



## **Corporate Social Responsibility**

### **Welcome to Axis Telecom's Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate social responsibility is defined by Axis Telecom as managing our business responsibly in the Telecom's and Broadband industry for both business and residential customers and other stakeholders in the community. Our business operations not only affect our stakeholders but we also have an impact on social, ethical and environmental issues. Therefore this policy highlights our aim to provide a positive impact on society and the environment as a whole.

Our business is founded primarily on catering to our customer needs by achieving our business objectives. This is why we endeavour to provide our customers with a cost saving solution for all their needs.

Our vision is simple; we aim to provide value for money on essential services to small businesses and consumers nationwide.

Not only do we aspire to provide value for money to all our customers but we endeavour to become the service provider of choice by expanding into other market places to offer even more value added services to our customers.

We pride ourselves by treating our employees, customers and suppliers fairly. Communication is vital between all these parties for the business to continue being successful and moving forward for the future of Axis Telecom.

The purpose of our corporate social responsibility policy is to provide you with our beliefs and values in areas such as:

- The Market Place,
- The Work Place,
- The Environment,
- The Community, and
- Business Principles.

At the end of 2006 we will be releasing our Corporate Social Responsibility Report to highlight how we completed our aims and goals and how we aim to develop our initiatives going forward for the year of 2007.

## **The Market Place**

Axis Telecom is an independent service provider that was established in 2001. The company has grown and prospered in the past 5 years with us achieving thousands of customers throughout the UK.

Axis Telecom's success is down to the company's policy of providing our customers with a service driven by quality and substantial savings on their everyday services.

## **Our Approach**

The way in which we conduct our business with our customers defines the way in which we achieve our company vision and how we define our values. We are passionate when it comes to our customers and we aim to provide them with a value added service at all times.

## **Axis Telecom's Code of Practice**

The aim of Axis Telecom's code of practice is to assure our customers that we comply with all of our key principles and industry standards.

The purpose of our Code of Practice is:

- To show that Axis Telecom Ltd adopts responsible best-practice selling techniques when marketing our services.
- To help our customers and potential customers understand our services and the behaviour to be expected from our representatives.
- To set out clear guidelines for our sales and marketing practice, as reassurance to our customers.

Axis Telecom aims to avoid mis-selling and misrepresentation and to ensure that the customer fully understands the services and the terms of contracts we offer the customer.

## **Sales, Marketing, Advertising and Promotional Activity**

We make our customers aware of and promote our services by using various promotional methods. In all cases, we act responsibly and try to comply with the relevant legislation.

We respect our customer's wishes and if they have registered with any relevant preference services we will not contact them through these various means, these preference services are:

- The E-mail Preference Service,
- The Fax Preference Service,
- The Mailing Preference Service, and
- The Telephone Preference Service.

All of our promotional activity is in line with the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion. As a result we ensure that advertising and promotional literature is clear, unambiguous, accurate and fair and that it does not contain false or misleading information about price, value or service and does not denigrate other companies.

## **Recruitment and Sales Training**

To ensure that our employees act responsibly at all times, we follow strict procedures in the selection and training of staff. We also ensure that all our sub-contractors and agencies use equivalent selection and training procedures and remuneration (payment) systems.

When recruiting new employees for the company, we take up references and carry out relevant background checks. We also consider whether applicants are suitable for this type of work, but also recognising that the people we employ will be seen as the 'public face' of our company and the industry in general.

We train all of our employees to ensure that they have an excellent understanding of our services and of industry practice. We also provide regular training for all employees to inform them of new services or changes in the industry.

## **Customer Service**

At Axis Telecom customer satisfaction is of our primary concern. This is why we provide our customers with clear and concise advice on their products and services they have with us. Our customer service team do not talk in jargon; our aim is to provide our customers with a simple step by step explanation to their query.

We know that our customers are obtaining the best quality service, because our training programmes are based on the principle of Investors of People. This provides our employees with the required skills that they need to help our customers.

## **Customer satisfaction**

Axis Telecom is passionate when it comes to the satisfaction of our customers. Every member of staff is guided by the same principles on how to respond to our customers.

- We listen and aim to deliver every time towards our customer needs.
- Our customer service team are friendly and polite and we always treat our customers with respect.
- We keep our promises to our customers.
- At Axis Telecom we value our customers and we treat them as an individual rather than a number.
- We have a dedicated customer service team who are always willing to go that extra mile for our customers.

Axis Telecom monitors customer satisfaction levels on a regular basis by conducting regular courtesy calls to our existing customer base. These questionnaires give guidance on our strengths and weaknesses within the company.

If we believe that a particular tariff is not meeting our customer's needs, a member of our dedicated customer service team will monitor the customer account to find the most cost saving solution for them, nonetheless this is the customer's prerogative on whether they want to change their tariff.

Our customers also receive anniversary calls to see how happy they are with the service they have received from Axis Telecom. Not only is it a courtesy call we also try and find a more competitive price for our customer.

By offering special reductions and pricing on international calls this allows our customers to keep in touch with their friends and family for the fraction of the price compared to some of our competitors.

Our main priority is to look out for our customers benefit.

### **Vulnerable Customers**

For our vulnerable customers we provide various services for their convenience, such as:

For people with sight problems:

We offer a free directory enquiries service to 118 destinations. We can also provide enlarged text on our written correspondence.

For people with hearing problems:

We can offer a text relay service for landline customers that costs the same as an equivalent voice service, short codes will be provided for users to call emergency services, operator assistance and directory enquiries.

