

CenturyLink Stops Outside Reps' Marketing in Click! Territory Following Reports of Lies By Josh Long

July 18, 2012– Channel Partners Online

CenturyLink outside sales reps who have been knocking on doors and allegedly spreading false information have stopped marketing services in a rival's territory in Tacoma, Wash.

[Click! Network](#), a division of Tacoma Power, has accused the reps of spreading lies about the company going out of business in the coming months after hearing from its customers.

Diane Lachel, a Click! spokesperson, said a CenturyLink executive informed her the telecom giant has taken the sales organization out of Click!'s territory.

The sales organization is Cydcor, Lachel said.

Gail Michalak, a spokeswoman for Westlake Village, Calif.-based Cydcor, did not immediately return a phone call placed Wednesday morning seeking comment on the accusations. However, CenturyLink on Wednesday afternoon confirmed that Cydcor has stopped marketing services in Click!'s territory.

Click! has considered filing charges with the Washington State Office of the Attorney General, although Lachel said the company hasn't made a final decision.

Click!'s call center has received calls from about 12 different customers regarding the sales pitches from Cydcor reps, Lachel said.

Meg Andrews, a CenturyLink spokeswoman, said her company asked Click! for a list of customers and complaints but Click! only provided one customer name. CenturyLink worked with the customer to ensure "the customer was with the provider of their choice," she said.

Lachel explained that one customer switched back to Click!. CenturyLink "had to actually make contact with the customer and void out whatever two-year contract the customer signed," she said.

Click! hasn't turned over any other names to CenturyLink, Lachel confirmed, because the company won't do so without customers' consent.

Cydcor reps are accused of telling Click! customers that Click! is going out of business when that is not the case. Click! offers cable TV service directly and wholesale high-speed Internet through three regional Internet service providers. The customer CenturyLink contacted actually is a direct customer of an ISP known as [Advanced Stream](#). A representative for Advanced Stream couldn't be reached immediately Wednesday afternoon for comment.

“I don’t know how many people have switched [to CenturyLink] based on that [false] information and haven’t called us,” Lachel said. “Some of these customers have not wanted to make waves.”

CenturyLink has reeducated the vendor on the carrier’s ethical guidelines and sales practices and corrected any misinformation on the competition that the vendor may have had, Andrews said. The matter was brought to CenturyLink’s attention the morning of July 7, and CenturyLink put in place corrective steps before the team was deployed into the field that day, she said.

Though Click! hasn’t decided whether to file a complaint with the state’s AG’s Office, such a move wouldn’t be unprecedented. In 2009, the company filed a complaint against Comcast for similar misrepresentations after a sales rep knocked on the door of former Tacoma mayor Bill Baarsma, Lachel said. The rep told the mayor that Click! was going out of business, Lachel said, yet Baarsma well knew that wasn’t the truth. Click! later filed a complaint with the AG’s Office.

“We made sure Comcast got the message loud and clear. Stop that,” Lachel said.