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## 'Emporia Life' Phone

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### **Introduction**

As we get older and our eyesight and hearing deteriorates, it can be harder to use technologies such as mobile phones. The screens are often hard to read, there are too many complicated functions, the buttons are too small and it's not always easy to hear the phone ringing. An Austrian-based manufacturer (Emporia) has designed the 'Emporia Life' phone specifically with older people, and the above difficulties, in mind.

### **Background**

Emporia was founded in Linz, Austria in 1991. It develops, produces, markets and retails smart electronics and has a full telephony range, including mobile phones, telecommunications products and a complete range of comfort accessories for mobiles.

The company started life as a radio workshop set up by Dr Albert Fellner who has upheld the principal of easy communication in combination with high technology. Emporia has formed a habit of identifying niches in the market. It was formed out of a group of domestic Austrian enterprises specialising in easy to use walkie-talkies and landline phone components.

In order to develop the 'Emporia Life' phone the company conducted their own research, as well as focusing on existing surveys of the older Austrian and German populations. They did this to ascertain the features, which are liked, and also those disliked, in a mobile phone. From Emporia's own surveys they established the features used by the over 50's. It became evident that this age group tended to use their phones purely for making calls and storing telephone numbers, despite the plethora of other features available to them. This was in contrast to other age groups who tended to use their phones for text messaging and music. This evidence suggested the need for functionality over features for the over 50's

market. Another thing that came out of the research was that the target market, don't use their phone as a fashion accessory or web browser, but as a functional tool to provide safety and security whilst out and about.

### **The Product**

Emporia Life is a no nonsense phone with back to basics design. The features include a large screen and display, oversized and easy to use buttons and a super loud speaker and ringing volume. Its orange backlight is helpful for people with sight problems, and the phone has added features for those with hearing difficulties, as it is compatible with digital hearing aids.

One of the most important features of the phone is the unique emergency button on the back of the handset. This can be programmed to call up to 5 numbers automatically in the case of an emergency. This may be a relative, a neighbour, a doctor, or simply anyone the owner trusts to be of help in an emergency. It can also be programmed to send off a pre-written text to another mobile phone asking for assistance.

Further features include a facility to make number storage easier. There is an option to allow other mobile users to send a text message to the Emporia Life phone, which then automatically stores this number as a contact. This allows numbers to be stored relatively easily without requiring too much input from the older user.

The phone was introduced to Austria and Germany in 2006 and the market was expanded in 2007 when Emporia unveiled the phone in Barcelona. In July 2007 'Emporia Life' was officially launched in the UK.

The Emporia Life is now available directly from Communic8 Ltd on a Vodafone pay as you Talk package at just £169.99.