For people who are dependent on the telephone:

We offer a priority repair service which guarantees the customer to receive a 4 hour engineer response time; this also includes a protected care scheme which allows you as the customer to nominate another person to deal with your bills.

### **Customer Privacy**

We have procedures in place that comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. Therefore all our customer's details are protected by this legislation.

### **Supplier Relationships**

At Axis Telecom we expect all of our suppliers and blue chip partners to work to the same values as ourselves in areas such as workforce practices, health and safety and the environment.

We also have a dedicated management team who are proactive with dealing with all of our external suppliers. They endeavour to create an excellent working relationship with all of our suppliers to make sure that the task in hand is always completed efficiently.

We carefully vet all of our suppliers to make sure they meet all of our requirements. We also make sure that all of our equipment meets the EU standards.

### **Better Payment Practice Code**

We have a responsibility to pay all of our suppliers in line with the payment terms agreed at the time of purchase. Failure to make these payments to our suppliers could result in a poor working relationship between both parties which could hinder the quality of service we deliver to our customers.

For more information on the Better Payment Practice Code, please visit their website at [www.payontime.co.uk](http://www.payontime.co.uk)

### **Price Promise**

Axis Telecom's price promise is there for us to protect our customers from our competitors. Sometimes our customers are misinformed from other service providers about certain discounts they can receive from them. As a result Axis Telecom guarantees to save our customers money against BT standard call charges. If they do not save money within their first year with us and they can prove this, we will refund them double the difference.

We can also provide our customers cost saving solutions on their landline calls to mobile phones by capping them for up to one hour on the main 4 networks which are O2, Orange, T-Mobile and Vodafone. Alongside this they can also have certain international destinations capped up to an hour or receive an extremely competitive rate per minute.

### **Refer a Friend**

Our referral scheme gives our customers the opportunity to encourage their friends and family to sign up with Axis Telecom. For every person that is successfully registered with Axis Telecom the customer will receive £10 on their account and the person who has signed up will also receive £10 credit on their account. The more people the customer refers the more rewards they will receive.

### **Payment Options**

At Axis Telecom our customers pay for their bills on a monthly basis. We recently conducted market research with existing and potential customers to see whether monthly or quarterly was preferred when it came to paying for their bills. The results showed that the majority of business and residential customers preferred to pay for their bill on a monthly basis. The reason behind this is that it reduces paying a larger amount each quarter.

We offer our customers various payment methods such as:

- Direct Debit,
- Cheque,
- BACS Payment, and
- Paypoint.

Our customers also have the opportunity to pay and view their bills online to ease the convenience of paying for their bills.

### **Debt Management**

Axis Telecom is committed to working with and helping our customers if they have any difficulty in making their payments. We provide our customers with payment plans to help resolve any payment issues they may have. Our main aim is to prevent our customers receiving a loss of service.

## Our Initiatives

### Listening to Customers

We recognise the importance of listening and catering to our customer's needs and this is why we provide our customers with courtesy calls to see if the customer is happy with our services. We conduct regular customer service questionnaires to measure the levels of customer satisfaction within our customer base. This gives us an insight into where we can improve our services to the customer.

We also carried out market research with existing and potential customers. Our aim was to find out what these customers looked for when it came to a service provider. The results have helped Axis Telecom make consecutive decisions on what products and services to launch to our customer base.

### Working with Others

At Axis Telecom we understand how important it is to listen and work with all different organisations to bring the best possible service to our customers. The organisations that we are involved with are:

- **Otelo:** Otelo is a business and consumer organisation that acts as a mediator between the customer and the service provider to resolve complaints.
- **Ofcom:** Ofcom is the government regulator body who advice and assist consumers and businesses with regard to all aspects of the telecom's industry.
- **FSPA:** FSPA is the representative body for Service Providers and Resellers of fixed telephony services.

## The Workplace

### Employees

#### Valuing Our People

The calibre and conduct of our people is central to our relationships with our customers, investors and suppliers. We aspire to build relationships with our employees based on mutual trust and respect for the individual. We promote and invest in:

##### **Health and Safety**

The health, safety and welfare of our employees in the workplace, and others who could be affected by our activities are top priorities for Axis Telecom.

##### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Valuing diversity makes business sense and we are committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity for all.

##### **Employee Relations**

An open and fair approach to employee relations is essential to build strong relationships with our people.

##### **Learning and Development**

Our business success depends on the capabilities of our people, so identifying and providing development and career opportunities is a key priority.

##### **Recruitment and Retention**

It is vital that we attract, motivate and retain the best available people to work with us to deliver our business objectives.

##### **Reward and Remuneration**

We work hard to reward our employees fairly for their efforts, recognising the valuable contribution their performance makes to the business.

## **Our Approach**

At Axis Telecom we recognise that the success of our business depends on the capabilities and dedication of our people. We are committed to developing employees to do their job in the most effective way, identifying their potential and providing development and career opportunities. In this way we can maximise their contribution to the overall performance of Axis Telecom.

Our approach to talent management is one of continuous development. Once we have attracted talented individuals, from within the company and the external marketplace, we maintain our focus on their learning and development.

We are committed to setting up a partnership with each individual employee who makes the most of their personal performance, commitment and prospects for employment. We will give our people the appropriate opportunities to develop business capabilities and will evaluate how effective our investment is.

