

BT Offers Small Businesses A 'Kickstart'



Released on: September 26, 2011, 5:54 pm

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Industry: [Internet & Online](#)

BT Business has launched a finance scheme offering start-ups the chance to lease up to £15,000 worth of technology and telecommunications solutions. Under the 'Kick Start Scheme', in conjunction with Shire Leasing, new businesses trading for under three years will be eligible for funding subject to credit vetting.

BT's 'KickStart Scheme', available through BT Local Business, aims to help small businesses raise funds in a challenging economic climate and to avoid having to rely on bank loans, overdrafts or credit cards.

'KickStart' offers start-ups the opportunity to purchase a range of technology and communications products and services including [business telephone systems](#), [business mobiles](#), handsets, connection charges, software licences and IT equipment such as laptops, as well as [small business IT support](#). The scheme is open to all industry types and has very flexible underwriting, aimed at delivering higher acceptance levels for new-start companies. An average £3,000 loan will cost less than £20 per week and can be added to as the business grows.

Declan McGlone, general manager of BT Finance, BT Business said: "The UK has an average of 270,000 start-up businesses every year. In light of the current economic climate we want to help these businesses access the products and services they need to get their new venture up and running. Our 'KickStart Scheme' offers finance over a fixed term, at a fixed rate, making it easier for customers to budget."

One business that has already benefitted from a similar scheme with Shire Leasing is A.I. Global Media Ltd. The publishing company, established in November 2010, needed funding to purchase a technology and communications solution for its eight staff working on a new corporate finance publication.

Jane Peter, director, A.I. Global Media Ltd, said: "When starting out, it was crucial to launch the business in the most cost effective way possible. We needed to install a BT Versatility phone and broadband system, so that staff could work on the magazine straight away, but couldn't afford any major spend. The leasing scheme allowed us to get the equipment we needed at a fixed rate and also meant we keep what capital we had in the bank to ensure we had some cash flow. This scheme really helped us get our business off the ground and we now have over 53,000 subscribers to our magazine."

Karina Knudsen, Head of Business Development at the British Chambers of Commerce also welcomed the launch: "The BCC has long called for more support for small businesses. Financing that specifically helps start and grow new ventures will considerably reduce the current credit difficulties that owners face."

New and existing BT Business customers will be able to take up the 'KickStart Scheme' offers as long as they have been trading for under three years, subject to a credit check. For more information about 'KickStart' and other BT products and services, interested parties can contact BT Local Business at www.btlocalbusiness.co.uk.

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About BT

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; [business broadband](#) and internet products and services such as [fibre optic broadband](#), and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of four lines of business: BT Global Services, BT Retail, BT Wholesale and Openreach.

In the year ended 31 March 2011, BT Group's revenue was £20,076m with profit before taxation of £1,717m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

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Press release distributed via EPR Network (<http://express-press-release.net/submit-press-release.php>)