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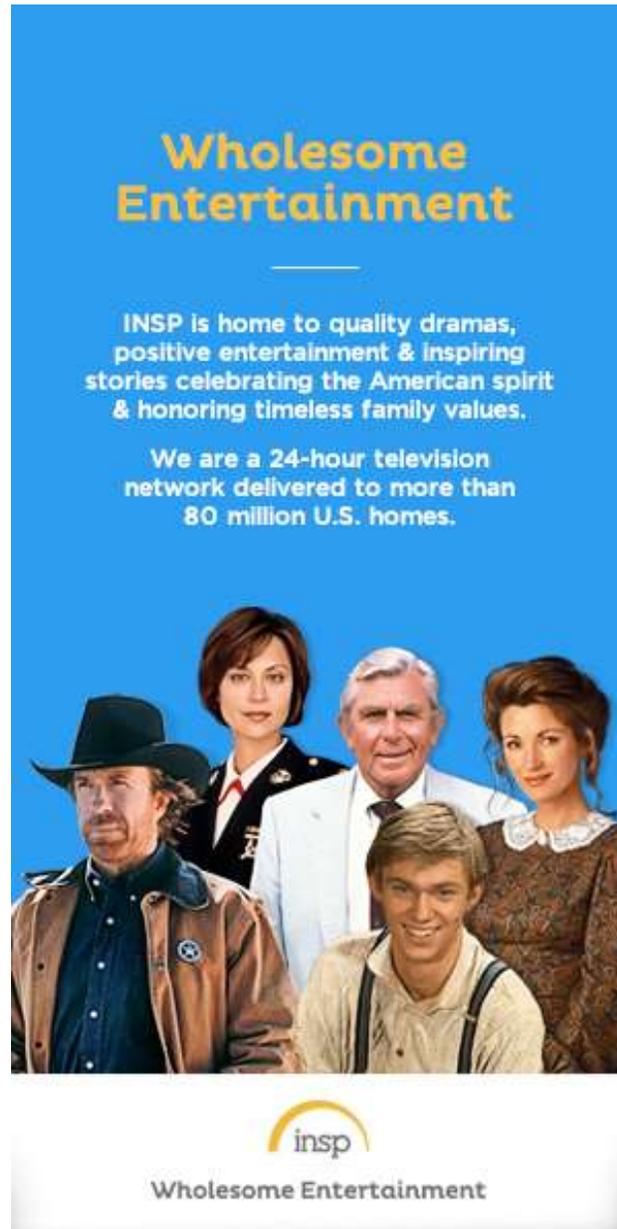
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Like many husbands, I've learned this lesson the hard way over the years: actions speak louder than words – much louder. It's not an easy lesson; it takes placing yourself in the other person's shoes, which is usually enough to drive the message home.



And such has been my experience with Comcast. Through the years, I'd hear grumblings, "If Comcast only did this or that" (you fill in the blank). I have to admit that I would join in on the criticism from time to time – without being fully informed – never placing myself in their shoes. It's not easy being one of the top employers in the fifth largest city in the country and the biggest corporation to boot. That's one big glass house at 17th and JFK.

But something changed for me along the way. In 2013, less than one year after launching a coworking space in Center City called Benjamin's Desk, I saw a different Comcast. I was fortunate enough to receive an email introduction to Comcast Senior Executive Vice President, David L. Cohen, to which he speedily responded. And even while overseeing a billion-dollar company, he took the time to listen to the pitch and took immediate action, which rippled down the chain of command at lightning speed.

I can't say I was surprised knowing David's reputation as one of the top executives in the world, but the voices along the way down were unlike the misaligned descriptions I had grown accustomed to hearing about. Each subsequent contact

led with these words, "What can we do to help?"

What began as a small ask for a burgeoning startup resulted in anything but that. Over the next year, my team and I would go on to foster an amazing partnership with Comcast running through several departments. Partnerships tend to be about words, but this was all about actions. At Benjamin's Desk, they've helped us provide tremendous resources to thousands of mobile professionals, entrepreneurs, and

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together**

startups in the region. We've partnered on sponsorships with Philly Tech Week, co-produced events like the I4E business competition, co-developed the #InnovationRising video platform, and so much more.

And that was just the beginning. As a military veteran, I ran the Union League's inaugural Veterans Job Fair as part of the Union League Veterans Initiative. Comcast was one of the first to step up with a sponsorship. Did I mention that actions speak louder than words? With veteran leaders like Neil Smit (former U.S. Navy SEAL) at the helm of Comcast Cable, they've put their money where their mouth is and have one of the top veteran hiring strategies in the country. But this shouldn't surprise you. The founder of Comcast, Ralph Roberts, was a Navy veteran, and his ideals have clearly been passed on through the years. In light of his very recent passing, I'd like to thank him and his family for his service to our great country and our great city of Philadelphia. His values live on with every new veteran hire.