We will continue to:

- Give our managers the necessary resources and personal development to enable them to support their people's learning and development.
- Give our employees ongoing information on the skills and behaviour which we believe are essential to the future success and how these can be developed.
- Analyse needs at a business level and at an individual level to see what development is appropriate and to assess the value to our business.
- Evaluate our investment in learning and development at all levels of the business.
- Give our employee opportunities to develop their capabilities and prospects for employment so they can deal confidently with organisational change.
- Offer a range of training and development solutions including work based activities, formal and informal learning, taking into account different learning styles.
- Provide an appropriate induction programme for all new employees and those who are changing jobs to make sure they can be effective in their new work as soon as possible.
- Provide equality of access to all programmes of learning, in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **Our Initiatives**

### **Employee Induction**

Our company-wide induction programme helps employees to quickly acquire a good understanding of Axis Telecom in terms of the business they are joining, the values and mission of the company; and the place they will be based. It involves how their role fits into the business, the support they will receive and the pay and performance structure so that all recruits know how they will be evaluated and rewarded.

Each new employee has an induction manager and is often assigned a buddy or mentor. In most cases a combination of written information, face-to-face events and one-to-one discussions with managers is followed by a period of job-specific training and then an evaluation.

## **Involvement Scheme**

The Axis Telecom Involvement Scheme is due to be launched shortly. This will be used as a way of rewarding employees with points for cost-saving ideas. The points can then be used by the employee to select rewards through a dedicated involvement scheme catalogue.

The Axis Telecom Involvement Scheme will be available to all employees, with its purpose being to generate ideas to improve profitability or aid growth, and to improve employee morale by rewarding staff for innovation and creativity.

Ideas put forward by staff members will be assessed using the following criteria:

- The cost based saving.
- Whether it is a one-off or annual saving.
- The implementation of the idea in terms of time and costs etc.
- The originality of the idea.
- Whether or not the idea will actually be implemented.
- Post implementation review.

It is hoped that the Involvement Scheme will help to increase innovation across the company and aid staff development by encouraging employees to come forward with ideas and rewarding them for doing so.

## **Annual Training Plans**

Axis Telecom believes in investing a great deal in training and consequently works hard to maintain an annual training plan that identifies the core development needs of staff, which reflects:

- Organisational development and workforce planning.
- Competence Frameworks and Personal Development Plans.
- Changes in industry legislation

The training plan is formally reviewed at least once a year, and more frequently where necessary.

The formal review is carried out in conjunction with the following processes:

- Workforce planning.
- Staff development/appraisal reviews.

## **Staff Appraisal System**

Every employee of Axis Telecom is provided with the opportunity to meet with their immediate manager or supervisor, at least once a year to discuss their development needs through our formal appraisal system.

Where development needs are identified, a personal development plan is mutually agreed between the member of staff and his/her manager. The plan is then reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

## **Leadership and Management Development**

We recognise the importance of providing career development for our staff and are keen to promote from within. We are proactive in preparing our staff for supervisory and management positions by providing supervisory training courses to many of our staff, even before a supervisory position arises.

All employees who are appointed to a supervisory, or team leadership role for the first time will be encouraged to undertake a supervisory training course if they haven't previously. Furthermore, it is considered essential that where appropriate to their role, they attend in-house training on the following:

- Staff Appraisal
- Recruitment and Selection
- Managing Performance & Conduct
- Managing Sickness Absence
- Bullying and Harassment

On appointment, a personal development plan is agreed between the supervisor and their line manager, which enables the supervisor to develop the skills and knowledge required for the role.

## **Employee Relations**

### **Our Approach**

We strive to maintain a high level of employee relations in Axis Telecom. Employee engagement, regular dialogue and open communication are important building blocks of our people strategy. They help us create a motivated and productive workforce that will deliver the levels of service our customers expect. The key relationships are between individual employees and their line manager, their teams and the organisation as a whole.

## **Our Initiatives**

### **Employee Engagement**

We view employee engagement as the level of commitment and involvement our employees have towards the organisation and its values. We believe that employee engagement is a continuous process and that the information our employees supply is critical to the successful performance and direction of the company. We work hard to develop and maintain the following:

- A culture of respect where outstanding work is valued.
- Availability of constructive feedback and mentoring.
- Opportunity for advancement and professional development.
- Fair and appropriate reward, recognition and incentive systems.
- Availability of effective leadership.
- Clear job expectations.
- Adequate tools to complete work responsibilities.
- High levels of employee motivation

In order to achieve these, we believe in utilising the following essential tools:

- Comprehensive employee satisfaction surveys.
- Listening to feedback and ideas.
- Acting on contributions.
- Actively involving employees in decision making.

We believe employee engagement to be a continuous process of measuring, analysing, defining and implementing, and work hard to ensure that this process is followed.

### **Key Findings of Our 2005 Employee Satisfaction Survey**

The 'Organisation' section of our most recent employee satisfaction survey revealed that employee engagement in Axis Telecom is currently at a high level. Below is a summary of the key findings:

- 94% of employees described the organisation as either a 'very good' or 'fairly good' place to work.
- 94% of employees reported feeling loyal to the organisation.
- 100% of employees reported feeling loyal to their team.
- 81% of employees reported feeling proud to tell people who they work for.

We will continue to monitor employee engagement levels, seek feedback from our staff, analyse the results and implement action plans for improvements.

## Communication

Axis Telecom places great importance on communicating with our people. We believe that building employee engagement will create long-term value for our stakeholders and position Axis Telecom as an employer of choice where the best and brightest people want to work.

