

Customer education is one of the most important aspects of the satellite installation. It can literally be the determining factor in a customer deciding to disconnect their system. Customer education is even more critical and is one of the crucial steps that is frequently overlooked when installing a High Definition system.

High definition television is one of the most talked about products on the market today. Satellite television remains the best platform to deliver HD content to consumers. Both Echostar and DIRECTV are currently offering more HD than their wired competitors and this advantage will continue to widen as more satellite capacity comes on line in the coming months. Unfortunately there is also a lot of confusion in the market about High Definition.

Many customers do not understand that just because a show says that it is being broadcast in High Definition that they are in fact receiving a non HD signal on their television. Two of my local television stations are constantly advertising that their programming is now available in HD. While it may be true that they are broadcasting in HD the only way you could actually receive this is by having an off air antenna as neither the cable or satellite feeds are currently available in HD. So even if a customer has a HDTV monitor and reception equipment they may not be able to receive the programming in the best format. In addition some stations do not broadcast in HD all the time. As a result it is not uncommon to hear customers saying that they do not see any difference between the HD signal and the regular old TV signal that they are used to. My local weekly paper just ran an article stating that HD TV was not all it was cracked up to be.

This is where you the professional satellite technician play a crucial role. When you are setting up the customers system be sure to put the receiver on a channel that you know is continuously broadcasting a High Definition channel. A safe bet is to pick a national HD feed that you are confident is always broadcasting in the best format possible (Discovery HD and ESPNHD are both good choices). After showing the customer the HD picture switch to a non-HD channel and they will quickly see the difference. Be sure to explain to them that since not all channels are being broadcast in HD the picture may be different depending on what they are watching. Also mention that HD broadcasts are especially dynamic on live programming such as sporting events as the action will truly stand out. Be sure to review with them what stations are available in HD, some savvy techs I know go so far as to program these into the customers favorites.

It is also critical to let your customer know which stations in your local market are being broadcast in HD. If you do not know this information, go on you're the platforms web site it is readily available. This will help you to better educate the customer when you are selling and or installing the satellite service. In addition you should read local trade publications and notices from your platform provider as they will frequently inform you when new HD markets are coming on line.

Being the expert is also a great way for you to make additional money. If the local channels are being broadcast in HD but are not currently available by the platform provider it may be an opportunity to sell additional an off air antenna. In addition you should be caring extra cables so that you can properly hook up a customers system. I am continuously surprised how often a customer will buy a HDTV and not be sold the proper cables to get the best picture and sound. It only takes a few minutes to explain to the customer that they will get better performance by upgrading to the proper cable (HDMI, optical etc.) depending on their system and its location. One of my colleagues carries an assortment of good quality interconnect cables in various lengths, he will offer to sell these to the customer which saves them a trip back to the retailer. He is making additional money and at the same time ensuring a happier customer.

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