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Virgin Mobile Provides Unlimited Calls At USD 80 Per Month – USA

Virgin Mobile has introduced a new calling plan, called "Totally Unlimited", for its customers at USD 80 per month, which USD 20 less than similar plans in the market offering unlimited calling. The new plan, which comes into effect from July 1, would provide unlimited calling all day and would also include roaming and long distance services. However, subscribers would have to pay an additional USD 10 per month for unlimited messaging.

Jayne Wallace, Head of Corporate Communications for Virgin Mobile, said: "We're competing against companies that are spending billions of dollars on marketing and we're not doing that. We're at over 5 million customers, that is what kept us going".

Virgin Mobile Mulls Helio Takeover – USA

Virgin Mobile is planning to acquire SK Telecom's MVNO brand 'Helio' for a consideration of USD 50 million. After the deal, SK Telecom will be left with only a 20% holding. The buyout would provide Virgin Mobile with 200,000 Helio customers that will get added to the existing customer base of 5.1 million.

People Telecom Plans To Become An MVNO – Australia

People Telecom, which currently relies on Optus for reselling mobile services, plans to purchase Optus services through M2 Telecommunications, an Optus wholesaler. The agreement is estimated to be worth USD 9 million for two years and would allow People Telecom to offer Optus 3G & GSM mobile and Wireless2Go wireless broadband services, to its existing and new customers.

Commenting on the occasion, John Stanton, Chief Executive Officer of People Telecom, said the agreement: "provides stronger operating margins for People Telecom's existing mobile business, which will assist our earnings growth [and] paves the way for People Telecom to become a multinet MVNO – offering our customers the flexibility to operate on a range of different major mobile networks across Australia."

It is our understanding that People Telecom has already inked deals with other carriers. Deals have been struck with Telstra and Vodafone for 2G services and 2G & 3G services, respectively. According to Stanton, under the new arrangement the company would be able to purchase airtime minutes from M2 and other operators, and resell them by developing its own packages and plans. Under the present deal with Optus, People Telecom was restricted to selling only Optus' plans.

Future Group May Venture Into MVNO – India

Future Group, operator of one of the largest retail chains in India, is reportedly planning to operate as an MVNO in the country. According to Kishore Biyani, Future Group's Chief Executive Officer, the firm is in talks with mobile operators to provide talktime as a gift for customers shopping at its outlets.

Biyani stated that the initial capital requirement would not exceed INR 1 billion. The company has appointed McKinsey and Co. and UK's Value Partners Group Ltd as its lead advisors for this venture.

Primus Canada Applies pulseINP – Canada

Primus Canada Inc., a Canadian telecom service provider, has implemented pulse's Intelligent Network Platform (pulseINP) solution to supply Number Portability and Intelligent Call Routing solutions. Pulse is a leading provider of intelligent communications solutions for the wireline, wireless, IMS and NGN networks. The new software will enable Primus to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

According to Matt Stein, Vice President of New Technology and Services at Primus Canada, "The pulseINP is a modular solution that allows Primus the flexibility to manage data more efficiently, while focusing on the on-going technology advancements within our industry."

ExtremeMob Searches For New Network Partner – United Kingdom

ExtremeMob, the sister concern of distributor Advantage Cellular, is scouting for a new network partner after the end of its hosting relationship with Vodafone UK. The company had entered into an agreement with Vodafone in 2005, but could not officially launch operations due to a revamp of its content offering. Ian Pond, Managing Director of ExtremeMob UK, stated that considering the recurring delays, it would be difficult to comment on when the firm would launch operations.

Further commenting on the situation, Pond said, 'It's not looking like summer this year. It's at a difficult point at the moment. It's a lengthy process, and it's taking longer than we had hoped.'

He further stated that entering into an agreement with an operator is one of the many things the company needs to think upon. It is also possible that the MVNO would launch services in Poland, earlier than the UK.



ExtremeMob is controlled by Roman Karkosik, a Polish billionaire who owns Polish telecom firm CentreNet, and 80% stake in Xebra, the holding company of ExtremeMob and Advantage Cellular.

Smile Communications Plans To Purchase Mobile Service Brand – Israel

Internet Gold Golden Lines Ltd., a subsidiary of Smile Communications Ltd, plans to purchase a cellular brand. The move would allow the company to be an MVNO and simultaneously provide cellular services by paying a transmission fee to cellular operators as provided by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Bezeq, Israeli Telecommunication Co. Ltd and Hot Cable Systems Media Ltd. Under this model, subscribers will obtain the company's full prefix number while the company would be accountable for billing using the host's network.



Just Nine Months And Blyk Adds 140,000 Subscribers – United Kingdom

Blyk has added 140,000 subscribers in the first nine months of its operations. Shaun Gregory, Blyk's UK Chief Executive Officer, said: "We were committed to delivering 100,000 connections within a year of launch, and we launched on September 24 last year. We now have 140,000 members, which is very exciting for our advertisers."



Lycamobile Ready For Launch This Summer – United Kingdom

Lycamobile has announced its plans to launch MVNO services in the United Kingdom by the end of the summer this year. However, the company has still not finalised its network partner. In the meantime, the company has selected Dextra as the distribution partner for supplying 150,000 SIM cards to the UK market. The company aims to attract 750,000 customers in the initial 12 months of its operation.



KPN Launches Simyo Brand – Spain

After the success of KPN International in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, the company has launched its MVNO brand 'Simyo' in Spain. This is also the first country where KPN acts as a true MVNO.

The company has partnered with Simfonics to leverage the company's managed service delivery platform that uses Symsoft's Nobill MVNO solution. The Nobill MVNO solution consists of charging and rating for voice and data services, such as SMS, MMS, GPRS, Voicemail, etc.



Axiom Telecom Raises Loan For Expansion – United Arab Emirates

Axiom Telecom, a UAE-based mobile phones retailer, distributor and content provider, has raised a loan of USD 400 million to expand its network in the global markets.

The company is focusing on spreading its MVNO operations globally, especially in countries such as India. For this, the company has formed a joint venture with the Indian retailer Future Group. Faisal Al Bannai, Chief Executive Officer of Axiom Telecom, said: "We have strong plans to further expand our position across the region, and our Indian acquisition is a strong part of that strategy. It is definitely not a market to miss, definitely part of our global expansion policy".



MVNO Market Attracts Polish Cable Companies – Poland

Two of the four largest cable operators, Aster and Multimedia Polska, are planning to launch their MVNO services in Poland.

According to sources, Aster is expected to launch the service within the next few days. The company aims to attract 10,000 customers by the end of 2008 and 50,000 by the end of 2009. This would involve an investment of PLN 4 million (USD 1.8 million). Multimedia Polska is also planning to launch its MVNO services later this year.

