

MasterCard Announces Alliance To Deliver Reload Service For Prepaid Cards in Europe

London, UK, Thursday 8 May 2008 - MasterCard has announced an alliance with Payzone plc to deliver a point-of-sale reload service for MasterCard® and Maestro® prepaid cards in Europe. The service, branded *MasterCard® rePower™*, will enable cardholders to reload their prepaid cards with cash at participating merchants. The first prepaid programmes to benefit from *MasterCard rePower* will be issued in the UK before spring 2009 by Newcastle Building Society, in association with Altair Financial Services International Plc.

The *MasterCard rePower* service will not only see cardholders using conventional 'swipe' technology for reloading their prepaid cards, but will also see them benefit from using modern PIN-based technology. Chip & PIN reloading will give cardholders a consistent usage experience for prepaid cards at the point-of-sale, and will provide issuers and retailers with a means of authenticating cardholders for loading prepaid value to payment cards and other payment devices. Chip & PIN reloading also embraces the migration towards EMV across Europe and the emergence of prepaid card programmes that can load and activate money held on the Chip.

Commenting on the announcement, Paul Bartholomew-Keen, Business Leader, Prepaid Europe at MasterCard, said:

"*MasterCard rePower* is a great leap forward for our prepaid cardholders and we're delighted to be delivering this with industry-leading partners. Although people can reload their prepaid cards at the point-of-sale today, the separate arrangements with the 'top-up' networks often means that cardholders receive a multitude of service experiences, and a wide range of timescales for when their money is available. With *MasterCard rePower*, cardholders will benefit from a streamlined service experience and be able to spend the money on their prepaid card as soon as it's been loaded."

Before a cardholder uses *MasterCard rePower*, the merchant will let them know whether a reload fee applies and, if so, the amount payable. This will provide cardholders with an informed choice as to how and where they reload their prepaid cards. When a *MasterCard rePower* transaction is completed, the cardholder will receive a receipt from the merchant to confirm how much money has been loaded - with the fee amount shown if applicable.

Bartholomew-Keen added:

“With a flexible pricing mechanism in place, market forces will naturally drive competition between merchants who offer the *MasterCard rePower* service and cardholders will see the benefits of this over time.”

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MasterCard Notes To Editors

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About Prepaid:

Prepaid card market expansion across the world is being driven by a variety of prepaid service providers and issuing banks, which recognise the customer acquisition and retention opportunities that prepaid card programmes can bring. In Europe, MasterCard works in partnership with these businesses to help them maximise the revenue potential in this regional market – one of the most innovative and creative marketplaces in the world. The European region is also a hotbed for prepaid card development, with customised programmes offering specific features and benefits proving a necessity to meet a diverse range of customer needs. MasterCard is able to present one of the industry’s most exciting prepaid programme portfolios to help you succeed in harnessing this potential - with independent research showing that by 2010, people across Europe will collectively have more than 360 million prepaid payment cards in their pockets at any one time¹. For more information, go to <http://www.mastercard.co.uk/prepaid>.

About MasterCard Europe

MasterCard Europe is the entity responsible for managing MasterCard Worldwide’s business in Europe, for Europe. With headquarters in Waterloo, Belgium, MasterCard Europe works with 51 European countries organized administratively into three customer areas, incorporating the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), mature markets and the developing markets of Europe, stretching as far afield as the eastern border of Russia. Through its network of local offices, MasterCard Europe can understand and meet the diverse needs of customers in the very different types of markets throughout Europe, enabling people to do business in their own way in their own language.

Through MasterCard Worldwide, MasterCard Europe offers its European customers and consumers access to leading payment services throughout the world. MasterCard Worldwide advances global commerce by providing a critical economic link among financial institutions, businesses, cardholders and merchants worldwide. As a franchisor, processor and advisor, MasterCard develops and markets payment solutions, processes over 18 billion transactions each year, and provides industry-leading analysis and consulting services to financial institution customers and merchants. Through its family of brands, including MasterCard®, Maestro® and Cirrus®, MasterCard serves consumers and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. For more information, go to <http://www.mastercard.com>.

About Payzone:

Payzone is the new company formed from the merger of alphyra Holdings Limited with Cardpoint plc. Payzone is one of the leading consumer payments and cash distribution networks in Europe. Listed on the AIM market of London Stock Exchange and headquartered in Dublin, it has operations in 21 countries across Europe, processing over 630 million transactions per year on behalf of its clients. These transactions have a yearly value of over €13 billion Euro and are handled electronically through the Payzone network of over 240,000 points of

¹ Source: PSEL Research, May 2006

service (terminals, vending units and EPOS tills) at more than 170,000 retail locations across Europe. Payzone also operates approximately 6,000 ATM cash dispensers in the UK and Germany.

The Company offers a wide range of services including pre-paid mobile phone top-ups, energy pre-payments, bill payments, pre-paid vouchers, local and housing authority payments, pre-paid MasterCard and Visa payment cards, payment vouchers for on-line shopping, gift card and loyalty programmes, transport ticketing, lottery games, parking and electronic road tolling, debit and credit card acceptance, contactless payment solutions and world-wide money transfer services. For further information visit www.payzoneplc.com.

About Newcastle Building Society:

Newcastle Building Society is the biggest building society based in the North East and one of the strongest mutual building societies in the country. With assets under management of over £4.8bn we are certainly large enough to cope but small enough to care deeply about the needs of our members. We are committed to providing a range of innovative and attractive investment products and that is why we are offering this Fixed Rate Bond.

The Newcastle Building Society is committed to remaining mutual and by doing so we feel we are better placed to continue to provide our investors with the quality of service expected from one of the country's strongest building societies. The Society is a MasterCard® Principal Member, with the most MasterCard® approved prepaid programmes in the UK. Newcastle Building Society have a SEPA licence and have live programmes in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Italy.

About Altair Financial Services International Plc:

Altair Financial Services International Plc (Altair) is a global transaction processing company, issuing and acquiring processor, internet payment gateway, mobile payments and stored value processor. Altair was incorporated in 2005 as a global provider of bespoke white labelled Prepaid Card programs with enhanced functionality. Altair acquired established transaction processing company, Symmetrex, Inc. in November 2006. Altair is headquartered in London with banking and processing relationships in UK, USA, Middle East and Africa, Asia Pacific and throughout the Latin America and Caribbean regions.

Altair solutions are designed to be flexible enough to provide companies with almost any type of prepaid card functionality, including open and closed loop programs, and created for corporate, retail/consumer and government use. Through its relationship with MasterCard®, all Altair cards issued in Europe are based on Chip & PIN technology and are EMV standards compliant. Altair is a certified issuer and transaction processor of contactless (MasterCard® *PayPass*™) prepaid cards in the United Kingdom. For more information, visit www.altair-financial.com or call +44(0) 20 7659 1140.