



## Alé Mercado

<b>Established:</b>	1993
<b>Headquarters:</b>	Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny
<b>Number of employees:</b>	Self-employed
<b>Vodafone solution:</b>	Sure Signal
<b>Industry type:</b>	Illustrator and graphic designer

Award winning illustrator Alé Mercado thought country life would allow his creative juices to flow and benefit his design practice. However, nothing could have been further from the truth.

"We decided as a family to move to the country for a better quality of life. We found a wonderful old stone house dating from the 1800s in the lovely Co. Kilkenny village of Inistioge which had space for my studio. We thought we were making the right move and that the lifestyle benefits would be huge.

"As an illustrator I rely heavily on technology. I need my computer so that I can create graphics and illustrations, I need my phone to talk to clients and I need broadband so that I can send artwork quickly and cost-effectively to clients and printers.

"When we moved into our new house in Inistioge, working from home quickly became a bit of an inconvenience and made me realise how much you take technology for granted.

"My studio is in the centre of our house, surrounded by thick stone walls. My clients ring me on my mobile number because that is the number I use for business. Suddenly I had a problem. The thick stone walls meant that I didn't have a mobile phone signal in my studio. In fact, we didn't have one at all inside unless you stood very still in one corner on a dry and calm day or went outside!

"This meant that I was no longer able to talk to a client on the mobile phone and look at my computer screen at the same time. I like to operate a 'paperless' office but because of this I was having to print out everything so that I didn't need to look at the screen, or rely on memory. I couldn't make instant changes to designs and the result was that everything took longer to complete than necessary. Also, I'm sure that I was missing calls too. My clients were understanding, but I felt it made me look unprofessional.

"When I heard about Vodafone 'Sure Signal' my first reaction was to laugh. I assumed that it had been tested in laboratory conditions and wouldn't work in our house. Happily, I was wrong.

"The first thing is that the Sure Signal box was really easy to install. It only required a quick read of the installation booklet, a DSL line and 20 minutes of my time. It worked straight away and I now have a signal throughout my house even in bad weather.

"I can't emphasise enough the difference Sure Signal has made to my working life. I'm now able to upload client presentations into the cloud and talk through them with clients there and then in the comfort of my own studio where I have everything to hand. I no longer have to print everything out or have the worry of missed calls. My working day is so much easier.

"Until we got Sure Signal I felt that I was making so many compromises to live in the country. Now, I simply look out of the window and remember why we wanted to live here in the first place. The fact I've almost forgotten how bad things were before Sure Signal is a sign of how good it is."

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Alé Mercado  
Illustrator and graphic designer



Vodafone

# case study