

25 years of innovation



free



A message from **Nicolas** CEO of Free

// Ever since it came onto the scene in 1999, Free has played a unique role in the telecoms market. We were born at the same time as the Internet, and from then on our mission has been clear: drive the rollout of the digital revolution throughout France by giving everyone access to the best technologies on the market.

That's why innovation has always been such an integral part of our DNA and why it's still shaping our growth and development today. Every year (or at least nearly!) since our creation we've announced new innovations.

- First, **tech innovations**. In 2002, Free invented the world's first triple-play box, and since then every new Freebox generation has given our subscribers access to the latest available technologies. State-of-the-art products – homegrown by our R&D teams – have been Free's trademark for 25 years now.

We've also always stood out for our tech leadership in network infrastructure. There are two prime examples of this: in the Fixed sector, we pioneered the rollout of fiber, deciding to invest massively in this technology as early as 2006. And in the Mobile sector, in 2024 we were the first telco in France to offer 5G SA (the final phase of the 5G network development) on a commercial basis, nationwide.

- Then there are our **sales innovations**. Right from the outset, Free has always done things differently to the other market players because of its radical sales and marketing positioning – always offering more, and always at a fair price. Our very first plan in 1999 already contained the key elements of the brand's commercial DNA: freedom, simplicity, unlimited use, and generous services included.

And because at Free we've always tried to make things straightforward and transparent for our subscribers, our teams have also innovated over the years in all areas of our sales strategy, whether it be revolutionizing Mobile retail with the Free kiosk in 2014, or launching a new way of being able to get a mobile phone thanks to Free Flex in 2021.

- And lastly, **service innovations**. In 2022, Free announced a new revolution – this time in subscriber support, which is ground-breaking territory in France. With Free Proxi we've put people and customer closeness back at the heart of the subscriber support experience. This is a super disruptive approach in today's market where all players are focusing on artificial intelligence.

What's particularly striking when reading this fast-speed version of our 25-year history is how at Free we constantly seek to explore, shake up the status quo and push the boundaries so we can create our own amazing story.

Stay tuned for the next episode!





1999 France's first free Internet access offer

Free launched its very first offer in April 1999: **Internet access free of charge**. This gave subscribers unlimited access to Internet and included the hosting of a personal website as well as an unlimited number of e-mail addresses. The offer already contained several of the elements that would come to make up the **brand's DNA**: access to the latest technologies on the market, no extra costs, unlimited use, and generous services included. And it was Free's **first-ever market disruption**, because at the time, to be able to browse the Internet, users had to pay not only a subscription of **between €12 and €22 a month**, but also the price of a local call for every minute spent online, charged by France Télécom.

2002



Freebox – the world's first triple-play box

In September 2002, Free launched the Freebox – the world's first triple-play box – which, for the very first time, meant that people could **surf the web, watch TV and make a phone call simultaneously**. The launch offer was a plan with unlimited broadband access for **€29.99 a month**. It was a **no-contract** plan and subscribers **didn't have to pay anything for their equipment or to set up their line**, unlike any of the other plans on the market at the time. As the title of our launch press release said: *"it's broadband for the price of dial-up"*! The **Free revolution** was under way.

2003

Digital TV included for everyone

In November 2003, Free was the **first provider in France** to offer people access to digital TV via their phone lines. This service was **included** in the Freebox plan, with **more than 100 TV channels** available to subscribers in over 20 municipalities. Other channels were also available as optional add-ons, either individually or in packages, giving subscribers (obviously!), **the freedom to choose**.



Fixed-line phone calls included for everyone

2004



In March 2004, Free announced that its subscribers could now **make phone calls from their Freebox, at no extra cost**, to all fixed-line phones in Metropolitan France. All they had to do was plug their phone into a socket at the back of their Freebox. And the price of the no-contract plan **stayed exactly the same**, at €29.99 a month. The plan also included **a range of services at no extra cost** for subscribers, such as voice mail, call waiting, last-number redial, three-way conference calls, and unknown number blocking.

