

# Oberlin Cable Co-op Wins 90 Percent Market Share Against Overbuilders With an Exceptional Member Experience



## Company Overview

Founded in 1985, Oberlin Cable Co-op, Inc. is a member-owned cooperative non-profit who began operations in 1987 with 2,200 broadband subscriber members. Oberlin employs one general manager, two customer support representatives, and four technicians. Their primary mission is to serve their members and the Oberlin community by building stronger collaborations with the city, schools, and community.

Oberlin is focused on delivering exceptional managed services their members want and need. They are deploying a “fiber enriched network (FEN)” using fiber-to-the-x (FTTX) and fiber-to-the-home (FTTH), as well as upgrading their Hybrid Fiber Coax (HFC) network.

## The Challenge

Oberlin’s biggest challenge is competing against large tier 1 overbuilders, who launch marketing and messaging focused on speed and price. Oberlin has faced an ongoing threat to their membership from a large tier 1 competitor who overbuilt Oberlin and continued to drop their prices and invest in a marketing budget that exceeds Oberlin’s entire annual revenue.

Oberlin is a small non-profit and decided they weren’t going to get caught up in what Jay Shrewsbury, general manager, terms as the “fiber wars.” Shrewsbury recognized that a strategy based on bandwidth wasn’t the solution, as everyone knows the bandwidth members consume and need.

Instead, Oberlin needed to develop a strategy to stand out against a large competitor and change the narrative. To do this, Shrewsbury pivoted to place “everything” on service and member satisfaction. He also identified a gap in the community’s knowledge about speed and price, leading Oberlin to provide education for members who didn’t understand they’d never fully utilize those speeds and were overpaying for them.



### COMPANY

Oberlin Cable Co-op

### COMPANY TYPE

Member-owned cable operator

### WEBSITE

[oberlin.net](http://oberlin.net)

### LOCATION

Oberlin, Ohio

### SERVICES

Residential and business services including HFC internet, video, voice, and managed services

### SUBSCRIBERS

2,400 homes passed; 88% penetration (2,200 subscribers)



## The Solution

In December 2022, Oberlin launched a new advanced managed Wi-Fi service deploying GigaSpires behind their cable modems that also bundles in network security and parental controls. They include ProtectIQ with each install, and ExperienceIQ is an optional upsell. Offering a superior managed Wi-Fi service is a differentiating subscriber benefit for Oberlin. Their protected Wi-Fi is superior to most consumer Wi-Fi, easily managed, and is offered at an affordable price.

Following up with the Calix managed Wi-Fi in Q4 2022, Oberlin launched Bark in November 2023 in just five weeks. Bark is a comprehensive parental control tool, designed to protect children and community members from the potential dangers associated with online activities.

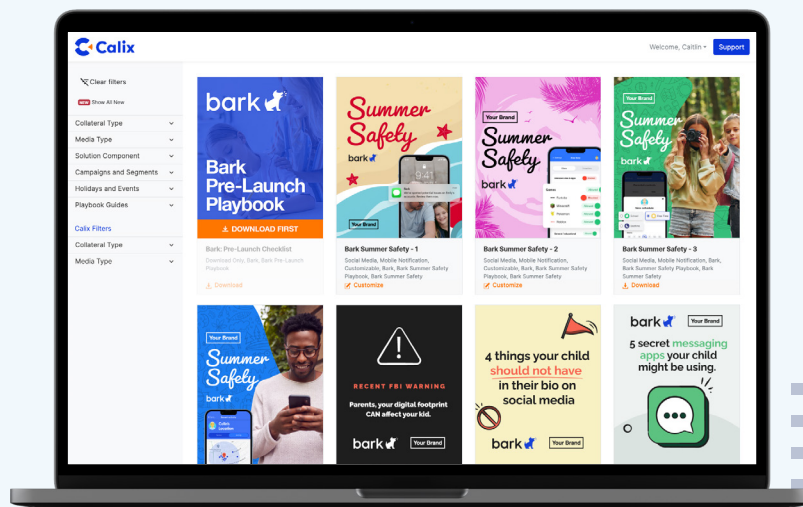
In collaboration with The City of Oberlin's Equity Division, Oberlin is offering Bark available to its members at a special rate of just \$4.95 per month, a significant 60% discount off the retail price. This initiative has garnered the endorsement of the Oberlin Police Chief and has received widespread support from local schools, libraries, and various community partners who share our commitment to enhancing online safety in Oberlin.

*"Bark is all about protecting the minds of our youth and loved ones. The level of security this managed service offers affects every household and member within our community in a positive, impactful way and has become a shared initiative among our local leaders."*

**Jay Shrewsbury,**  
General Manager,  
Oberlin Cable Co-op

### ECB

To spread awareness about the speed and price "fiber wars," Oberlin leaned on the Calix Electronic Content Builder (ECB) to develop marketing and educational materials for their members. The ECB is a unique self-service tool, allowing Oberlin to choose from a vast library of creative templates with built-in messaging and customizable formats.





## Case Study

### The Results

Oberlin has achieved zero negative losses to membership and extremely high member satisfaction.

To date, they've achieved a 24 percent residential managed Wi-Fi penetration that doubled their original forecast. Most importantly, they've seen incredible numbers correlated with member satisfaction. Oberlin has seen a 45 percent increase in Wi-Fi subscribers, a 44 percent increase in Wi-Fi generated revenue, and 45 percent net margin generated.

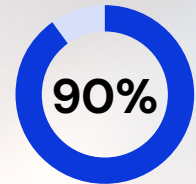
Members are not only signing up, and staying, they're also finding it easier to work with Oberlin. Unlike the long response times from the competition, Oberlin is fast to respond and has seen a 53 percent reduction in Wi-Fi related tech calls. Members are also quick to spread word-of-mouth about Oberlin's fantastic service. When a new resident inquired about who provided the "best Wi-Fi," (not the fastest internet), the Facebook community was quick to cite Oberlin.

Due to significant net margin gains from their managed Wi-Fi launch, Oberlin plans to invest in additional Calix managed services.

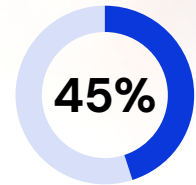
Want to learn more? Set up a [consultation](#).

*"Calix managed Wi-Fi is a great product. It's easy to manage, and people absolutely love it. I'm seeing member satisfaction rates going up. Since we've launched with Calix, our Wi-Fi trouble calls have decreased by 53%. That figure alone should make this service worth looking into. On top of that, we hold 90 percent market share. For a small co-op, that's huge. I've actually managed to increase membership as these companies come in, overbuild us, and undercut our prices. Without Calix, I'm not sure I'd see this success. It comes from a mindset shift, turning away from speed and price to differentiating with an exceptional member experience—and it's paid off."*

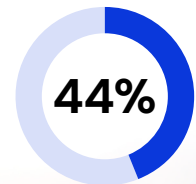
**Jay Shrewsbury, General Manager,  
Oberlin Cable Co-op**



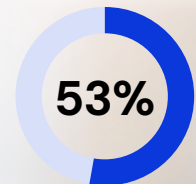
Market Share



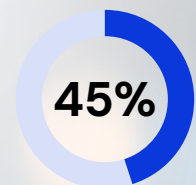
Increase in Wi-Fi  
Subscribers



Increase in Wi-Fi  
Generated Revenue



Reduction in Wi-Fi  
Related Tech Calls



Net Margin Generated