

## Qwest sells its services the old-fashioned way: Door to door.

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Jun. 30--David Hutton is pitching newfangled technology the old-fashioned way -- door to door.

He is one of about 90 salespeople in Colorado who work for Qwest selling telecommunications services to small businesses, homeowners and apartment dwellers.

"It is a numbers game," Hutton said with a shrug last week, after unsuccessfully scouring a row of businesses in an Aurora strip mall.

Qwest's "Feet on the Street" program began two years ago with salespeople banging on residential doors. This month, the program expanded to include businesses with fewer than five phone lines.

The Denver-based company now has several hundred employees going door to door in its 14-state service territory and others working outside the region.

They pitch high-speed Internet, land-line and wireless phone service, subscription-TV packages and communications products. They also provide information on bundling deals that reduce prices by consolidating communications services on one bill.

Hutton, 34, has an easy smile and a low-key sales delivery. He listens intently as proprietors and managers talk about their phone service. Dee Thai, owner of East Dynasty, a small Chinese restaurant on East Smoky Hill Road, told Hutton that he already uses Qwest at his business.

What company serves his home, Hutton asked, or provides him with wireless service? Qwest and Verizon Wireless, Thai answered. When it became obvious that Thai wasn't ready to deal, Hutton got ready to leave.

"If there is anything I can ever do for you, here is my card," he said, then walked out the door.

Hutton makes at least 40 sales visits a day, working from 7 a.m. to about 7 p.m.

He estimates that 20 percent of his contacts result in sales. With a \$35,000-a-year salary plus commission, he has grossed about \$39,000 in the past six months.

Verizon Communications, BellSouth and other telecommunications providers also have been selling door to door for the past year or so, said Su Li Walker, an analyst with the Yankee Group.

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SBC uses door-to-door sales in its Southwest and Midwest regions, said corporate spokeswoman Tiffany Nels, and tried it in California before discontinuing the program.

"We do it to reach out to customers and help them understand the wide range" of available products and services, she said, and to ensure that the services they currently have make good sense for them.

Telecom companies have long relied on telemarketing and other sales approaches. State and federal no-call legislation has made it more difficult for them to reach noncustomers, although businesses still may call existing clients with sales offers.

Now, competition from cable companies, which have added broadband and telephone services to their product lines, has pushed them to add the personal touch to their sales efforts, Walker said. "The cable companies and telcos are now on the same playing field." On his rounds, Hutton once ran into a sales representative from cable giant Comcast. And he frequently sees brochures and other evidence that the company has beaten him to the homes and businesses he visits.

"There is a lot of competition out here," he said.

Qwest doesn't disclose the revenues it reaps from door-to-door sales, company spokesman Michael Dunne said. "But we view it as a success. It is doing very well." Hutton, who has worked for Qwest since September, once sold insurance. Pushing telecom services is more enjoyable and a lot easier, he said.

"Health and life insurance is not something tangible," Hutton said. "You can't really see it or touch it or see how it works until you need it.

"Communications products are fun. A lot of times they are cutting edge. You can see the way the products perform."

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