Free becomes Europe's first telco to offer ADSL2+ across its network

In October 2004, Free announced it was offering its subscribers ADSL2+ – the **first telco in Europe to do so**. This gave subscribers **broadband Internet access** at exceptionally fast speeds, **without any change in the price of their plan**. It was a move that reflected Free's commitment to quickly passing on to consumers the **tangible benefits** of technological or regulatory developments, and was a very early demonstration of its **industry leadership in fixed-line infrastructure**. In 2014, we led the way again by being the **first telco in France to offer our subscribers the new VDSL2 standard** at no extra cost.

2004

ADSL2+

2006

Free – a fiber pioneer

In September 2006, Free began its rollout of fiber to the home. Firmly convinced of the technological potential of fiber, and its ability to give us independence from the incumbent operator's copper network, we decided at a very early stage to **invest massively in the large-scale rollout of FTTH**. In 2018, we were also the first – and are still the only – telco to decide to use **10G-EPON technology**, which means that we continue to offer **some of the fastest speeds in the market** throughout the whole of France.

2010

The Freebox Revolution – ultra-fast broadband for everyone

With the Freebox Revolution, launched in December 2010, Free **brought ultra-fast broadband within everyone's reach** thanks to a hybrid ADSL/fiber box that gave subscribers the **fastest speeds available at the time** for the two technologies. As soon as they got fiber coverage, subscribers could be automatically switched to fiber. The Freebox Revolution was the **first box** to have an NAS server and a Blu-Ray DVD player, and its **no-contract plan** also included unlimited calls to all mobile phones in Metropolitan France. The iconic box designed by Starck made a **sensational entrance** into many homes in France.



2012

Free Mobile – the big bang

January 10, 2012 – Free Mobile's launch date – **will go down in the history of French telecoms**. With its two no-contract plans – at €2 and €19.99 a month – Free Mobile caused a **big bang** in the mobile telephony market whose effects are still being felt today. The first impact of the Free Mobile revolution was immediate **purchasing power gains** for people in France. The French statistics institute, INSEE, estimates that the cost of mobile plans in the country fell by 9.5% over the first nine months of 2012¹. And it was a revolution that **reshaped the market**, as 10 years on, France had the lowest mobile telecoms tariffs in Europe². According to the French telecoms regulator – ARCEP – the average monthly mobile bill for users in France fell from €27.3 in 2012 to €14.30 in 2022³.



2014

The Free kiosk – a retail revolution

In April 2014, Free presented its latest innovation, **wholly designed and developed in-house** by its R&D teams. The Freebox kiosk lets users **sign up to the Free Mobile plan they want in a matter of minutes** thanks to its interactive touch screen. And once they've signed up, the kiosk gives them a **pre-activated SIM card that they can use straight away**. Subscribers also have access to a range of other services through the kiosk, such as changing the format of their SIM card, getting a new SIM card if theirs is lost or stolen, or paying their Free phone bill. Free was the **first telco** to introduce an in-store kiosk, which has revolutionized retail sales because it's so **quick and easy to use**. The kiosks are regularly updated and are still used in all Free stores and in many local shops throughout France.

The first unlimited 4G plan

In March 2017, Free struck hard again by **including unlimited 4G data** in its €15.99 per month mobile plan⁴ for Freebox subscribers – a first for France. Calls, texts, MMS and 4G data – **everything in this plan's unlimited** for Freebox subscribers. And by being unlimited, it's true to Free's promise of freeing up everyone because there's no need to count! This was the **first time in the world** that a telco offered an unlimited 4G data plan at such an attractive price.

2017



Nouveau

4G ILLIMITEE

en France métrop.



