

Telecommunications

How to Choose the Right Internet Provider

Classroom Course #9631932 | Online Course #9631933

Provider: 0008912

Approved for One (1) Continuing
Educational Credit Hour ELECTIVE or OPPTS

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Fiber Optics by Hotwire

Community Association Managers and Board of Directors are the unsung heroes of the community association industry. They play an essential role in making the experience great for their community. It takes a lot of hard work, good people skills to efficiently run and manage a Florida residential property.

Boards and Managers take complete ownership of the day-to-day responsibilities that come with managing a residential property in Florida. The bottom line is that residents need to trust their property and the asset is in the care of professionals. This class will show you how to navigate the waters, as well as how to deal with the many challenges!



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This class is an excerpt from my book, “Common Sense Community Management: A Guide From a Florida Condo/HOA Manager, Board Member, and Business Partner” and articles that have been published in the Florida Community Association Journal.

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Course Description

This course will provide practitioners with a detail overview on telecommunication services and how to go about choosing the right provider.

Objectives

- Review the importance of a reliable network and infrastructure
- Identify what your residents need
- Understand the basics of telecommunication ISP services and contracts
- Differentiate a vendor from a partner
- Review the proposal & decision-making process
- Contract considerations & what to keep in mind
- Highlight what you and your residents can expect post contract execution

The Technology Revolution

The internet is now considered a **utility** in the industry.

Your household may only consist of one or two people, however, it could be hosting 10-15 devices (laptops, cellphones, gaming consoles, smart TVs, gadgets, thermostats, robot vacuum cleaners, you name it!).

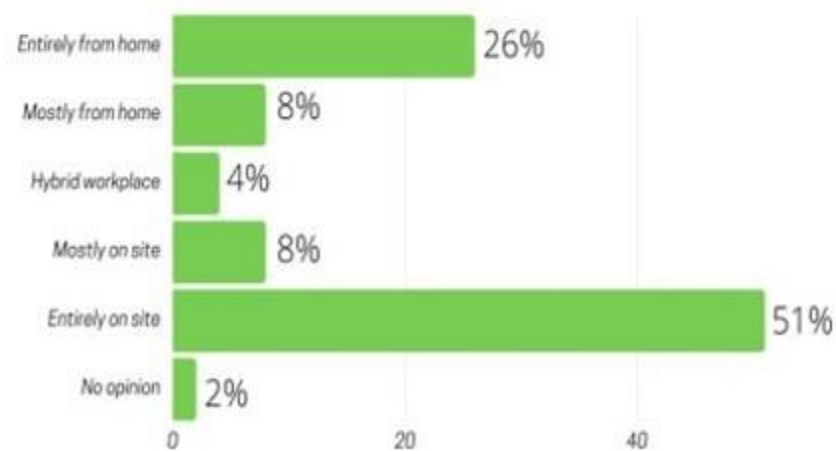
Boards and managers are getting on board with the technology revolution and the ever-growing technological demands of residents.

While the technological revolution was changing the way we lived as residents before the COVID Pandemic started, the virus forced us to utilize technology more than ever before.

With businesses offering work from home and/or flexible schedule options, many residents can now work from home.

Improved technology in your community can offer tremendous benefits in staying informed, connected, and achieving new levels of efficiency and productivity.

A Quarter Of U.S. Workers Working Entirely From Home



Faster



Fiber

Fiber Internet is the fastest widely available internet technology. It uses fiber-optic cables, which can transmit large amounts of information quickly. While fiber is fast, it isn't available in as many areas as other types of internet. Much of the limitation in its availability stems from the high cost of creating its network infrastructure.



Cable

Cable Internet uses the same types of cables that transmit cable TV services. It has broadband capability and thus can reach high speeds. It is usually available through current or former cable TV providers in their respective areas. Cable internet speeds are usually similar to DSL speeds but can be even faster in some areas.



DSL

DSL uses a connection that looks similar to a phone line, but the wiring inside is different and allows for broadband transmission. This makes DSL much faster than dial-up. Current or former telephone companies that also provide internet service often use this technology, and it is usually available throughout their service areas.



