

The Rebtel Story

Rebtel Networks AB was set up in 2006 by serial entrepreneurs Hjalmar Winbladh and Jonas Lindroth. Their aim from the start has been to create a genuinely good, honest, and trustworthy global voice services company that saves its customers money.

Rebtel is a company inspired by a genuine desire to challenge the network operators and their insistence on exorbitant international calling rates. Hjalmar estimates that in the last ten years he has spent as much on international call charges as he did on buying his house!

Rebtel offers its users the chance to make incredibly low cost (or even free) mobile-to-mobile or mobile-to-landline international calls.

The Hjalmar story

Hjalmar Winbladh is founder and CEO of Rebtel (www.rebtel.com). He describes himself as a “serial entrepreneur” with a thirst for setting up companies based on disruptive technologies. Prior to Rebtel, Hjalmar was a strategy consultant and entrepreneur-in-residence at Investor AB, providing counsel for investments in the mobile/fixed convergence arena.

Before that he co-founded and spent seven years as President and Chief Executive Officer of mobile technology innovator Sendit AB, successfully taking the firm public before it was acquired by Microsoft for \$150m USD.

Hjalmar headed up Microsoft's internet efforts until 2001, leaving to pursue his life's ambition - sailing the Pacific with his wife and kids for almost 3 years. It is rumoured that his mobile phone bill during his time at sea was another motivating factor in his desire to challenge the status quo.

The Product

Most succinctly described as ‘Skype for Mobile’, Rebtel stands apart from the cluttered VOIP market by being the only service that can be activated entirely from the mobile phone. It requires no downloads, works on any handset and any network and doesn't require the call to be initiated from a PC (unlike its competitors Jajah, Fring, Skype, Truphone, Jangl, and VOIPbusters).

The company's services allow registered users to create local phone numbers for themselves and their friends abroad. For example, a person in San Francisco gets a San Francisco phone number to call their friend in London, and the friend in London gets a London phone number to call the person in San Francisco. By connecting the local calls over the Internet using VoIP technology, Rebtel lets consumers bypass the excessive international fees charged by mobile carriers.

Using local numbers means that Rebtel can slash the prices of international calling. The only charges that Rebtel passes on to its customers are the termination charge issued by the network operator for the final part of the calls journey. This is as low as 1p/min to US, China etc. (See our Rates page for more details). This is known as a **Direct Call**.

As if this wasn't enough, Rebtel have also created **Smart Calls** - a way of totally avoiding any costs at all. In a Smart Call, the person making a call asks the receiving person to hang up and call back the local number that has appeared on their screen. The initiator of the call stays on the line and is then joined by the person calling them back. These calls are totally free.

The Rebtel Timeline

- May 2006 – Rebtel launched in Stockholm by H Windbladh and J Lindroth
- June 2007 – Rebtel launches unlimited International Calling for \$1 a week
- September 2006 – Rebtel announces \$20 million VC backing from Index and Balderton Capital (former Benchmark Capital)
- March 2007 – Rebtel receives Red Herring 100 Europe Award
- May 2007 – Rebtel launches WAP site
- June 2007 – Rebtel launches free 10 minute trial call
- June 2007- Rebtel featured on Martin Lewis' moneysavingexpert.com
- August 2007-Rebtel launches the Let's talk application on Facebook

The future

Local number calling is the first generation Rebtel product. Rebtel will continue to bring disruptive technologies to the mobile world – a landscape which in five years' time will be unrecognisable from the one we know today.