

**Mayor's column for
The Beacon
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I've decided to take the plunge...into the world of uncertainty and questions! And I'm going to take you along with me. I've decided to switch my television, phone, and internet providers.

A little history to start with. Years ago I became very frustrated with Verizon's internet service because it was often difficult to log on and very slow when I did get online. I learned later that it was a function of too many users, and I was located at the end of the line, so to speak; so if others were using their connections, I wasn't able to log on.

I switched to Comcast and was very happy with their television and internet service. I kept my Verizon phone service.

Over the years of using Comcast, I had occasions to call their customer service office, located in Everett. I was impressed with their professionalism. They were courteous and always willing to help. They solved every problem in a timely fashion.

So this week, despite the quality product and service I have received from Comcast over the past eight years, I decided to try Verizon's new FIOS bundle package. I know just enough about the Verizon fiber delivery service to be dangerous! The ads to lure you to their new service have sucked me in. After looking at their one-year special for television, phone, and internet service, I determined I could save almost \$500 for the year by switching.

So, step one was call Verizon to order the new service. Their \$100 special included television with HD channels, faster internet speed than Comcast, and phone service better than I was currently getting from Verizon. I actually upgraded the package by \$10 a month to get even faster internet speed and more sports channels (hey—I'm a guy!). Part of the deal was a DVR free for six months and some other charges waived for a period of time.

I asked what my monthly fee would be next year after the special rates expired. The answer was a little murky! They don't have a fixed rate yet but will honor whatever special they have at that time. Hmmmm...

I set up an install date. It will take four to six hours for the installer to do all the work. A responsible adult must be home at the time...I chose my wife!

Next up was the call to Comcast to cancel my service. Should be relatively easy based on my past experience with their superior customer service staff. After working my way through the automated menu and receiving directions from "computer girl"(my name for the voice that has taken over just about every customer service phone line in America), I got a recording telling me how important my call was, that they were very busy, and I would be helped in 20 to 25 minutes!

Thank God for speaker phones! I sat back in my chair and read a magazine while I heard every 30 seconds "how important my call was." After 45 minutes, I heard a real person's voice. Or was I just nodding off? No, it was real. "How can I help you?" he said again.

After I mentioned canceling my service I detected a change in tone. I was offered a lower monthly price if cost was an issue. I assured him cost wasn't the reason. I said I was switching to Verizon. He asked why. I said I thought fiber was the wave of the future and he told me that Comcast had fiber. Now remember that I know just enough to be dangerous, so I said that I wasn't about to engage him in a discussion about whether Comcast really had fiber or not.

I was becoming irritated now. I asked him where he was located and he said in Tacoma, adding that they were local...unlike Verizon! I let it go. Then he asked what day I'd like my

service to be discontinued and I gave him the date my new Verizon service was starting and could he please cancel my Comcast service the previous day. He was aghast that I hadn't even tested the Verizon product before canceling Comcast.

I think you get the flavor of the call. Needless to say I was disappointed. My positive thoughts about Comcast customer service were fleeting.

Stay tuned for part two of this ongoing story: installation day!