

Choosing A Satellite TV Provider

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So, you've finally decided to get satellite tv, have you? But which provider should you choose? Here's a few tips to help you get the most from your satellite service.

Content:

The satellite tv industry has made huge gains on the cable tv industry in the past several years. With the price of cable tv skyrocketing every year, many cable subscribers are making the switch over to satellite tv. Okay so you've decided to switch to satellite tv but which satellite tv provider do you choose? A satellite tv provider is a company that owns and operates satellites in geostationary orbit around the earth. These satellites broadcast the satellite signal down to your satellite dish and from their the signal is

transferred to your receiver (black box). The two largest satellite tv providers in the United States are DirecTV and DISH Network. The vast majority of satellite tv subscribers in the United States use one or the other so this article will concentrate on comparing the two satellite giants in an attempt to help you decide which of the two is best for you.

With the almost exponential growth of the satellite tv industry, both DISH Network and DirecTV are now in a position where they can afford to offer the satellite equipment (dish and receivers) free to their subscribers. So for starters both DISH Network and DirecTV offer free satellite equipment. Basically the only qualifiers are that you be a first time subscriber and that you have a credit card for monthly billing purposes. So if the equipment is free how do the two providers make any money? Well, you do have to pay for the monthly programming of course. The price of your monthly programming bill depends on which programming package you choose.

DISH Network's America Top 60 programming package starts at \$24.99 per month and local channels are available. DISH Network presently is not making new subscribers commit to a one year contract. You can end your subscription at any time with no financial penalty to pay. DirecTV's entry level programming package is called the Total Choice package and comes with local channels and is \$39.99 per month. With the Total Choice package you get over 130 channels. DirecTV does require you to sign a one year subscription agreement. If you cancel your service before the year is up, then you have to pay a penalty fee to DirecTV.

As both satellite giants use the very latest technology in their satellites and receiving equipment, what differentiates the two is in the programming options that they provide to their subscribers. I would rate DirecTV somewhat ahead of the DISH Network in their sports packages, as they offer seasonal sports options like the N.F.L. Sunday Ticket that DirecTV has exclusive rights to. Both providers offer tons of premium movie packages to choose from including HBO, Showtime, Starz and Cinemax. All these come with multiple channels per movie package. As DISH Network has more satellites in orbit than DirecTV does they have the capacity to offer up to 500 viewing channels, whereas with DirecTV, you can 'only' get 250 channels. Also, DISH Network offers a lot more foreign programming packages than DirecTV does.

Both DISH Network and DirecTV offer 100% digital picture and CD quality sound in all of their programming. So again, they are tied in this important quality. This technology allows for a crystal clear perfect picture that cable tv simply cannot provide.

DISH Network, a subsidiary of EchoStar Communications, was founded in 1996 by Charles Ergen. While not quite as old as DirecTV, DISH Network was the fastest satellite provider to reach the 100,000 subscriber level doing so in just four short months. Presently, DISH Network has over Nine million satellite tv subscribers in the 50 United States and District of Columbia. DISH Network has many 'firsts' to its credit, including being the first company to offer a satellite tv receiver that had a built in DVR (digital video recorder).

DirecTV was begun in 1994 and is the largest satellite tv provider in the United States. When it first launched in 1994, DirecTV was the first satellite TV company to offer all digital-quality, multi-channel TV programming through the use of direct broadcast satellite (DBS) technology. DBS technology is now the standard for the satellite tv industry and we have the ingenuity of the DirecTV engineers to thank for it. While DirecTV does not have as large a bandwidth allocation as the DISH Network does, to counter this DirecTV has arranged to have exclusive deals with programming companies to cater to the programming whims of their subscribers.

In the all important area of customer care, both DirecTV and DISH Network offer outstanding customer care and support. Both offer online FAQs sections and help sections to

their websites. You can also call both toll free to get help with any problem you may be having. Pay-Per-View movies may be ordered either by using your remote control or calling the 800 toll free number for either provider.

Both DirecTV and DISH Network offer free professional installation as part of their free satellite tv promotions. One difference is that DirecTV will install your equipment for free in up to five rooms, where DISH Network presently only installs for free in up to four rooms of your home.

RATING DISH NETWORK and DIRECTV POINT by POINT:

Satellite equipment - DirecTV - FREE DISH Network - FREE
Satellite Installation - DirecTV - FREE (up to 5 tv's) DISH Network - FREE (up to 4 tv's)
Picture Quality - DirecTV - Outstanding DISH Network - Outstanding
Pricing - DirecTV Total Choice Package \$39.99 per month DISH Network America's Top 60 Package \$24.99 per month
Programming Quantity - DirecTV offers programming packages up to 250 channels DISH Network has the capacity to offer up to 500 channels
Programming Quality - DirecTV has outstanding programming package options with a heavy emphasis on seasonal sports packages. DISH Network also has outstanding programming package options with somewhat less of an emphasis on sports.
Customer Care - DirecTV - Outstanding with both online and 800 toll free support. DISH Network - Outstanding with both online and 800 toll free support.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION:

Both DISH Network and DirecTV offer an outstanding television viewing experience. The picture reception for both is far superior to that of cable tv. DISH Network's entry level package is cheaper than DirecTV's but then the Total Choice package comes with alot more channels. DirecTV is stronger in the area of sports coverage, while DISH Network places somewhat more of an emphasis on its premium movie packages and foreign programming options. And both have outstanding customer care, both having won the prestigious J.D. Power Award in recent years for providing the best overall service among satellite and cable subscribers.

Our recommendation is that both DirecTV and DISH Network offer a superior television viewing experience than cable tv. Both are alot cheaper than cable, offer superior picture quality and free equipment and instalation. Both also offer superior customer care service compared to local cable providers. If you're a big sports fan and just have to have that certain premium sports package, then DirecTV is for you but if you're not a huge sports fan and cost is an issue, then you might want to go with DISH Network and it's entry level America's Top 60 at just \$24.99 a month. Also, remember that DirecTV will require a one year commitment, whereas with the DISH Network there is no contract to sign, meaning you can cancel your service at anytime and not have to pay a penalty.

Whichever satellite provider you choose, you can't go wrong. As a subscriber of the DISH Network and a sales person that has several years experience in the satellite tv industry (have sold both DirecTV & DISH Network)I highly recommend that you drop cable, stop feeding the pig and switch to satellite tv service today. The vastly superior picture quality alone that DBS satellite technology provides makes it worth the change. It's like heaven watching tv with no more squiggly lines running across the tv screen!

About the Author: Gary Davis has many years experience in the Satellite TV Industry and has written numerous articles on the topic. You can learn more about satellite

television at [Dish Network Satellite TV](#).

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