2018

The Freebox Delta – the premium revolution

With the Freebox Delta, unveiled in December 2018, Free **took everyone by surprise** yet again. This new box invented by our R&D teams was an **ultra-premium Freebox incorporating all of the market's latest technologies**. As a result, Free became the **first telco to offer fiber with 10 G-EPON technology** in France, giving eligible subscribers access to **ultra-fast FTTH**. The Freebox Delta was also equipped with AC4400 Wi-Fi – the fastest on the market at the time – as well as the most advanced connectors and a latest-generation processor, and it had a 1 TB internal hard drive as an add-on option⁵. Its Player, with its striking design, had a huge wow factor, and with good cause, as it incorporated a **revolutionary audio system** created by Devialet that generated a pure and totally immersive sound experience. **And that's not all** – the Freebox Delta also included the Amazon Alexa voice assistant, a security pack with an alarm system, and smart-home solutions to control lighting and Somfy-brand devices.



2020

The Freebox Pop – a concentrate of powerful technologies

In July 2020, Free unveiled its latest little gem – the Freebox Pop – with a minimalist, round design and a highly compact format. Super-small but **super-powerful**, the Freebox Pop was specifically designed for fiber and came with an **ultra-fast shared download speed of up to 5 Gbps⁶**. And it's compatible with ADSL for subscribers who don't yet have fiber. The Freebox Pop offers stable and ultra-high-performance Wi-Fi, covering the whole of the home thanks to the Wi-Fi repeater included in the plan. Designed to last like all of our Freeboxes, it has a **reduced environmental footprint** due to its energy efficiency and eco-designed packaging.



The Freebox Pro – the first pure-fiber Freebox

In March 2021, Free set out to conquer the **B2B market** under the **Free Pro** brand, with the ambition of offering the best-performing technologies at an ultra-competitive price to **all businesses in France**, especially SMEs. At the same time, we launched the Freebox Pro – a new Freebox entirely designed and made for the B2B market. **This first pure-fiber Freebox** directly addresses the number one priority of businesses – top-quality, ultra-fast connectivity. The Free Pro plan includes 4G backup, an innovative double data protection system combining local storage and automatic synchronization of data in the cloud, and embedded cybersecurity solutions. Just like with Free, **it's an all-inclusive deal at a fair price.**



Free Flex – the new way to get a mobile phone

In July 2021, Free launched Free Flex, another **disruptive offer** which gives subscribers a way of getting one of the latest smartphones on the market at a fair price and in a transparent and responsible way. With Free Flex, they can spread the payment for their mobile phone over 24 months at no extra cost thanks to leasing with a purchase option⁷. The offer is totally **transparent** as the subscriber's Free Mobile plan stays at the same price, and their monthly plan payments are totally separate from the lease payments for their phone. At the end of the 24-month leasing period they can either buy their phone by exercising the purchase option, at the same price as if they'd bought it up-front, or return their phone. And if they're not sure what to choose, their leasing agreement is just automatically extended on a monthly basis. Free Flex is also a **responsible offer** as it **doesn't encourage subscribers to change their phone before they need to** because the price of their plan stays the same whether they get a phone or not.



2022 Free Proxi – the subscriber support revolution

In November 2022, Free announced another revolution – this time in the ground-breaking territory of **subscriber support**. With Free Proxi we've put **customer closeness** back at the heart of the subscriber support experience. Throughout France, **small local teams** made up of 8 to 10 specialists are on hand for Freebox subscribers, answering any questions they may have and providing technical support. Thanks to their **local presence**, the Free Proxi teams have detailed knowledge of the infrastructure in their region. They can easily troubleshoot any incidents, and **even go directly to the subscriber's home** to restore service or replace a device if needed. This means that subscriber issues can be handled **from A to Z by the same team.**

The Freebox Ultra – there's nothing quite like it

In January 2024, Free launched the Freebox Ultra, **the most powerful Internet box ever created**. Our R&D teams leveraged all their innovation capabilities to achieve **incredible speeds** – up to 8 Gbps for both download and upload – and to incorporate **Wi-Fi 7 for the first time in the world**. Ultra-powerful, the Freebox Ultra is also **ultra-responsible**, incorporating for the first time features that help contain its energy consumption, including an Eco Wi-Fi setting and a Total Sleep mode. Additionally, the Freebox Ultra plan has an **unprecedented range of content included**: over 280 TV channels, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, Universal+, and, for the first time in France, Canal+ la chaîne en live. All that at an **ultra-affordable price**, and still on a **no-contract plan**.





