

Telecommunications and Curb Appeal

Ask a few key questions to get the most out of your service provider.

By Susan Knowles

With communities of perfectly manicured landscaping, clean lines, and modern fixtures, no one enjoys having satellite dishes ruin the aesthetics of his or her property, but what other options exist? Either accept unsightly dishes throughout the property, or tell residents that they will have to watch their team's big game somewhere else this weekend. However, many other options do exist, and not just concerning satellite dish placement. There are many ways to get more out of your relationships with your telecommunications service providers.

Long gone are the days of incumbent providers dictating the rules of the game to properties. There are many choices when it comes to enabling services such as Internet, television, and telephone for your residents. With more

choices in the market comes more power for individual properties to get more benefits from their providers. Here are just a few questions you can ask to get more out your property's communication solutions.

Can you eliminate individual dishes on my property? There is a new technology solution that allows an entire neighborhood's satellite service to be consolidated to just a handful of dishes in a single location, like a high rise's rooftop or in a small, unobtrusive area on the property. A satellite-based IP technology platform can now carry satellite signal to travel from these few dishes on the property to each individual residence. Also, access to satellite service in your property is no longer limited only to residents with full access to the southern sky. Now everyone can enjoy the satellite service

without having to consult a compass first.

Installation of this solution is relatively painless and can take less than six weeks to complete. By asking this one simple question, owners and managers may be able to greatly expand the entertainment options for the entire community.

Can you increase my operational income? Many properties are starting to look beyond the standard model of one-size-fits-all solutions offered by many traditional providers. By working with a network builder and manager, multiple providers are allowed onto the network, increasing competition, and

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thereby lowering prices and increasing the quality of services overall. Better pricing and service quality cause more residents to opt into these services, increasing total revenue for owners and managers for marketing assistance. Also, network managers can work with

the providers to negotiate higher percentages of revenue shares and door fees. In addition to the added revenue, the quality of service is guaranteed, since service providers are often held to strict service level agreements.

How will this affect the value of my property? It would be difficult to imagine a potential resident being swayed by a community's brochure promising "Access to Cable," but there are ways for telecommunications companies to deliver amenities that can make homes more attractive, increasing their value, and the amount of rent residents are willing to pay. When a provider is willing to create or upgrade to fiber-optic infrastructure, telecommunications at a property transition from an attribute to an amenity. Studies show that homes with access to fiber are appraised from \$5,000 to \$10,000 higher than

homes with traditional cable access, which means the market should drive residents willingness to pay more in rent for fiber-connected residences.

Regardless of a property's current relationship with its service providers, the most important question to ask is "What are you doing for the property and its bottom line?" Property owners and managers should keep in mind that by allowing a provider access to its residents, they are essentially handing over hundreds of customers to each company. When considered in this light, it seems more than fair to expect a provider to work hard for your business.



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Fast Facts

- Consolidate an entire neighborhood's satellite service into a handful of dishes in a single location.
- Work with a network builder and manager to allow multiple providers onto one network.
- The market should drive residents' willingness to pay more in rent for fiber-connected residences.