the company is targeting MVNOs and new entrants which have recently been allocated spectrum. The company has already done three installations for MSPs and MVNOs in Europe. In addition, Megasoft is looking forward to a USD 7 million deal with an MVNO in the Asia-Pacific region in a few weeks time.

According to Business Standard, the company expects total revenues of around USD 82 million by 2009, as against USD 61 million in 2007. Revenues from its IT division, however, are expected to shrink to USD 28.6 million this year as a result of decreases in the number of small customers.

8. Virgin Mobile Slashes International Call Tariffs – USA

October 16, 2008

Virgin Mobile USA has lowered its international calling rates to select markets with effect from October 15. Under the new tariff plan calls to Brazil, parts of Mexico, Venezuela, China, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan will be charged at 2 cents per minute. While calls to countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Bangladesh, India, South Korea and Thailand will be charged at 5 cents per minute.

Virgin claims that its customers will no longer be required to purchase an international calling card or pay for a separate international calling service with another operator. A spokesperson from Virgin Mobile USA stated that a significant share of their customers call Mexico and other Latin American countries. The company also provides the facility of sending a text message in Spanish which will be received as a Spanish voice message by a landline user. This facility is currently available to customers in the US, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Customers are also provided with the facility of sending and receiving text messages at 20 cents and 10 cents, respectively, to over 170 countries globally.

9. Freenet Nears Broadband Division Sale – Germany

October 16, 2008

According to reports by news agency DPA-AFX, Freenet, the German Multi-Service Operator (MSO), is close to selling its broadband division. It is understood that the company requires funds from the sale to pay for its acquisition of Debitel, an MVNO it acquired July this year.

The company plans to focus on mobile services in the future, particularly mobile Internet and content services. Freenet has received bids from various German telecom operators including United Internet, Versatel, Vodafone Germany, Telefonica O2 Germany, Hansenet and Deutsche Telekom. The company has around 1.1 million DSL subscribers and expects to raise approximately EUR 400 million (USD 543.48 million) from the sale by the end of November.

10. Magasins U Partners With France Telecom – France
October 15, 2008

Magasins U, a leading supermarket group in France, has entered into an agreement with France Telecom for providing MVNO services in France. The MVNO offering dubbed 'U mobile' is a pay-as-you-go service linked to the U loyalty card. The company will provide 5 different prepaid card top-up schemes ranging from EUR 5 to EUR 35 (USD 6.83 to USD 47.82) from more than 600 Magasins U stores. Customers will also be able to make calls and send SMS by using their U card points they receive in lieu of shopping from the Magasins U stores taking part in the loyalty scheme.

11. NRJ Launches Unlimited Text – France

NRJ has launched a new 24 month contract called 'Double Jeu'. The contract is priced at EUR 21.90 a month. The plan comes with an unlimited text offer and follows the European standard now of attempting to reduce churn by locking subscribers into lengthy contracts.

The French mobile market looks set to be further saturated with a fourth 3G mobile spectrum auction scheduled for early 2009. This could be good news for MVNOs as it may mean the entry of a further cooperative MNO, alternatively it could provide another tough competitor which may take market share away from the MVNOs.

12. Slifter LBS Application Added to Virgin Mobile Offering – USA

Slifter, a popular mobile shopping tool that employs LBS technology to search and share products and promotions at neighboring retail locations, announced its partnership with Virgin Mobile USA. This means that the five million Virgin Mobile customers now can shop with their phones by searching over 300 million products at more than 150,000 local and online retailers, seeing price and availability, and getting detailed directions to the nearest store.

"Slifter and Virgin Mobile USA are giving consumers the ability to hold on to their dollars, by saving on products and even gas," said Alex Muller, Chief Executive Officer of Slifter.

New York City-based Slifter, is a popular mobile shopping tool that enables millions of mobile users to search and share products and promotions, straight from their cell phones. It is accessible for free via, wireless web, or java application on almost any mobile device.