Employees receive a series of regular communications to keep them informed of our strategic direction and business performance. We employ a full range of communication channels including one-to-one discussions, weekly team meetings, quarterly staff forums and company briefings.

We actively promote two-way involvement in decision-making at all levels of the organisation. We also have a number of initiatives in place for measuring employees' perceptions and continue to be a strong supporter of Investors In People.

Below are the key findings of the 'Communication' section of our most recent employee satisfaction survey:

- 87.5% of employees described the company as being either 'very good' or 'fairly good' at communicating with its employees.
- 87.5% of employees described the company as being either 'very good' or 'fairly good' at listening to its employees.
- 80% of employees reported being satisfied with the influence they have on organisational decisions that affect their jobs.
- 88% of employees described feeling well informed about the organisation's future plans.

Thank you for reading about our approach to Employee Relations. We would welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to [estannard@axistelecom.co.uk](mailto:estannard@axistelecom.co.uk)

## Health, Safety and Well Being

### Our Approach

The health, safety and well being of our employees and others who may be affected by our activities is a top priority for Axis Telecom. We strive to maintain a safe environment, healthy employees, and jobs that can be done with minimal risk of harm or injury and we recognise that in order to achieve this it is crucial that we are proactive in our approach to employee well being.

We take a holistic approach to employee well being, and central to this is our health benefits strategy, which focuses on preventative care, healthy lifestyle choices, and good health care decision-making. This includes:

- Helping employees take responsibility for healthy behaviour.
- Enabling informed health care decision-making by providing information that helps individuals choose benefit options most suited to them.

Employee well-being is built into every aspect of Axis Telecom's working environment. Our workplace conditions are regularly reviewed and our integrated approach to employee well being ranges from the more traditional aspects of occupational health and safety to innovative and proactive wellness initiatives, including a broad array of preventative employee health benefits.

## **Our Initiatives**

### **Work Related Stress**

We take the issue of preventing and managing stress seriously. We recognise that stress significantly reduces employee well-being and that sustained or excessive work pressure can lead to stress. At a time when stress levels are rising we acknowledge that it is crucial for us to tackle the challenges posed, by dealing proactively with the excessive and long-term causes of stress.

Our guide to Managing Stress in the Workplace provides line managers with information on workplace stress and highlights:

- What stress is
- The causes of stress
- How to identify individual and organisational stress
- How to tackle the main causes of stress
- The responsibilities of employees
- The benefits of tackling stress
- The associated health and safety obligations

This guide is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date and in line with best practice.

In addition to this guide, we work hard to maintain the following:

- A workplace environment that demonstrates to employees that we genuinely care about well being, and that we acknowledge that personal and professional lives are not artificially separated.
- Effective formal and informal communication systems, to ensure that all managers, supervisors and staff have a clear understanding of workplace issues and processes.
- Convenient meal and break facilities and a place where employees can go during their breaks to sit quietly, relax and unwind.
- Full and up-to-date job descriptions so everyone knows who is responsible for specific workplace activities.
- Monitoring and review of staffing levels to ensure adequate resources are in place.
- Regular and appropriate training.
- Awareness and training on our grievance procedure to ensure that staff have a formal communication channel available to them to help release build up of resentment or frustration that may arise in the workplace.
- An up to date resource plan to ensure that work levels do not become excessive and that we have enough staff to cope with the demands.

## **Health and Safety Committee**

We have a dedicated health and safety committee made up of staff members from all departments and levels across the company. The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss any health and safety issues that may arise in order to maximise employee well being and ensure that legislation is adhered to.

## **Health Benefits Strategy**

Thank you for reading about our approach to Health and Safety. We would welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to [estannard@axistelecom.co.uk](mailto:estannard@axistelecom.co.uk)

## **Reward and Remuneration**

### **Remuneration**

#### **Our Approach**

We work hard to reward our employees fairly and we regularly review our remuneration packages to ensure they remain competitive. Our induction process introduces new employees to the way their performance is evaluated and recognised. We use bonus schemes to encourage employees to surpass business and personal goals. We are committed to rewarding high performing employees and operate a range of performance and competency based pay schemes to all of our staff.

Axis Telecom aims to recruit, motivate and reward high calibre employees. A total remuneration package that is competitive, flexible and recognises good performance is a crucial tool in aligning performance with shareholder interest.

### **Our Initiatives**

#### **Senior Management Reward**

Our reward strategy for senior managers is based on:

- A competitive market environment for employees.
- A competency based pay scheme, designed to reward employees for excelling in the competencies considered crucial for outstanding performance, which is our aim.
- A degree of flexibility to suit individual lifestyles.

#### **Employee Remuneration**

In Q1 of 2006 our average employee salary was £12'525 per annum and we endeavour to provide staff with a competitive salary for their role, which is also linked to performance. All staff reward packages are reviewed annually based on performance over the year, helping to achieve the joint goals of the business and our staff. We recognise the importance of rewarding excellent staff performance in order to achieve the kind of business performance that we desire.

We are committed to attracting, retaining and developing the brightest and best people and therefore, we continue to monitor and review our reward and recognition systems to ensure that staff remains motivated in their roles.

## **Total Reward**

### **Our Approach**

We recognise that pay is not the only motivator, and acknowledge the importance of not only tangible but also intangible rewards within the wider context of the work experience. The total reward package we offer is extremely powerful in aligning our business strategies with employee needs in order to improve performance.

