

Q&A with Adam Moore

Maintaining Customer Service and Scale in Multifamily Broadband

The group vice president of Spectrum Community Solutions shares how multifamily bulk internet and video services are evolving to meet the needs of the multifamily market.

Spectrum Community Solutions is Charter Communications' brand dedicated to multifamily properties. It delivers broadband connectivity solutions to apartments, single-family gated communities, off-campus student housing, senior residences, RV parks and marinas. Adam Moore is the group vice president of customer operations for Spectrum Community Solutions. The Product and Technology, Customer Experience and Customer Service divisions fall under his purview, with four U.S.-based call centers dedicated to serving Spectrum's bulk customers. Sean Buckley, editor-in-chief of **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES**, recently spoke to Moore about how Spectrum Community Solutions is evolving the delivery of broadband services to the multifamily segment. Following are highlights of the conversation.

BROADBAND COMMUNITIES: *Spectrum Community Solutions has been a mainstay in the multifamily industry providing bulk services. What do you think drives your success?*

ADAM MOORE: Two things stand out: customer service and scale. First, we demonstrated our focused commitment to the multifamily industry by creating Spectrum Community Solutions as a vertical business unit within Charter Communications. We own nationwide sales, operations and, most important, customer service.

In 2019, we recognized that our clients would be better served through specialized customer service teams, so we carved out dedicated call centers that serve our bulk communities' residents and property staff. Our clients appreciate that the call center staff understands their needs, can address their issues, and won't send them to another area of our business to resolve their concerns.

Second, we proved that we could scale bulk services. Charter has more than 800,000 miles of hybrid-fiber network across its 41-state footprint. Spectrum Community Solutions provides a portfolio of internet, managed Wi-Fi and video products to meet clients' needs, and we deliver these products over multiple architectures.

We typically build fiber for new construction properties; however, most of our clients operate an extensive portfolio of existing properties, and these clients prefer solutions that do not require



Adam Moore

construction. That is why we offer those clients our Advanced Community WiFi product, which utilizes the existing coax network with no need for disruptive or time-consuming property rewires.

BBC: *That's interesting. I thought that to get symmetrical speeds, a property would need fiber.*

AM: On the contrary. Because of our ongoing investments, we will soon be able to offer speeds up to 2x1 Gbps over our existing hybrid-fiber infrastructure using high-split technology. This network evolution, which will soon be available to Spectrum Community Solutions clients, is as simple as changing out the current node to our next-generation node technology utilizing distributed access architecture. Because we use existing wiring, there is no construction necessary and no need to dig up the property or cut into a resident's walls. As we deploy DOCSIS 4.0,

we will have the capability to deliver speeds up to 10x1 Gbps on this architecture.

BBC: *That's a lot of speed. How much speed do residents need?*

AM: Most online activities today, such as streaming video, surfing the web and gaming, need only a small fraction of that speed. Our investment today is about evolving our network for the future. Technology and how people engage online are continuously changing, and we want to be ready to meet our customers' speed needs – now and in the future.

It is good to remember that typical internet use remains heavily skewed to downstream activity. Even following the broader adoption of video conferencing applications during the pandemic, downstream traffic continues to dominate use, at a ratio of 14 to 1, versus upstream traffic. This is easy to understand when you consider that a Zoom call requires less than 4 Mbps of bandwidth both down and up, and a 4K HD stream requires 15 Mbps of downstream bandwidth and nearly no upstream bandwidth. With most internet traffic streaming video, this quickly adds up to asymmetrical demand.

Though we are excited to have the capability to provide symmetrical gigabit and multi-gig products, these will appeal primarily to property owners who prioritize branding their communities as technology-forward with a best-in-class internet amenity. Spectrum's Standard (300 Mbps) and Ultra (500 Mbps) speed tiers remain our most popular options today.

BBC: *Spectrum Community Solutions Managed WiFi is a popular service for your multifamily customers. What trends do you see there?*

AM: We've been installing our Managed WiFi solution in multiple dwelling units (MDUs) for more than seven years and have certainly experienced increasing demand. The customer trends are toward control, customization and always-on connectivity.

Property owners continue to turn to the Spectrum Community Solutions Managed WiFi product as a valuable amenity that provides ubiquitous, always-on connectivity; enables IoT solutions and gives them some control. But we've evolved our product set to offer higher-value features to residents while making it easier for property staff to administer features.

An example is the Spectrum Community Solutions Advanced Community WiFi, which utilizes a Spectrum Community Solutions WiFi 6 router and is the bulk version of our Advanced WiFi residential product. Advanced Community WiFi allows residents to self-install their routers and customize their networks. Unlike other providers' solutions, the Spectrum Community Solutions Managed WiFi product gives residents control and security. Advanced Community WiFi features parental controls and proactive protection monitoring to mitigate the growing number of threats that target any device we install in a multifamily community.

Though the setup of Advanced Community WiFi is hands-off for property staff, they still have control and

visibility into the Spectrum Community Solutions Wi-Fi service as they do with our Managed WiFi service. In addition, Advanced Community WiFi includes installing service in common areas. We extend a network if the property needs an always-on network to connect IoT devices. Since we launched it, Advanced Community WiFi has become our most popular bulk internet product.

BBC: *Let's talk more about ubiquitous connectivity. What does ubiquitous mean for Spectrum?*

AM: To us, ubiquitous connectivity means the seamless combination of internet, Spectrum's Wi-Fi service and mobile with gig-powered wireless everywhere Spectrum operates. Customers want fast, reliable, secure connectivity for all their devices inside and outside the home.

At Spectrum, we offer a combination of the fastest internet, the fastest Wi-Fi and the fastest overall speeds in mobile from our combined Managed WiFi service and cellular with nationwide 5G. Having superiority in all three and enhanced security from Advanced WiFi provides the best overall experience. For example, our Advanced WiFi product detects Spectrum Mobile devices, automatically connects them to Wi-Fi and boosts the device speed.

Though much attention is being paid to the transition of cellular networks to 5G, Wi-Fi 6 and beyond will continue to deliver faster speeds than cellular. This has translated to increased mobile device use over the Advanced WiFi product – now, more than 85 percent of Spectrum Mobile customers' activity occurs over the Advanced WiFi network service. For MDU developers, this trend has shifted focus away from distributed antenna systems (DAS) to our Advanced Community WiFi solutions.

BBC: *You mentioned video products earlier. As the streaming wars continue, are your clients still finding bulk video a vital amenity?*

AM: Most clients still purchase bulk video solutions because video remains valuable. There is more value in a technology amenity that includes internet, Advanced WiFi and video than one that provides only internet. Granted, the video landscape is ever-changing, so continued innovation here is essential. Spectrum has continued investing in providing our customers with a best-in-class video experience.

We developed the nation's most-watched streaming platform on a per-household basis – the Spectrum TV App – and offer both large and skinny video packages that can stream through the Spectrum TV App or our traditional cable boxes. And through our joint venture with Comcast, we plan to offer in the coming year a next-generation streaming platform, Xumo, on branded 4K streaming devices and smart TVs, providing customers with world-class user experience and navigation.

BBC: *Any final thoughts?*

AM: We are excited about the future at Spectrum Community Solutions. We have a product set and network capability that is difficult for our competitors to match, and we have a network evolution plan that ensures we continue to deliver the best-in-class connectivity services and products that our multifamily clients and residents depend on. 🌈