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Guide to buying a mobile phone

By Paul Smith

Guide to buying a mobile phone

If you already have a mobile phone, you can switch to a different network and take your phone number with you, although you may need a different handset. You could get a connection with a new number, using your existing handset.

Networks

When you buy a phone you need to choose a network – O2, Vodafone, Orange and T-mobile are mobile phone networks. Each network is a collection of radio towers all over the country, linked together and transmitting people's conversations.

A mobile phone service usually comes as a package, made up of the phone itself and access to a network. There are five main mobile phone networks in the UK – O2, T-Mobile, Orange, Vodafone and most recently '3' with its growing third generation network which can support mobile video. Other operators such as Virgin and BT Mobile use the 5 main networks and there are many airtime resellers dealing with one or all the networks. They offer two ways of using their services; by "pay as you go" or by monthly line rental. If you do not intend to make a great number of calls from a mobile phone, a pay as you go package may suffice but any reasonably regular use (especially during business hours) probably warrants a monthly package – which package will depend on the volume of calls you anticipate making.

You don't need to put pen to paper for most mobile phone contracts nowadays, but they are still legally binding. Contracts can be 'signed' over a website or over the phone.

The network should be the first thing you choose when you're starting out. Your choice of network will decide where you get good coverage, and how good the customer service is. Some networks have better coverage in particular areas than others, but customer service varies from day to day, depending on demand.

Price plans

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Next, decide whether you want a pay as you go phone or a traditional contract arrangement.

Pre-pay, where you pay (usually by buying vouchers) before you make calls. There is no risk of a high bill, but sometimes this is an expensive option, adding vouchers can be inconvenient and you may run out of credit during an important call.

Pay as you go packages are useful if you only expect to use your mobile occasionally, and are cost effective if you expect to receive a lot of calls, but not to make many. But you should be aware that some companies set an expiry date on their credits, meaning that the credit must be used in the time allocated.

Contract – where you get a bill each month, but the call charges are usually lower, and there are more facilities offered.

With rental you pay a monthly fee in the same way as you would for a land line. Many monthly rental packages include some inclusive call minutes or talktime

Monthly line rental costs from around £6, with a wide range of call-plans available. Look at several to work out which is best for you, and to ensure you spend the least amount of money relative to the use you expect to make of the service. Spending more on your monthly call-plan will result in more inclusive minutes, and calls made with inclusive minutes tend to be cheaper than calls made outside of the call-plan. Generally, paying higher line rental gets you cheaper call charges

Before you commit yourself, check whether you can change contracts later as your usage and circumstances may change.

When you buy a phone, it is subsidised by the network or service provider, the higher your monthly fees the cheaper the phone will be. A mobile phone can be included 'free' when bought as part of a subsidised package, but without the subsidy even a basic model would cost at least £70, and you could pay £300 or more for the latest models with WAP access, GPRS and Bluetooth or other mobile data features. Expect to pay more for the handset with a pay as you go package because you are also getting a line but without a monthly rental charge and minimum contract.

Choosing the handset

There are lots of different phones to choose between. Read the Handsets section before deciding.

Once you have seen all the information here, and decided what you want, find a good mobile phone shop mad4mobilephones.com offers excellent value, superb service, and provided you with this information!

See the mad4mobilephones.com web site for information about the wide range of phones available.

Some users are far more interested in gadgets than others, as a general rule you should get a phone

with as many feature as you think you will need. If you think you need lots of features then there are plenty of mobile phones to suit you.

You should also be careful before opting for some of the pay-as-you go deals. Some use phones that skimp on features for the sake of cost cutting.

Look for a phone with good battery life, the phone should get you easily through a full day or weekend of normal use.

The most important thing is to choose a good mobile phone shop , mad4mobilephones.com can provide you with some good deals, check out the site for more information.....

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for more guides and articles.

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By connie

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