Satellite

Satellite Internet is delivered wirelessly to the receiver, but it still requires wires to transport the signal from the receiver to different locations throughout the building. Because it's wireless, it's available almost anywhere in the United States. Satellite internet has bandwidth comparable to DSL and cable but can often feel slower due to latency.

Dial-Up is the slowest connection technology because it can't support broadband and has limited bandwidth. Because of its technological limitations, it is almost obsolete.

Slower

The Need for Speed

How do you use the internet?

Different online activities use different amounts of bandwidth. For example, online gaming takes more speed than checking your email.

Internet Bandwidth vs. Speed

Internet speed and bandwidth are often used interchangeably, but they're not exactly the same thing. If the internet is a road and data are the cars, speed is how fast the cars travel and bandwidth is the number of open lanes.

So, say you have 100 data cars all going the same speed—you'll get your data faster if those cars are traveling on a five-lane highway compared to a one-lane back road.

Upload speeds tell you how fast you can send data out to the internet, while **download speeds** tell you how fast you can pull data from the internet.

Fiber optics to the home provide a dedicated connection. At peak times, no one is sharing!

INTERNET SPEEDS

1- 5 Mbps

- Checking email
- Streaming music on one device
- Searching on Google
- Social Media

10 Mbps

- Streaming video on one device
- Video calling
- Online gaming for one player

25 - 35 Mbps

- Streaming HD video on multiple devices
- Multiplayer online gaming
- Downloading large files

100 - 500 Mbps

- Streaming video in UHD on multiple screens
- Downloading files quickly
- Gaming online for multiple players

500 - 1,000+ Mbps

- Doing a lot of almost anything

Future-Proof Fiber Optics

Fiber is a single, incredibly thin but highly durable strand of glass or plastic thread that transmits data at the speed of light.

Fiber is the fastest possible way to transmit data.

Fiber Optic technology is future-proof, meaning no matter how much service needs increase in the years to come, fiber optic networks have the scalability necessary to be continuously upgraded in accordance with the highest levels of performance.



Benefits of Fiber

for your connected community

Fiber is Future-Proof

Fiber Optic technology is scalable, meaning it can grow with the ever-changing demands. One time installation, limitless upgrade capabilities.

Fiber Speed

Fiber Optic cables are capable of transmitting data at the speed of light – the fastest way to transmit data possible.

Fiber is Weather-Proof

Fiber never deteriorates and is capable of withstanding intense weather conditions. This means that fiber lines installed today will still be fully operational decades into the future.

Fiber Enhances Property Values

Home values with a fiber connection are over 3% greater. Transaction prices are over 7% higher where 1 Gig or more is available. The Fiber Broadband Association found that fiber increased the rental and property values for MDUs by 8% and 2.8%, respectively.

The Importance of a Reliable & Fast Internet Connection



Dedicated, integrated automation, fiber-optic technology, and wireless connectivity access are becoming an increasingly popular necessity within communities.

- Make sure that your internet provider owns and operates a dedicated independent fiber optic backbone in all its core markets, which connects directly to your community to provide services to.
- Confirm that the provider offers FTTH (Fiber to the Home) technology utilizing an end-to-end fiber optic infrastructure that allows them to offer Gigabit-speeds over 100 times faster than the average connection delivered in the United States today.
- By directly installing fiber into every home, ensure they guarantee full-service redundancy with no interference under normal conditions: no bottlenecks, no drop-offs in speed, and unlimited use without data caps.

What Do Your Residents Need?

Before you even start looking for a service provider, you need to know exactly what your residents need. A good place to start is by getting an idea of what they use their current services for and how they feel those services might be falling short.

Over the past few years, one of the most important factors CAMs have had to consider is internet service, which has emerged as a fourth utility. Boards and managers are getting on board with the technology revolution and the ever-growing technological demands of residents.

- How are your community association residents consuming TV, internet, and media today?
- How will they do it tomorrow?
- What is influencing your choices?
- What is the impact of the internet in your association, and how do you forecast the entertainment/media landscape for your future needs?