Our strategy of total reward brings together components such as learning and development with aspects of the working environment, which we provide, into the benefits package. It goes beyond standard remuneration by embracing our company culture, and is aimed at giving all employees a voice in the operation, with the company in return receiving engaged employee performance.

### **Our Initiatives**

In order to achieve a balanced reward package we offer the following benefits in addition to our financial reward package:

- Access to professional and career development.
- A challenging and varied role at work.
- Freedom and autonomy at work.
- Opportunity for personal growth.
- Recognition of achievements.
- Being able to raise matters of concern.
- Being involved in decisions that affect the way work is done.
- Time in lieu.
- Home working where appropriate and necessary.
- An ergonomic working environment.
- Convenient rest and recreational facilities.
- A safe and health working environment

The aim of our total reward package is to encourage more positive employee commitment. We believe this combination of financial and non-financial benefits contributes to the easier recruitment of better quality staff, reduced wastage from staff turnover, better business performance, and enhanced organisational reputation as an employer of choice.

Thank you for reading about our approach to Reward. We would welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to [estannard@axistelecom.co.uk](mailto:estannard@axistelecom.co.uk)

## **Workplace Diversity**

### **Our Approach**

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all irrespective of:

- Gender, marital or family status.
- Religious belief or political opinion.
- Disability.
- Race or ethnic origin.
- Nationality.
- Sexual orientation.
- Age.

We are opposed to all unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees and job applicants will be treated fairly and selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy helps all employees to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workplace are fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

We are committed to:

- Preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation.
- Promoting equal opportunities for men and women.
- Promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Promoting equal opportunities for ethnic minorities.
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment will be tolerated.
- Fulfilling all legal obligations under the relevant legislation and associated Codes of Practice.
- Taking any necessary positive and affirmative action, including setting goals and timetables.

## Our Initiatives

Everyone within our organisation has responsibilities for diversity and equality in the workplace and we expect all our employees to abide by our equal opportunities policy and help create the equality environment, which is our objective.

In order to implement our policy and put our approach into practice, we ensure that:

- Our approach is communicated to all employees through induction training, management training, team briefings, employee handbooks and made known to job applicants.
- Managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities through appropriate and regular training.
- An equal opportunities programme will be developed and will include a range of initiatives, indicating where appropriate affirmative/positive action, with targets and timetables.
- Appropriate training and guidance will be provided, including training on induction and management courses. In particular those involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques.
- Adequate resources are made available to fulfil the aims of our policy.

## Monitoring and Review

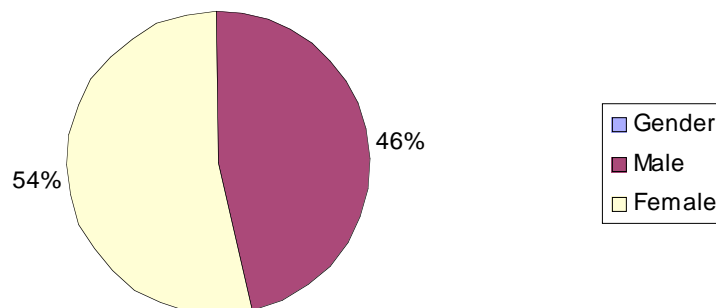
The provision of equality of opportunity between women and men, irrespective of ethnic background or disability, is monitored through the collection and analysis of statistical data on the community background, ethnic background, sex, marital status, family status, status as a disabled person, and age of all employees and job applicants.

A recent analysis carried out on our current diversity statistics reveals the following findings:

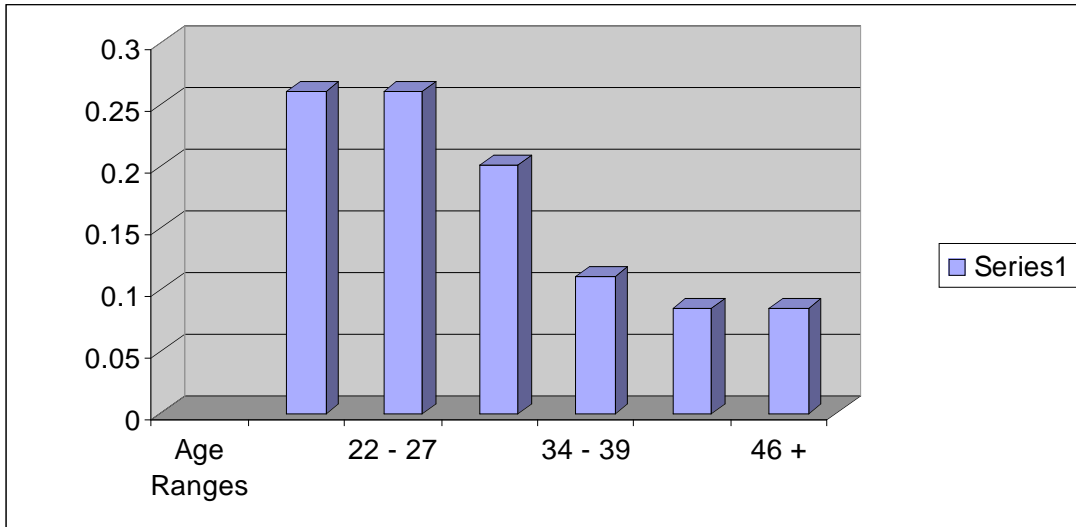
- 66% of our staff are currently employed on permanent contracts and the remainder are employed on a temporary – permanent basis.

The following graph shows the percentage gender split of our workforce.

