

How much did that call cost me?



The landscape

These days there are lots of phone companies vying for custom from phone user. Equally there are many ways to make income from telephones.

It's confusing and no-one is clear which calls attract which rates.

Charge bands

Phone charge bands largely fall into four categories:

1. *Geographic numbers*
2. *Non-geographic*
3. *Mobile*
4. *Premium*

We get the idea on mobiles and premium rate, but many people don't understand the difference between geographic and non-geographic as they are both to landlines. So let's discuss them.

Why's it important?

Most phone packages discuss great rates for geographic numbers. Many offer packages where calls are free. Fantastic.

Profit Per Minute specialises in helping business owners to maximise the reward for their effort through understanding where your profit comes from and how to work with your customers to get more of it

Visit our web site at www.profitperminute.com

Geographic numbers

These are the original and the most understood.

Any number starting 01 or 02 is a geographic number. There will be peak and off peak rates.

What can I do?

Make sure you've got the best deal for your calling profile.



Non-geographic numbers

08 numbers are virtual phone numbers and are thus not regarded as geographic. A lot of these are billed as *local rate* or *national rate*, which is true but often callers think that the rates are the same as they pay for geographic calls.

They do ring an actual geographic phone but have different financial arrangements between the phone company and the holder of the number. A financial adviser, The Motley Fool, tells us that we could spend up to £2 billion on 0870 calls this year. Receiving up to £700 million in return for you calling them shows why companies like these numbers.

Why's it important?

These non-geographic numbers do not form part of any deal for geographic numbers. So, rather than being free, calling an 0870 number could be costing you 10p a minute - even a local call is 3p a minute during the day.

On national call numbers (087x), the holders of the phone number (the company that you are calling) can be making money from you.

Uswitch.com says "Firms usually get a cut of the call charge from the phone company. On average they make about 2½p a minute from a daytime 0870 call and ½p a minute from an 0845 one." And 0871 numbers make up to 3p a minute.

Callagenix.com and companyregistrationsonline.com both offer to pay you up to 2p a minute peak and 0.3p off peak for getting people to call you on 0870 numbers.

Many banks and utilities use these sorts of numbers, as do some government departments. Even Business Link, who aim to help small businesses use 0845 for phone calls and 0870 for fax.

Ironic as an 0845 number is positioned as a local call to SAVE the caller money!

Profit Per Minute specialises in helping business owners to maximise the reward for their effort through understanding where your profit comes from and how to work with your customers to get more of it

Visit our web site at
www.profitperminute.com



Profit Per Minute Limited
Keeping your profit in your wallet

01865 771329

What can I do?

Always try to call a geographic number. The 08xx phone numbers do have a real phone number as well!

One tip is to look at the web site for foreign callers. The 08xx numbers do not always work for callers from abroad, so look for a geographic number. Take off the +44 and add a zero. For example, Mint gives these numbers for lost or stolen cards:

More on non-geographic numbers

UK - 0870 6000 459
Abroad +44 1423 700 545.

Yet 01423 700 545 works in the UK as well.

www.saynoto0870.com is a web site that lists 0845 and 0870 numbers together with their geographic equivalents. As an example, Lloyds Bank Insurance centre is advertised as 0870 1660046, but the site tells us that you can also reach them on 0117 3020313.

But I've got a 08 number!

Think about your callers. There is a lot of resentment building up as callers start to see the cost of these calls: if they have an unlimited geographic calls package, then an 0870 call sticks out like a sore thumb. Even an 0845 'local' call can cost more than a national call. If you've got a bad deal with your provider, then the caller is paying more and so are you!

Consider whether the revenue from the call is worth the potential loss of sales. In a price-driven market it can make the difference between calling you or your competitor. In a market that is working on long-term relationships, ask how customers feel having to call expensive numbers.

Some companies are becoming wise to this. Call centres can see the number that you dialled and many are refusing to handle UK calls that come in via geographic numbers.

Profit Per Minute specialises in helping business owners to maximise the reward for their effort through understanding where your profit comes from and how to work with your customers to get more of it

Visit our web site at www.profitperminute.com



Profit Per Minute Limited
Keeping your profit in your wallet

01865 771329