Management's Role in

Introducing & Facilitating Innovative Technology

- Increase Efficiency
- Improve Operations
- Reduce Liability
- Improve Communications
- Protect the Association

Homeowners, tenants, prospective buyers and renters now consider fast, reliable internet to be so crucial that according to a Verizon study, 90% of homebuyers prioritize it when searching for a home!

Telecommunications Services

A good **internet service provider (ISP)** will offer a suite of services including gigabit-speed internet, HD and 4K capable IPTV, voice, and home security & automation to a growing portfolio of high-end residential communities, businesses, local governments, schools, and healthcare customers across the United States. More than that, a company shouldn't just offer these services but should be an expert on what residents' needs are and how they've changed over the last two years.

Top Factors to Consider

When Choosing an Internet Service Provider

- Type of Connection
- Speed
- Bandwidth
- Cost & Contract
- Reliability
- Customer Support



5 Things to Keep in Mind When Looking for an Internet Service Provider

If you want to make sure your community is partnered with the right service partner, that your residents are receiving the services they need, and that you're signed into a contract that's right for your property, here are five things you should keep in mind:

Caveat emptor is a Latin phrase that is translated as "let the buyer beware." The phrase describes the concept in contract law that places the burden of [due diligence](#) on the buyer of a good or service.

1. Make sure you know what your residents need

Before you even start looking for a service provider, you need to know exactly what your residents need. A good place to start is by getting an idea of what they use their current services for and how they feel those services might be falling short. Maybe their internet connectivity is unreliable, and it's resulting in unstable Zoom calls, slow download times, or a poor streaming video experience

It could be something as simple as wanting a better customer service experience—a **good ISP places an emphasis on making sure everyone it serves receives concierge-style, white-glove customer service, but some ISP providers aren't quite as focused on building that relationship.**

5

Things to Keep in Mind When Looking for an Internet Service Provider

2. Include Experts in Your Decision-Making Process

Every community is different with unique features and considerations that will need to be accounted for as they may eventually impact the actual delivery of services.

Consulting with an expert can save you time, money, and frustration when it comes to considering options, helping you to not only determine what to look for in a service provider but also enabling you to present potential partners with the precise details of the job they're bidding to take on.

3. Properly Vet Potential Partners

It's paramount that you pick a partner that can actually meet the needs of your residents. When requesting proposals, make sure you ask service providers to prove they have the skills, capacity, and personnel necessary for delivering services to your community.

What can they show you that demonstrate an ability to serve communities like your own? What industry accolades have they recently been awarded with, if any? Do they have a list of impressive references you can reach out to and ask questions about their experience with the company? Do they have a history of adopting emerging technologies, implementing innovative solutions, and being among the first to deliver cutting-edge services?

4. Think Long-term, *Think Fiber*

As important as your community's needs are today, it's equally important to consider what your community's needs may be tomorrow. When it comes to internet and other telecommunication services, the best way to do that is through a fiber optic infrastructure.

Fiber is future-proof since it's not only incredibly durable but also scalable, meaning future upgrades can be easily made through the simple installation of new equipment. More than that, the presence of a fiber optic network can boost the present and future property value of your owners' home or units.

According to the National Apartment Association, apartment rental value can increase by up to 11 percent if gigabit-speed fiber-to-the-unit connectivity is present.

5. Don't be Afraid to Make a Switch

Your relationship with your service provider is just like any other relationship: sometimes it just isn't working out, and it's time to say goodbye and maybe meet somebody new.

If your current service provider isn't meeting your residents' needs and your contract is ending soon, it may be time to start thinking about making a switch.

5 Things to Keep in Mind When Looking for an Internet Service Provider

Community-Focused Business Model

BULK PROVIDERS

Bulk providers partner with community associations to provide customized products and services.

- ✓ **Property-Wide Partnership** Coming together in a community-wide bulk contract enables us to customize services with lightning-fast speeds and cutting-edge technology at a fraction of the cost.
- ✓ **Future-Proof Technology** Hotwire builds a dedicated all fiber network that gives you access to the latest technology as it evolves: no renegotiating, no reconstructing - just pure progress.
- ✓ **Fixed Pricing, Fastest Speeds** With a community-wide bulk contract you lock in a rate for the entirety of your contract, while your speeds remain scalable with the latest technology.
- ✓ **Concierge-Level Service** At Hotwire, we provide personalized support with a dedicated team for your property and local U.S.-based customer contact care.

