

Fellow members,

This month, I thought of sharing with you the not-so-smooth experience of buying a flatscreen TV. Remember when it was easy to buy a TV? All you had to do was walk into the store, pick the one you wanted, pay for it on the spot, and drive around to the delivery pickup door, load it into your car trunk and drive it home. Once home, you plugged it in, adjusted the rabbit ears, and Voilà!!! Oh, for THOSE days, again. Wait 'til you see what happened to 'moi'...

Perhaps this will help you avoid some of the turmoil, frustration, and surprises that lay lurking on my path. There is not enough space, here, for the blow-by-blow description of what happened between Dec. 29 when I made the purchase, and February 3, Super Bowl Sunday, a full 37 days between those two dates.

Here, to the best of my recollection, is how it all went down:

1. I do my homework and select what I consider to be a high performance flatscreen, 42", LCD, 1080p television set.
2. I wait for a sale. On Dec. 29, a well-known West Island store offers the TV I want at a great "Boxing Day" price. They're throwing in a year of free HD cable service, and 50\$ off the digital converter box.
3. I head down there. I'm ready to take the plunge until I ask the salesperson if this is the one advertised in the paper today. Yes is the answer. I say, "Then this is a 1080p?" "Oh, no, sir, this is a 1080i". Good thing I asked. The 1080p version is right across the aisle, and is going for 400\$ more...
4. In spite of the store being out of stock (after the Xmas rush), I order the 1080p, and choose the interest-free 50 month payment plan. I'm assured that the delivery will be some time early in the new year. So there shouldn't be any problem getting it before the Super Bowl Game, right? After all, that's a full 37 days away...
5. A whole week goes by. No news. Second week: I call. "We're expecting a shipment at the beginning of next week, sir." Another week goes by. Still nothing. Then, on January 18, don't I see another ad in the paper from the same store, but this time offering a free digital recorder (value of 599\$) bundled with the same TV set! I drive down immediately and demand that we reach an accommodation, here. I want the new deal, especially since I still don't have my original TV from dec. 29.
6. It is not easy to get around a computerized accounting system. The store computer required that I cancel my original deal and make a new deal. But this would mean that I'd lose my place in line for the new shipment. (It turns out that 752 other people took the same

deal as I did, and I would have to go to the back of the line if I switched to get the new deal...

7. I was hopping mad. I demanded to see a manager. Twenty minutes later I had the opportunity to keep my place in line, receive delivery of the Dec. 29 TV, then return to the store with the original converter and switch it for the recording converter.
8. Another week goes by. Then another. By Wednesday, January 30, I called my salesman to give him a piece of my mind, when, lo! And behold! The store had just received a big shipment! I called the delivery people and worked out delivery for the next day, Jan. 31, somewhere between 7 A.M. and... midnight!
9. It arrived at 1:15 P.M. As soon as it was in the house I went back to the store to return the converter and get the recording one. The young lady at the computer in the Service Dept. couldn't make the switch. Why? Because her computer didn't show that I had received delivery of the new TV. I produced the bill of lading and the driver's and my signatures on the bill. Nope. Only once the driver returned to the warehouse and confirmed his deliveries and non-deliveries could it be entered into the computer system... I would have to come back tomorrow. And by the way, the store will be notifying me as soon as they receive my second TV. Second TV? 'Yes, sir, the one you ordered on January 18.' Another visit with a manager to clarify the situation...
10. I return the next day in the midst of a huge snowstorm. Now it's a young man behind the desk, and I have to tell the whole story again. After watching him bang the keyboard for a full 15 minutes, I ask him if there's a problem. He says he'll be done shortly. After 20 minutes, he managed to get the computer to understand that I was benefiting from the new deal but keeping the original TV and the original warranty extension, as well as the interest-free 50 month payment plan. Why, I even got a 100\$ refund on the original converter!
11. I rush home to activate the new digital recording converter. I call my cable provider. I'm told that activation can take as long as 24 hours before it is complete. What!!! Super Bowl is the day after tomorrow and I have people coming over! The lady is very kind and understanding, but there's nothing she can do. Now I'm sweating bullets. This is going to be a close call... Lo! And behold! After only 15 minutes the signal is coming in.
12. "But what about that free HD channel offer? Can you activate the HD channels for me?" "Certainly, sir, just as soon as you fax me your bill from the store where you bought the TV." "But I don't have a fax machine at home!" "No problem, sir, have the store fax us their copy." Oh boy. I'm thinking that I won't be seeing Super Bowl XLII in high definition, which was the whole purpose behind this

exercise... But this lady came though (or took pity on me, whichever...) because she said she'd activate the HD right away so that I could be sure of seeing the Super Bowl in 1080i.

13. Yay! Twenty-four hours before the Game, my TV was working the way it was supposed to...

Bob Rondeau,
Webmaster