**Gender Statistics**



The following graph shows the percentage age split of our workforce



- 3% of our staff are from an ethnic minority background

Although we do not currently have any staff members with a disability, we are fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and our office is fully equipped to allow people with disabilities to work easily. There are ramps at the front of the building to allow easy access; we are situated on the ground floor, so steps do not provide an obstacle for wheel chair access; we have a disabled toilet facility; and we work hard to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures do not disadvantage people with a disability through a regular review system.

### Work-Life Balance

The balance between work and personal life is an important aspect of our work on diversity and equality. We aim to think creatively about new ways of working to improve employee retention, productivity, motivation and morale, as well as increasing diversity and talent. In line with our strategy of becoming an employer of choice and valuing diversity, we try to ensure that work-life balance is reflected as fully as possible in all our policies.

We take any requests for flexible working seriously and try to support these wherever possible, whilst considering the needs of the business.

Our individual development plans and annual appraisals allow us to review work-life balance on a regular basis, to plan ahead for busy periods and make adjustments before problems arise.

We offer an 'open door' approach to problems and have established good guidelines so that business and personal needs can be met.

In addition to the statutory minimum leave requirements relating to holiday leave, parental leave, time off for dependents, maternity and paternity leave, we offer enhanced holiday entitlement for all staff, a time in lieu system, paid training days and home-working where appropriate.

Thank you for reading about our approach to Workplace Diversity. We would welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to [estannard@axistelecom.co.uk](mailto:estannard@axistelecom.co.uk)

## **The Environment**

In the past five years that we have been operating we have aimed to meet our environmental obligations.

At Axis Telecom we advise our customers on how to make the best informed decision about the way they use our products and services.

This section is to demonstrate what impact we have on the environment and how we overcome these issues.

## **Our Approach**

At Axis Telecom we recognise the direct responsibilities in relation to the way we conduct our business and how it may affect the environment.

With the environment we aim to meet our environmental responsibilities by:

- Having a dedicated environmental team to deal with the impacts we have on the environment.
- Using our resources efficiently and trying to implement as many environmentally friendly procedures as possible.
- Working with our customers so they use our products and services in the most environmentally responsible manner.

## **Implementing our Policy**

At Axis Telecom we are fully aware of our impacts that we have on the environment. Our aim is to find out more efficient ways to conduct our business.

We ensure that all our employees are aware of our environmental policy and that they understand the role that they play in helping to reduce the environmental impact of our operations and how they can encourage our customers to do the same.

Telecommunications has a relatively low environmental impact. However we do have a dedicated environmental team who are set up to monitor our environmental impact as part of the health and safety team. These environmental meetings are held on quarterly basis whereby Axis Telecom's employees can suggest improvements to the way we conduct our business.

The majority of Axis Telecom's customers receive their bill through the post. However we do provide e-billing as a different format. Our customer service team highlight the benefits of e-billing to our customers, the benefits they receive are a full break down of their call charges and management reports, the decision to transfer to this service is the customer's choice.

We have recently introduced online billing. This allows our customer to view and pay for their bills online. This enables the customer to pay for their bills at their own convenience. This is another step to provide our customers with a paperless environment.

We provide all of our employees with online manuals to reduce paper wastage in the office.

To reduce any paper wastage we recycle the paper as much as possible such as saving scrap paper and making them into note pads and we place all unwanted paper in the recycle

bin. We constantly encourage staff to recycle any paper that they have used. We strive to operate in a paperless working environment.

Instead of sending paper contracts out to the customers who want to sign up to our services we use telephone verbal contracts. Telephone verbal contracts are friendly to the environment since there is no paper wastage. They are simply recorded over the telephone and then stored on to our secure server.

At the end of each working day every member of staff switches their PC's and any other electrical equipment off fully to be more energy efficient.

The lights throughout the office are on a timer so once everyone has left for the day the lights turn off automatically.

With our existing customer base our telephone and broadband services also encourage people to communicate with one another through these formats rather than post.

With our broadband services this allows our customers to have access to services such as IPTV. IPTV enables the customer to watch TV on their PC, therefore reduces the need to have a TV in their house which could result in the customer being more energy efficient.

Axis Telecom's head office is situated in Hull City Centre which is located near the train and bus station. This enables our employees to make the decision on whether to use public transport.

## **Our Initiatives**

### **Future Business Initiatives**

At Axis Telecom we will be launching VOIP, which enables our customer to make telephone calls over their internet. This system is environmentally friendly since by sending telephone calls over the internet it means we do not have to dig up streets or erect telephone cables for the customer to have access to a telephone line.

Another future initiative is to introduce different types of recycle bins for different pieces of waste so we can further help the environment.

### **Encouraging Others**

As a service provider it is our responsibility to encourage our customers to be more environmentally responsible through the use of our products and services.

We promote this by providing information to our customers about our environmentally friendly services. This is done over the telephone by our customer service advisors and through our marketing and sales literature.

### **Employees**

At Axis Telecom our employees play a vital role to reduce the effects we have on the environment. We expect our employees to consider their actions and work in ways that reduce impact on the environment, this also involves encouraging our customers to use our products and services in a more environmentally sensitive way.

As well as holding dedicated environmental meetings we also encourage staff to come up with environmental ideas through our involvement scheme. Our involvement scheme gives our employees the opportunity to suggest new ideas on how we can improve our business practices for the environment.

If an idea is selected, this work is then sponsored by the employee's manager. If the company implements the idea the member of staff will be rewarded with the proportion of the level of cost reduction/efficiency achieved.

