

## Comcast Triple-Play

I made the decision to move from AT&T telephone lines (3 of them) to Comcast as a way to bring some sanity to those costs. Specifically Comcast service has one or more special pricing programs over the last few years that "reduced my cable and internet bill to around \$120 monthly. On expiration of the promotion the bill would bounce up to 20-40 dollars depending on the expiring promotion. It was up to me to track them and it was a royal pain.

Now I admit I have some issues with wanting things how I want them. And I knew going in that I would have to settle for some limitations. For example, Comcast does not offer a hunting feature like AT&T where an inbound call to a busy line will simply switch (hunt in AT&T vernacular) to an open line. It works rather well and we have enjoyed that feature (AT&T doesn't charge for the feature) for many years as we are active users of telephone services. Second is the Comcast doesn't provide a 2<sup>nd</sup> number to a phone line with a distinctive ring tone which is a common feature which aids piggybacking a FAX on the phone line. Today since FAX are so yesterday I decided to simply lose my 3<sup>rd</sup> AT&T line and manually answer the very few FAX's thee are received.

So the order to move to Comcast's Triple-Play was made and it was somewhat time consuming as placing the initial order took well over an hour. It would turn out that was about the best Comcast experience I would have. Immediately upon placing the order I was locked out of my Comcast customer central so I couldn't see anything or change anything about my account. The message provided was I needed to enter a security PIN and select a security question. The only problem was no method was provided to accomplish that task. And that precipitated the 1<sup>st</sup> call for support that was going to a very long and discouraging process. It took Comcast more than 5 days and a zillion calls to correct that issue.

The installer arrived within the time window; it was an ok experience although he didn't install the voice modem because he had no training to handle structured wiring panels so I managed that aspect and performed the integration into the Panasonic PBX system. They wouldn't let me self-install because it was a 2 line install. WOW big deal since the voice modem has to RJ11 jacks for each line – not real hard! They did waive the installation fee of 40 dollars.

Ok first off no caller ID on one of the phone lines, No caller ID at all to display to DVR (theirs) equipped TV. Other than that phone service was operational.

I quickly determined that I didn't want Comcast's call waiting or voice mail. Placed call to them and requested those features be disabled. The agent said fine - end of call. At that time I had no un-heard voice mails. Later I noticed the stutter tone indicating a voice mail and funny thing is I had no way to retrieve them. Comcast had disabled my ability to retrieve voice mails but did not stop

the callers from leaving a voice mail. I called them and the agent was amazed I would find this troubling and he said there was nothing he could do. Anyway several more calls and that problem were resolved. However the stutter tone was still on one of the lines. That took three or four more calls to resolve again some amazing bizarre responses were obtained along the way to a solution. You are likely to get a different answer to the same question each time you call is my experience.

Caller ID on TV. I was able to find the right agents and got the service working on booths lines. On Monday out had stopped working on one of the lines. Call to Comcast got more garbage and misinformation from agent. I was able to find an agent that actually knew what he was doing and he got it restored ion no time and he discovered what the gone wrong initially and took care of that problem so when "Provisioning" (Comcast speak) for reset/reconfigures my options will always enable that feature. One agent had noted that my convertor was not capable of display CID on the TV despite it having worked before and it is their DVR. The agent had made up some wild story that I had a True2Way capable TV with the card – I don't.

There are many more stories sand contacts that frankly I can't remember clearer howlers here are some issues to be aware.

Agents are hot or miss – some (actually few) are quite good, most are mediocre and some are downright incompetent. If you don't; feel you are getting the right answer try again as that's was my best solution

The feature set is below that of AT&T so beware you will lose some choice, although they may not be important.

Their phone system (automated) hung up on me more than once.

An amazing detail, Since I am paraplegic I am eligible for what they call Directory Assistance Exemption which means I am entitled to free directory assistance calls. The signup was super easy, just fax them a note with a doctor's letter stating the condition, within an hour I was approved and received a call back. It was explained to me their billing system can't handle the exemption automatically and there is a special group that each day looks at all of the individual accounts that participate in the program and if they find directory assistance call they manually issue a refund. In some cases at month-end the credit won't be made until the following month. I am just flabbergasted!

My advice Comcast digital voice works ok, but if you push the limits and want what was promised look out as you may have a rough time getting things set up... I will be saving some money each month but the time spent was consuming something like 25 calls and likely about 10-15 hours on the phone along with a high degree of frustration.