

UK operators play catch up in B2B

UK operators are vying to strengthen their business market footprint, stated Julien Parven, head of marketing at Fone Logistics.

He said that O2 and Vodafone traditionally lead the way in being focussed on the B2B market, having taken the early decision that their indirect sales channel should be solely concentrated on affecting their penetration into the SME and MLE customers where the direct sales teams are reluctant to tread.

However, he added: "In more recent times, both Orange and T-Mobile have entered this sector with strong commercials and compelling customer offerings, only to withdraw periodically as budget constraints and strategy dictated. Currently, Orange in particular is very focussed and determined to make a lasting impression within the channel and has demonstrated this commitment with a clear and present strategy."

That leaves 3, which over the past two months has been once again attempting to sell itself to the indirect channel as a business network. Parven commented: "3's latest sojourn into the B2B space is with perhaps greater structure and focus than before, and its target audience is clearly defined as the SOHO and SME customer, particularly those within a creative and media type environment where 3's content rich services win many followers.

"The day is fast approaching where all five of the UK players will have a solid B2B offering and while there will always be winners and losers in the volume stakes, each one's ability to focus on specific verticals or horizontals will allow them to take a hold on a unique customer segment," Parven continued.

Ed says: For more on 3's B2B bid, turn to this month's industry panel on page 36.