



TeleTips For Smart Consumers

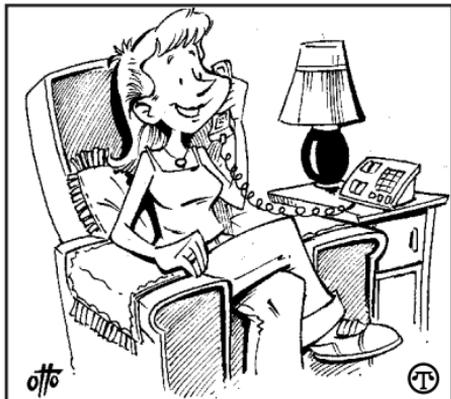
Playing The Communication Market

(NAPSA)—Answering consumers' call for the latest telecommunication products and services has become quite a competitive business—giving customers more ways to stay in touch than ever.

This variety of prices, packages and products, however, may prove pretty dazzling. Scientific research, the rush of modern lifestyles and industry competition have brought home new choices as well as technological wonders. Many households use the Internet with some form of high-speed connection from DSL. Others have additional lines, home voice mail, wireless phones with data capabilities, instant messaging and e-mail accounts, caller ID, talking call waiting and more.

With all the competition and choice out there, consumers still want convenience, control, choice and simplicity when it comes to meeting communications needs. To achieve that, it helps to be aware of just what it is you really want, and which providers are able to supply it at what price. Most telecommunications companies now offer services bundled into different packages.

It's wise to decide what problems those services can solve and do research on where to get the best deal. You should see, for instance, if the package you pick has the services you've selected, and that there are no hidden charges. For example, some compa-



Before you buy a telecommunications package, it may pay to check out whether you're getting the mix of products and services you want at the price you expect.

nies add surcharges for the privilege of making in-state toll calls; some companies tack on an extra fee for sending you a single bill for all the services provided.

One company that instead offers consumers special assistance is Verizon. When a prospective customer calls, he or she gets what the company refers to as "consultative selling." The responding representative will ask various questions about the household, including family size, work-at-home practices, family and individual interests and concerns in general, current technology use and so on. This helps meet the need for tailored solutions, not just a cookie-cutter approach.

You also can register, shop, and buy online at www.verizon.com.