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When They Turn off the Analog TV Light Will Your Customers and Potential Customers Be in the Dark?

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On February 18th, 2009 NTSC analog broadcast signals will stop. No more will antennas on analog TVs be able to receive analog broadcast signals. All those white 10" Panasonic Color TVs that you sold for picking up local broadcast signals will no longer work

If they use a VCR as an NTSC analog tuner, guess what.....it will no longer work as a TV tuner...

In fact the customer that owns anything that receives an off the air analog signal is out of luck. The government has just said..."Too bad, you need to get an additional device, or throw the product away". Of course if you have cable or satellite, they will have a solution, but not everyone who has cable and satellite has it in every room. The FCC is trying to put a positive spin by saying that only 15 percent of the households (June, 2004 numbers) do not use pay TV, cable or satellite, and only have an off-the-air signal. The FCC also predicts that by 2009, that number will drop to 7 percent of households. What this number does not state is the number of devices in a consumers home that are not hooked up to cable or satellite. These consumers may still be using TVs with an off-the-air signal in numerous places in their homes.

What's a consumer to do?

First of all, since there will be no analog signal to pick up, the government says that there will be inexpensive set top boxes to convert digital terrestrial signals to a signal the analog TVs can use. What is unknown is if consumers will be willing to add this box to their current set?

What does this mean to you?
Numerous possibilities.

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I believe that the problem is bigger than is being stated with products being using in homes that are being overlooked by the statistics. Since the government has only budgeted \$5 million for education, the word will not be out in any great frequency.

Therefore, some dealers will become known as the digital TV your community.

Will it be the cable company? DirectTV? The Geek Squad? Sears? Home Depot? Will it be you?

It should be.

How do you do this?

Start Now.....

- By becoming the digital TV expert in your area now, you will have a position that will pay dividends in years to come. Understand what is going on with this process. The February 18th, 2009 date is relatively recent cut off date that was passed into law December, 2005. Originally it was projected to occur in 2006.
- Market the expertise. Use a tag line on your ads that identifies you with the knowledge and expertise to solve these problems for your customers. Make the message positive and filled with a secure feelings that you know more about this than anyone else. Frequency and consistency of message are the two important factors that determine the success of achieving awareness for your message.
- When speaking to customers regarding their video purchases, ask if they are using off-the-air signals with any of their current TVs. Are they using VCRs analog tuners? Do they take portable TV from room-to-room using its own antenna? You may want to make them aware of the changes, but it is very important that you let them know that some devices will no longer work as they did previously in 2 ½ years.
- Design, systems that can take advantage of a digital signal and distribute it around the residence or commercial installation.
- If customers are using off-the-air signals, let them know that digital signals are different than analog signals. The analogy that I use is that when you are driving a car away from a city and the radio signals starts to fade, you have a warning that you need to change the station. Unfortunately with digital radio and digital TV signals, the signal is either off or on. This requires a change in the understanding of what happens if you are in a border line area. You can go from no signal to quality signal and back to no signal. No more do you get a snowy picture informing you of the signals weakness.

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Becoming the expert on this change can ensure that customers will look to you when the end is near. Since it is unclear how much publicity and press there will be when they turn the analog signal off you can create awareness by talking to your local TV stations to better inform consumers of the change. The FCC approved the current NTSC standard in 1940 and it has served us well for over 60 years. When a product stops working as originally purchased, consumers will react. Some will buy new products and some will get set-top boxes. Tell them that you can help in their decision making by informing them now that you are the expert on this change.

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