OTHER PROVIDERS

Retail environment. Each resident is responsible for their own services.

- ✓ Benefits the provider not the customer
- ✓ More expensive usually as each resident must negotiate their own contract and pay higher pricing for lesser speeds.
- ✓ Less reliable with lacking redundancy. Typically, outdated technology that requires additional installation to be updated.
- ✓ Cost increases in services after promotional period ends and increases annually.
- ✓ Call centers (many internationally located) with long wait times. No direct line or dedicated team to the property to service residents.

With other providers, you're only 3% of their business.
At Hotwire Communications, our bulk properties are
100% of our residential business and our top priority.

You are 100% of our business.
100% of our focus. 100% of the time.

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by Hotwire Communications



Concierge-Level Service

When looking for an internet service provider, a true partner will provide seamless, concierge-level service to you and your community.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- Dedicated project managers
- Rigorous launch process & dedicated teams
- Ongoing account management after construction is complete

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

- Letters and email communication
- Town hall meetings
- Launch events & welcome kits
- Customized community website

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

- In-home installation and surveys
- Quality assurance
- In-home education and training
- Dedicated account manager
- Local and engaged leadership team
- Committed organizational support
- Rapid response and issue resolution

Continued Education for Your Community

A true partner will provide in-person & virtual ongoing education. These classes will provide residents with an in-depth look at their products and features.

Training on Product Features like:

- **Replay TV**
- **DVR**
- **Video on Demand**
- **Guide Customization**
- **Community Portal**
- **And more!**



Questions & Considerations

When seeking a new service provider, here are some things to consider:

Bulk Service Agreement Considerations

- Does the association currently have a bulk service agreement for internet, television, and/or phone services in place, and if so, will it expire or renew within 24 months? It takes time to evaluate your options for your residents and common areas.
- Does the agreement provide for an access or easement agreement, and if so, what are the options?
- Does the agreement offer an introductory/promotional rate for the first year and provide reasonable increases year two and after?
- How long will the agreement run?
- Does the service provider offer an SLA (Service Level Agreement) defining the service requirements?
- Does the service provider define ownership of the hardware, home-run wiring, and wiring inside a unit?

Property Tech Specifications

- How much space is available in the association's telecom rooms?
- How many different paths to the building can the fiber take?
- Is there sufficient power for the fiber-optic technology?

Cost Considerations

- Who will pay the service provider?
- Did you have your CPA review the governing documents to determine how the assessments may be apportioned across the community?
- What are the fees to lease or purchase the equipment?
- Are there any startup costs or installation fees?
- What are the fees for a technician to come out for a non-related company service call?
- Are there any incentive offers for switching providers?
- Does the service provider offer temporary suspensions for snowbirds/seasonal residents?

Provider Customer Service Considerations

- Does the service provider offer an assigned account manager to your property?
- Will the service and fiber technicians and employees of the telecommunications company be direct hires, or are they subs/1099 employees?
- Is the service provider a trusted partner for hospitality facilities, sports stadiums, and government facilities?

Provider Products and Services

- Does the service provider offer the latest and greatest WiFi based mesh network solution?
- Does the service provider offer bundling TV, internet, and phone service packages to homeowners to save money?
- What options for programming will the service provider offer (retail) outside of what the association's bulk contract will provide?
- Does the service provider offer a community channel?
- Does the service provider offer security solutions?

Internet

- Can the company provide the sustained download and upload speeds that would be contracted for residents as part of the agreement?
- Are the internet speeds symmetrical?
- Do you provide residents with a dual-band WiFi router and managed in-home WiFi that includes network security?
- Do you provide whole-home WiFi service?
- What average size unit will the WiFi cover?
- What internet speed is provided? What are the costs of higher internet speeds?
- Are internet speeds contractually guaranteed?

