

# Give It to Me Now!

Today's customers – especially millennials – aren't used to waiting for anything. If they have to wait for internet service, they won't be happy at all.

By Bryan J. Rader / *UpStream Network*

**N**ow seems to be the most important marketing term these days. Send my Amazon order *now*. Deliver my pizza *now*. Post your Friday night pics *now*.

Everything must be done in real time. Think about the video business. DIRECTV is available as DIRECTV NOW, and HBO offers HBO NOW. Broadband customers, too, want service *now*.

How about later? “No, I want it now,” they say. “Fix it now.” “Upgrade me now.” “Take care of it now.”

I get it. Everything must be done in an instant. Comcast sells service this way, too. So does CenturyLink. But are independent providers ready for this? Can we deliver *now now*?

The newspaper business is dying because it's not *now* enough. The taxicab business is being left for dead by Uber because Uber provides an on-demand, get-it-*now* proposition. Want to search for a new relationship? You can do that *now*, too.

If you drive for Uber, you can even get paid *now*. Want to increase the credit limit on your credit card? You can do it on your smartphone *now*. Transfer money to a friend? You can Venmo *now*.

## NOW SERVICE FOR MOVE-INS

How about moving into a new apartment community and having gigabit broadband service with a whole-home DVR ready *now*? That's what customers expect these days. Success is often determined based on the time they have to wait to receive what they ordered. And they get frustrated if it isn't ready immediately.

Hmm ... can we meet that expectation?

A few years ago, customers found two- to four-hour appointment windows acceptable. Today, just imagine telling a customer, “I can schedule you next Wednesday afternoon between 1 and 5. Be sure to have someone over 18 home at that time.”

I can practically hear that customer thinking, “Next Wednesday? Take off work? Wait over a weekend to get new service? What do you expect me to do for the next five days – go to the library?”

People have compressed their expectations about time so much in the past decade, thanks to new technology. The younger a customer is, the more demanding he or she is likely to be.

These customers are used to confirming their drug prescriptions by text, refilling their grocery orders by swiping “Yes,” checking in for their flights and changing their seat assignments instantly.

I'm not so young, and I still catch myself getting irritated when I order an Uber between meetings and have to wait seven minutes for the nearest driver. Really? Seven minutes? I watch the stupid car on the Uber map go down several streets to come to me. Why can't he get here faster? His car hasn't moved on my map in 20 seconds! He should be here *now*.

The concept of *now* is how internet and cable subscribers think about services when they move into their new apartments. They want it when they want it. And we, the providers, had better build a platform to deliver it – *now*!

How can we do that?

One of the great things about providing bulk internet in the multifamily market is that we can easily deliver the most important product as soon as customers move in. No sign-ups. No truck rolls. No phone calls. Services are working *now*.

That's what independent providers can do for property owners and condo boards. We can meet their customers' time expectations, which is quickly becoming the most important benefit. *Now* is the new “fast.” ❖

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