And now, they're stepping up again. Today, we'll announce Comcast as the first national corporate sponsor of The Bunker and a founding sponsor of The Bunker Philadelphia. The Bunker is the first of its kind – an incubator led by military veterans for military veterans with a focus on cultivating and growing veteran-led startup companies. With this partnership, Comcast is kick-starting our ability to launch our first cohort this fall and will surely be the impetus for other corporate sponsors to join in supporting this very important new venture.

True leaders – whether individuals or corporations – lead from the front and know the highest level of influence is demonstrated through service. Like Ralph Roberts, today's Comcast is all about actions, and I'm proud to have them as a partner and grateful to have them headquartered right here in the city of brotherly love.

"Well done is better than well said" -- Benjamin Franklin – **Philadelphia Business Journal** op-ed by Mike Maher, founding executive director of The Bunker PHL, an incubator for veteran-owned companies

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Outdated federal rules are hampering the deployment of high-speed Internet service to some of the nation's most rural residents, a Federal Communications Commission regulator said Monday in Omaha. Backed by U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer, R- Neb., FCC commissioner Ajit Pai said he and a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers are seeking to modernize the way federal subsidies are distributed to telecommunications companies that serve rural communities.

Under current FCC rules, only telecommunication companies that offer landline telephone services to customers in specific rural communities are eligible to receive federal subsidies. Carriers that offer standalone broadband service in specific rural areas are not eligible for incentives. The model is becoming increasingly less relevant as consumers abandon "landlines in favor of wireless and Internet-based alternatives," he said. The incentives are drawn from the federal Universal Service Fund, which is funded by a federal surcharge on landline and wireless telephone bills. The fee is levied on carriers, which are authorized to pass the cost onto consumers.

The subsidies are intended to spur telecom companies to expand their networks to remote, rural areas that might otherwise go unserved, said Fischer, a member of the Senate Commerce Committee. Last year, the federal Universal Service Fund collected about \$8.7 billion and distributed \$1.95 billion to small rural companies with 200,000 or fewer customers. Under current federal rules, if a rural customer opts for a landline and broadband service, the carrier of the service receives the federal subsidy. If the consumer opts out of all services, the carrier still receives the federal subsidy, said Nick Degani, legal adviser for commissioner Pai. "Here's the catch," said Degani. "If the customer says, 'I don't want phone service — just broadband service,' the carrier gets no subsidy."

Pai is seeking bipartisan support to help persuade the other four FCC commissioners to extend federal subsidies to companies that offer broadband Internet service to designated rural communities. Getting those rules changed is entirely within the control of the FCC. Companies that offer wireless high-speed Internet service in rural areas — but that don't lay down actual fiber-optic lines — aren't affected by the potential rule change. Changing the rules sooner rather than later is critical, Fischer said, because telecom carriers "are building 10 to 20 years out," and need to know if they will have the support of the federal government. Network expansion projects can cost millions of dollars.

For now, some rural carriers in the U.S. are holding back "investment because they are unsure if they can deploy the next generation services," Pai said at the press conference held at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. At a roundtable earlier in the day, Pai said he heard from regional rural carriers who had put projects on hold due to federal subsidy uncertainties. Pai said he and other supporters hope to see the rules changed by the end of the year. The FCC Universal Service Fund is separate from Nebraska's Universal Service High Cost Program, which is administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission and is state-funded, said PSC Commissioner Frank Landis of Lincoln. The state program has been providing state subsidies to companies that offer stand-alone broadband services with a voice-service component for several years. "The federal system is doing what we started doing several years ago," Landis said. — **Omaha (NE) World-Herald**

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Gov. Tom Wolf on Monday signed a bill into law that will raise phone bills by a few nickels and dimes to **generate more money to fund 911 centers.** The higher 911 surcharge will begin to be included in August phone bills.

The new law sets a uniform fee of \$1.65 a month per line regardless of the type of phone service someone has. Currently, there are varying rates that have cell phone and voice over Internet Protocol services users paying a \$1 per month per line and landline users pay between \$1 and \$1.50, depending on where they live.

Getting an increase in the fee was **a top priority for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania,** given the higher cost of operating these emergency communication centers. The centers require about \$292 million a year to operate, but the fees that have been in place generated only \$190 million this year so counties had to subsidize the centers using revenue generated by their property tax. "Local governments have struggled to maintain adequate funding for 9-1-1 systems for far too long," Wolf said. "I commend the General Assembly for passing a bill that will bolster these institutions that are vital to maintaining public safety in our communities." — **pennlive.com**



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