Television

- Provide your company's complete channel lineup and specify any provider-supplied equipment (and its cost) required to enable viewing.
- Describe all equipment (i.e., set-top boxes) as well as type and quantity needed by individual residents to support the bulk video service delivery.
- Describe the entertainment features including On Demand, DVR, use with other platforms like Firestick, and viewing on other devices.
- Describe remote access (away from home) to the bulk video service. Identify requisite apps, equipment, and company support.
- Is there a DVR capability, how many simultaneous recordings, what capacity
- Is a community channel provided? How is content created?
- Is voice capability available on the HD unit remote? Can the TV specific controls be synched, i.e., power, volume, etc.?

Phone

- What is the pricing for local, long distance, and international calling plans?
- What phone calling features are included?

Resident Survey

When looking for a new service provider in your community, conducting a resident survey is a great place to start. This will help you understand your residents' preferences, learn about any challenges they may have with the current provider, and gain insight into their expectations for a potential new provider.

RESIDENT SURVEY QUESTION EXAMPLES

- Who is your current provider?
- Approximately how much are your monthly charges for internet, TV, and phone service?
- On average, how many devices are connected to your home network at the same time?
- How happy are you with your current service provider?
- Do you experience frustration with your internet connection, such as slow speeds, frequent outages, or limited bandwidth?
- If a new provider could offer better rates and services for all residents, would you be interested in switching from your current provider?





Request for Proposals

When seeking out an ideal service provider for your community, leveraging a request for proposal (RFP) can centralize the selection process more efficiently to ensure your residents' needs are met. The RFP formally outlines project details to solicit bids from potential providers.

Clearly Define Your Needs

Clearly outline your community's needs considering factors such as bandwidth, reliability, scalability, and any other specific features or services you may require.

Secure Offers From Different Vendors

An RFP makes it easier to compare skills and rates to find the right partner for your project. Using an RFP streamlines the vendor selection process by providing a standardized format for evaluating proposals and expediting the decision-making process.

Fair Selection Process

A well-structured RFP ensures transparency and fairness during the selection process, as all bidding vendors are evaluated on the same criteria.

Did you know that the FCC ruled to eliminate exclusivity clauses for the provision to MDUs [multiple dwelling units], and your current agreement may be impacted?

Contracts

Telecommunication services evolve, *negotiating a contract that protects the residents and property values takes time, understanding, and education!* Determine what makes sense when upgrading the existing infrastructure to meet future needs.

Board Authority

Section 720.309 (a) Florida Statutes, Any contract entered into by the board may be canceled by a majority of the voting interests present at the next regular or special meeting of the association, whichever occurs first. Any member may make a motion to cancel such contract, but if no motion is made or if such motion fails to obtain the required vote, the contract shall be deemed ratified for the term expressed therein.

Breaking Contracts

What happens if a community signs a long-term contract with a service provider that fails to meet their needs? The only options are either to break the contract, usually at great financial cost, or to simply wait several years until the contract expires and a new service provider can be signed.