## The Community

At Axis Telecom we recognise the impact we can have on society. Therefore this section explains how we are committed to helping the community.

### Our Approach

We recognise the effect Axis Telecom has on society and we seek to address these issues. This is why we play an active role in the community that we work in and provide our products and services to.

Our approach to community involvement involves:

- We aim to choose and create a healthy relationship with community organisations and charities in the local area.
- We evaluate the effects our products and services have on the community.
- We provide training throughout our employee's position within the company.
- We support our employees in fundraising events.
- We choose suppliers in the local area to help boost the local economy.

### Implementing our Policy

At Axis Telecom we have clear guidelines on deciding on how and who we support in the community. **(Add guidelines)**

### Working in the Community

David Meyers the Managing Director of Axis Telecom has been actively involved with the local community. With his wealth of knowledge of setting up his own business, he has passed on his entrepreneur experiences on to others. He has done this by:

- Providing graduates with advice on how to set up their own business.
- He has also been a guest speaker at the University of Hull where he shared his experiences of entrepreneurship.
- He has also visited local schools in the Hull area to judge competitions.

Our aim is to offer the community a cost saving solution to all their services. We have heavily marketed to the communities to make them aware that there are alternative service providers and that they do not have to be over charged by the monopolies.

We have supported world telecom's day by allowing all of our customers to make free calls to the USA.

To help local businesses and the economy we choose the majority of our suppliers from the local area. An advantage of this is that it becomes easier to liaise with them and build a good working relationship with them since they are on our doorstep.

As a local business it is important to support the community in which we live and work. For this reason we decided to support a local girl's football team.

### **Services**

Our aim is to go that extra mile to help our customers. Therefore it is vital to provide them with value added quality products and services.

At times our customers may receive nuisance calls. As a result we provide a nuisance call service that bars any unwanted callers. Our customers can also register for the Telephone Preference Service to prevent them from receiving unwanted sales calls.

Our code of practice guides our customers on how to use our services. This also covers areas such as our recruitment process and our sales and marketing activity. Please see the market place to read more on this subject.

We provide our vulnerable customers with various services to help them understand their bill more clearly. Please see the market place section to read more.

We have a dedicated team who provide our customers with annual account reviews to help find them a cost saving solution on their services.

At Axis Telecom we are aligned with a telecoms ombudsman to assist with customers who may have any queries or complaints on our procedure or products and services that we provide and cannot resolve ourselves.

### **Employees**

We encourage and support employees who take part in fundraising events. This includes fundraising events in the office and collections being donated to the particular charity. Our members of staff have been involved with charities such as Children in Need and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

### **Our Initiatives**

One of our main priorities is to develop a skilled work force. We employ local people and help to create a skilled workforce in the local area. We achieve this by training our employees from scratch since most of the people employed at Axis Telecom had no or little experience in the telecoms industry. The majority of the training is conducted in-house which involves all different avenues of the telecom's industry. We constantly hold refresher courses to keep our employees informed and updated on any industry changes. However we do have an out sourced training company that trains our employees in customer service, supervisory and management roles.

With our continuous success we intend to expand further and employ even more people as the business grows. This will include employing people outside the local area to fill certain regional positions throughout the country.

At present Axis Telecom has not chosen a particular local charity to support. As a result we have narrowed this down to five charities and we will ask Axis Telecom's employees to choose one of these. The one with the most votes will be the one that we will sponsor. Nonetheless if any of our employees has any other suggestions we will take this into consideration.

## **Business Principles**

Axis Telecom's mission is to provide value for money on essential services to small businesses and consumers nationwide.

Our business has evolved substantially over the last 5 years in pursuit of this vision. Our continued success depends on the establishment of positive relationships with not only our customers, employees, and investors, but also our business partners, suppliers, and the wider communities in which we work. At the core of these relationships is our commitment to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity.

Our business principles set out our commitment to operate responsibly wherever we work and to engage with our stakeholders to manage our social, ethical and environmental impacts in the different markets that we operate.

Central to these principles is our obligations to work within the law and regulations of each jurisdiction in which we operate and to standards recognised as best business practice. These business principles have the full support of our senior management team and as a company we are committed to managing and upholding these principles as an integral part of our business process and to measuring our performance in respect of its implementation.

Axis Telecom expects the highest levels of ethical conduct from all employees. Our business principles will not provide the answer to every eventuality. Rather they establish a framework to guide employees' behaviour and decision-making in line with the values of the organisation.

We want to be proud of what Axis Telecom achieves wherever we operate. We believe our business principles will enable us to embed and demonstrate our commitment to sustainability and help us to discharge our obligations as a responsible corporate citizen.

## **Our Business Principles**

In order to ensure that we fully integrate responsible business practice into the way we operate our business we believe it is necessary to have some basic building blocks.

At the heart of our approach to corporate responsibility is a clear articulation of our vision and values. Our values are supported by our business principles, which express how we seek to operate responsibly to create value for our investors and deliver the kind of service our customers, suppliers, business partners and colleagues expect.

## **Vision**

We are passionate about our customers; we provide outstanding customer service and deliver on our promises. If we do not deliver first time our next aim is to recover and put this right immediately. We value our customers and champion their needs in markets where consumers are confused or badly served. We aim to provide everyday services at competitive prices; we fight against the big boys to bring quality and service at the right price. We value loyalty and develop long-term relationships with our customers; we achieve this by getting closer and understanding your needs. We believe in simplicity, having one point of contact for all of your essential services, making life easier.

