Dave McClure • Mar. 18, 2013

So you have done your homework, cut your bills for some things, but are you really done squeezing the fat out of your communications bills?

Not even close. For one thing, if you have been very lucky you may have cut your bill by about $100, but you are still on the hook to a variety of vendors for upwards of $250 per month. You can do better, and here's how.

This is part III of a three-part series from Dave's Bleeding Edge Blog. You can read the first two here and here.

Note that since we gave the first five in the previous article, we will start with #6:

6) Cut your cable/satellite/fiber TV bill by cutting out channels. For the package that you buy, to get the channels you like to watch, you will pay from $100 to $150 per month after fees and taxes. That is way too much.

For example, you will likely pay not only for the service, but a box rental for each television connected to the service. More if the receiver box is a DVR, or Digital Video Recorder. If you like to record movies and TV shows for later watching, invest in a DVD recorder or a stand-alone TIVO unit and skip the $72 to $120 per year cost of a "DVR Service."

Then look at what you actually get, versus what you actually watch. The "Bundled" services will put you into a "Preferred," "Premier," or other high-priced tier. But most of the channels can be found, on Comcast for example, on the "Digital Starter" tier for half the price. Other services also offer a (gasp!) much lower tier. They give you about 80 percent of the channel you watch, at half the price. And you will still likely get "The Walking Dead" and "Duck Dynasty."

7) Cut back on your Internet speed. We, as consumers, are being handed a ration of

You are being sold a bill of goods, my friends, marketing hype for the extremely gullible. Yes, you want 1.0 or 1.5 Mb of throughput. Above that, you are mostly paying for smoke and mirrors.

8) Pay no attention to the "specials," "deals" and "bundles." These generally include a two-year contract, limited-time trials, and other traps designed to sucker you in. When you investigate such packages, ask what the total cost will be after the trial period ends (usually 1 ½ years of the two-year contract). Make them put the offer IN WRITING and email it to you. They won't – their sales staff will promise you the moon to get you to sign the contract, and will be impossible to find afterward. That's how they do business.

Ask for the full retail cost of the combined services, and calculate based on that. Not surprisingly, you will find there is little difference in the "special deals" of one vendor over another.

9) Be prepared to switch frequently. As we have previously noted, the communications vendors could care less about their current customers. After all, they have you tied to a nearly unbreakable contract, so why should they cut you a deal. They would, generally, rather lose you in order to pay thousands of dollars to get a new customer to replace you. No one said they were very bright.

In addition to remember to ask for the "customer retention department," be prepared to threaten lawsuits and threaten to leave if you do not get at the very least what they offer to someone walking in off the street. And stick to your guns – if you say you are going to leave, then leave.

10) Don't pay to tether your cell phone. This is another game for fools, in which cellular companies offer to let you use your cell phone as a "wifi hotspot" for your computer, laptop or tablet in order to avoid the cost of a separate data plan for that

depends on what your family needs, and how much they can live without. How much you are willing to forego the latest and greatest, and "keeping up with the Joneses." And how much work you are willing to do to find deals.

People all around you are paying less for most of the same services that you enjoy today. Just as some people are saving hundreds of dollars a month at the grocery store by couponing. Whether or not that is a lifestyle suited to you is your choice.

Small Business