2024

Free becomes France's first telco to offer 5G SA on a national scale

After its 2021 launch of what would become **France's largest 5G network** by number of base stations, in September 2024 Free announced that it was the country's first telco to offer 5G 3.5 GHz SA on its public network on a national scale⁸. 5G SA is the final phase of the development of the 5G network, and will enable faster speeds, lower latency and higher reliability. Its large-scale deployment will also pave the way for the **massive take-up of new 5G services and applications** in many domains, ranging from industry, health, education and entertainment through to smart cities. By making this **cutting-edge mobile communications technology** widely available – which requires significant capital expenditure and industrial performance – Free has once again demonstrated its **technology leadership**.

The Freebox Ultra Limited Edition – a collector's Freebox to celebrate our 25th anniversary

In December 2024, Free celebrated 25 years of innovation by launching the Freebox Ultra Limited Edition. Our teams thought up a **new version of the Freebox Ultra Server** – it's transparent and harks back to the iconic tech products of the nineties, such as the iMac G3 and the Game Boy Color. Its red case is fitted with **LED lights inspired by the RGB customizations** found on computers and their accessories, like the keyboard, mouse and screen. It's **red**. It's **fun**. And one day it'll undoubtedly be a **collector's item**! Like all of our Freeboxes, it was designed by our teams in France. It's a **showcase of our know-how** and our ability to create products with a **unique design**.



2024

2025



The new Freebox Pro – even more pro

In January 2025, Free Pro launched its new Freebox Pro, a **concentrate of technological innovations** for VSEs and SMES. It combines **ultra connectivity** and **data protection** with fiber offering symmetrical speeds up to 8 Gbps, Wi-Fi 7, a double data-protection system comprising local storage and cloud synchronization, and a built-in IPv4/IPv6 firewall. The new Freebox Pro also has an integrated **state-of-the-art cybersecurity solution**, called Cyber Protect Essentiel, which analyzes all of the box's data streams 24/7, and detects threats and anomalies in real time. On top of that, our new box is **environmentally responsible** as its energy consumption is 40% lower than for the previous version. And it all comes at a Free value-for-money price, and of course, still on a **no-contract** basis.

Stay tuned for the next episode...

1 Source: INSEE

2 Source: Rewheel Research Pro study, November 2021

3 Source: ARCEP, Observatoire des Marchés des Télécommunications Electroniques, May 26, 2021.

4 Mobile offers subject to terms and conditions.

5G network currently in rollout phase (700 MHz and 3.5 GHz). Available in Metropolitan France to subscribers with a compatible plan and phone, only in areas covered by the network.

See mobile.free.fr for full terms and conditions.

5 1TB internal hard drive available to purchase for €40.

6 Maximum theoretical speed of up to 5 Gbps (shared) download (up to 2.5 Gbps on 1 Ethernet port, 1 Gbps on 2 Ethernet ports and 0.5 Gbps via Wi-Fi).

7 A credit facility is an engagement and the amount due must be repaid.

Check you are able to meet the repayments before agreeing to any credit facility.

Free Flex: Lease financing offer with purchase option, available to retail subscribers on the Free Mobile Plan or Série Free Plan. Minimum leasing period 24 months.

8 See ARCEP's update on the 5G rollout in France, available on arcep.fr.

Freebox offers subject to terms and conditions and eligibility and to the subscriber having a fiber connection.

Maximum theoretical fiber speeds.

See free.fr for full terms and conditions and eligibility -

Free is registered in Paris under no. 421 938 861.

Mobile offers subject to terms and conditions. 5G network currently in rollout phase (700 MHz and 3.5 GHz).

Available in Metropolitan France to subscribers with a compatible plan and phone, only in areas covered by the network.

See mobile.free.fr for full terms and conditions and coverage -

Free Mobile is registered in Paris under no. 499 247 138.

All rights reserved Free Communications Department - Iliad Group 2025.

Design and layout: Julie Beau.

Free Proxi photo credits: Sylvain Leurent.



free

