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The unknown world of tariffs – TNS Infratest study reveals knowledge gaps

MUNICH. Mobile phone tariffs in Germany have changed but many customers have failed to notice. This was the result of a TNS Infratest study where just under 1,000 mobile phone users were interviewed. The study, which was commissioned by Telefónica O₂ Germany, discovered some enduring prejudices: Mobile telephone contracts are still considered expensive and inflexible, even though this is no longer the case.

For example, monthly fixed costs: 87 per cent of respondents thought that a flat rate costs the same each month even if it is hardly used. But in fact, there are flexible mobile phone tariffs without fixed monthly costs. O₂ for example offers an option without a basic monthly charge where customers only pay for what they have actually used. But once the limit of 50 euros for telephone calls and text messages is reached, the tariff automatically becomes a flat rate due to the implemented cost airbag.

The majority of respondents also still have an outdated view of international tariffs. 73 per cent still believe that mobile phone calls to other countries are very expensive and not included in the flat rate. In fact, there are several mobile phone providers that offer such calls at domestic rates. With “Global Friends“, for example, customers can call five friends abroad for 15 cents per minute and the same cost airbag applies as for connections within Germany.

It is astonishing that 49 per cent of respondents still believe in the fairy tale of the 1-euro mobile phone. They assume that they will receive a subsidised mobile phone with each mobile telephone contract and therefore save money. In fact, these costs are financed through basic charges or minimum use requirements. The cash sale or financing get by without these hidden costs. So the required phone will be bought regardless of the tariff. With his mobile phone contract, the customer pays only the monthly usage and not the cost of his device.

“There are many tariffs offered on the market that are inflexible and expensive“, says Peter Rampling, Managing Director Marketing at Telefónica O₂ Germany. “Our O₂ o tariff has no minimum term and also clears up other prejudices.“ More than half of the respondents believe that a contractual term of 24 months is standard. 52 per cent share this outdated opinion.

A *Telefonica* company

Telefónica O₂ Germany GmbH & Co. OHG Georg-Brauchle-Ring 23-25 80992 München Deutschland www.o2.com/de

Ust.-Id.-Nr. DE 811 889 638, Amtsgericht München HRA 70343. Gesellschafter: Telefónica O2 Germany Management GmbH, Amtsgericht München HRB 109061 und Telefónica O2 Germany Verwaltungs GmbH, Amtsgericht München HRB 121389, beide ebenda. Geschäftsführer beider Gesellschafter: René Schuster, Vorsitzender, Andrea Folgueiras, Markus Haas, Thorsten Haeser, André Krause, Joachim Kugoth, Jens Prautzsch, Johannes Pruchnow, Peter Rampling, Lutz Schüler, Robert Simmeth, Carsten Wreth.



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Further information:

Telefónica O₂ Germany GmbH & Co. OHG
Press Relations
Albert Fetsch, spokesman
Georg-Brauchle-Ring 23-25
80992 München
t +49 (0)89 2442-1220
f +49 (0)89 2442-1209
e albert.fetsch@o2.com

www.o2.de/presse