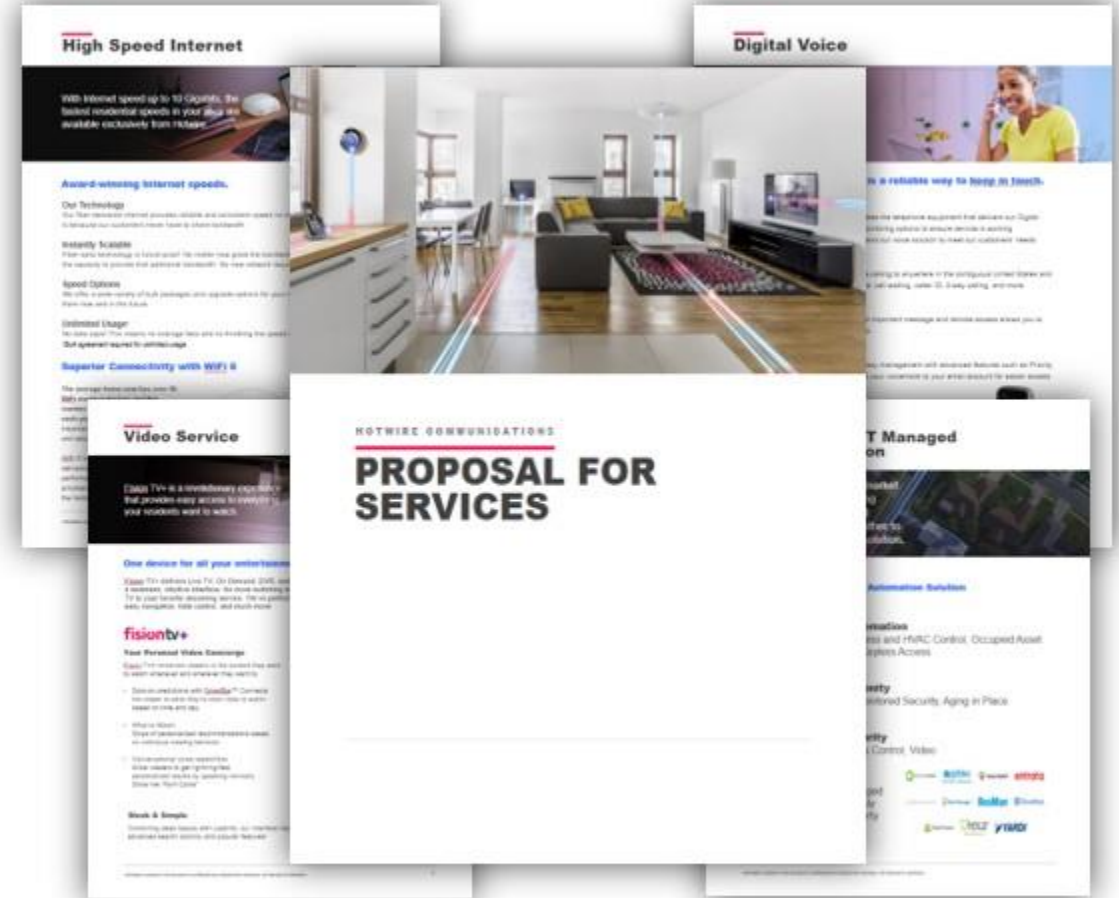
Length of Contract

When signing with any bulk services provider, it is vital that communities are sure they're making the right choice. Most bulk service agreements must last for a minimum of two years, but often last far longer than that.

Service Standards

A **service-level agreement (SLA)** is a contract between a service provider and its customers that documents what services the provider will furnish and defines the service standards the provider is obligated to meet. *This may include:*

- Type of service to be provided
- The service's desired performance level, especially its reliability and responsiveness
- Monitoring process and service level reporting
- The steps for reporting issues with the service
- Response and issue resolution time frame
- Repercussions for the service provider not meeting its commitment



What to Expect From Your Bulk Service Provider

Entering into a bulk services agreement is much more than signing a contract. This long-term partnership offers incredible benefits like ongoing support and open communication with your service provider.

Customer Experience

- Dedicated Project Managers
- Rigorous Launch Process & Teams
- Dedicated Account Managers

Ongoing Communication

- Letters & Email Communication
- Town Hall Meetings
- Launch Events & Welcome Kits
- Customized Community Website

Commitment to Quality

- In-home Installation & Surveys
- Quality Assurance
- In-home Education & Training
- Rapid Response & Issue Resolution

Expect

Ongoing Support
& Communication



Expect

Townhalls &
Open Tables



Expect

Construction &
Installation Timelines



Expect

Dedicated Teams for
Your Community





Who We Are

- We are an independent fiber optic telecommunications company founded in 2002.
- We deliver customized next generation technology solutions to communities, businesses, student housing, and hotels across the nation.
- We own and operate a dedicated independent fiber optic backbone in all of our core markets through Fiber-to-the-Home technology.
- We provide 10 Gigabit speeds with no data caps - possible through an end-to-end fiber optic infrastructure.
- We are the largest, privately held provider of communications services to community living environments in the US and the 11th largest cable company nationally

Ownership



**KRISTIN
JOHNSON**
Co-founder & CEO



**MICHAEL
KARP**
Co-founder & Chairman

Blackstone

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