## **Mission**

Our mission is straightforward. 'To provide value for money on essential services to small businesses and consumers nationwide'

## **Values**

**Outstanding Customer Service** – We are professional, friendly and understanding to our customers needs always seeking to improve and exceed our customer expectations.

**Innovation** - We deliver a quality service by empowering our employees and we monitor customer feedback to continually improve the customer's experience through innovation.

**Develop** – We invest in our people and quality systems to produce continuous improvements in all that we do.

**Opportunity** – We look to seize opportunities where we can offer something better, fresher and more valuable.

**Flexibility** – We are proactive to market change and actively seek ways to improve and refresh the business.

**Value For Money** – We provide our customers with simple, honest and clear pricing. We are competitive and aim to continuously reduce costs because of our bulk buying power.

## **Business Principles**

### **Individual Conduct**

Axis Telecom expects the highest levels of ethical conduct from all employees. We insist on honesty, integrity and fairness in all aspects of our business and expect the same in our relationships with all those with whom we do business. The direct or indirect offer, payment, soliciting or acceptance of bribes in any form is unacceptable. Employees must avoid conflicts of interest between their private activities and their part in the conduct of company business. Employees must also declare to the company potential conflicts of interest.

All employees should take appropriate steps to safeguard company assets. Complete and accurate records must be made of all transactions made by or on behalf of Axis Telecom and all its customers. We do not make gifts or donations to political parties.

### **Respect**

We value our people and are committed to creating a culture of mutual trust and respect. We will recruit and employ people on the basis of the qualifications and abilities needed to do the job, while promoting diversity and development throughout our business. Any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying will not be tolerated.

Individual career development will be encouraged to enable each employee to reach their full potential through progressive policies and comprehensive training programmes.

We will work with our employees to ensure fair consultation and representation in decision-making.

## **Corporate Conduct**

We recognise the many benefits of a competitive market place. However, competitive markets can only flourish within an ethical framework, and no employee should unfairly denigrate a competitor, or use unethical means to obtain any commercial or financial advantage for Axis Telecom.

We are committed to working within the laws and regulations of all the markets that we operate, and in the absence of such laws, we will adopt recognised standards of best practice.

## **Openness**

Open and transparent communications with our investors, employees, customers, local communities and societies at large are important to us, while respecting commercial confidences and the privacy of our employees and customers.

Axis Telecom will also provide meaningful and timely communications to stakeholders of our social, ethical and environmental performance in respect of these principles through the annual reporting process and online progress reports.

## **Investor Value**

We aim to conduct our operations in accordance with accepted principles of good corporate governance and also to provide an acceptable return for our investors. We believe that properly competitive markets provide the best environment for achieving this ambition.

## **Health, Safety and The Environment**

We are committed to the health and safety of our people, and to the communities within which people operate. We aim to provide all our employees with conditions of work that are not only healthy and safe, but also facilitate and promote high quality output.

We are committed to making environmental improvements by understanding and managing the impact of our operations and the manner in which we supply our products and services.

Our aim is to continuously improve health, safety and environmental performance.

## **Community Investment**

Wherever we operate, we take our responsibilities to the community seriously. We recognise that good relations with local communities are fundamental to our sustained success. The criteria for our investment decisions are based on issues relevant to our business activities, values, and where possible, encourages the involvement of our employees.

We are committed to promoting education, skills development and employability in the communities we serve.

## **Applying Our Business Principles**

### **Communication and Compliance**

We will treat any breach of these principles with utmost seriousness and will support employees, suppliers and business partners where compliance with these principles jeopardises the achievement of business targets.

We aim to ensure that all our employees are familiar with these principles and apply them consistently throughout our business activities. This will be done using existing internal communication channels supported by practical guidance and training.

If an employee has concerns about malpractice or non-conformance with these principles, we provide appropriate means and safeguards for disclosure, which are communicated to our employees.

### **Ensuring Openness and Transparency**

Open and transparent communications with our investors, employees, customers, local communities and society at large are important to us, while respecting commercial confidences and the privacy of our employees and customers.

Axis Telecom will also provide meaningful and timely communications to stakeholders of our social, ethical and environmental performance in respect of these principles through the annual reporting process and online progress reports.

### **Continual Improvement and Assurance**

Axis Telecom is committed to verifiable and systematic monitoring, reporting and reviewing of our performance in accordance with these principles.

We are committed to continual improvement and are implementing an appropriate corporate responsibility strategy – including indicators, target setting, stakeholder engagement and a verifiable assurance programme.

### **Comprehensiveness**

A statement of business principles cannot cover every eventuality, nor should it. Business life is increasingly about employees having the freedom to take decisions, within a clear framework consistent with the principles and values of the company.

It is inevitable there will be occasions where individuals are confronted by situations not covered by policy, precedent or procedure.

On these occasions, the following questions should be considered when the matter is unclear:

- Are my intended actions legal?
- Am I being fair and honest?
- Will my action stand the test of time?
- How will I feel about it afterwards?
- How will it look on the front page of my newspaper?
- Could I justify it to my family?

These questions should be triggered by any one of the following signals:

- “No one will ever know”
- “Everyone does it”
- “We can hide it”
- “We didn’t have this conversation”
- “It doesn’t matter how it gets done, as long as it gets done”

Thank you for reading our Business Principles. We would welcome your feedback. Please send any comments to [estannard@axistelecom.co.uk](mailto:estannard@axistelecom.co.uk)