

El Tu(r)bo de Carlos

■ One of the few remaining Villas in the sea of apartment buildings in the Ipiranga quarter of Sao Paulo. No one has any idea that there's a small but energetic satellite dealer and installer headquartered here. The satellite antennas can't be seen from the street.

- **Successful online shop**
- **Ships to every corner of Brazil**
- **Interesting niche products**
- **Hardly heard of: tube to improve circular signal reception**

A Psychologist Sells Reception Equipment

The somewhat convoluted path to a successful online business



■ Carlos Augusto de Quadros in front of his home that at the same time doubles as the headquarters of his Internet shop. Two dishes are located in front of the door; the upper 60cm dish is aligned with HISPASAT at 30W while the lower 38cm antenna receives the Sky package on INTELSAT 11 at 43W.

Carlos Augusto de Quadros very proudly shows us his student ID: he's studying Psychology. What does that have to do with digital TV? "It helps me with my online store", he explains to us. He's been selling products for antenna builders and satellite system installers since 2006. But it all started long before that.

"My father started it all in 1977 by installing antennas. Of course, back then they were used for terrestrial TV." Carlos would go to school in the morning and then help his father in the afternoon with these antenna installations. "I stood below with a walkie talkie and told my father which way he should turn the antenna." While his father later on moved on to a different line of work, namely the installation of lightning arrestors, young Carlos could not give up installing antennas. Then in 1991 came his first satellite

dish: "It was a 2.4-meter antenna that was pointed to the then-popular BRASILSAT 1 satellite." Carlos found the meaning of life. In 1992 he started his own business Omega-sat. Why Omega? "Simple, it's a nice name." In just his second year, his business took off - Brazilians had discovered satellite reception. "I installed at least one satellite antenna every day, sometimes it was two or even three a day." With the help of two others he managed to install 400 antennas a year.

His best year was in 1994 when he installed 2000 systems. But he began to realize that the demand for materi-

als was increasing so he started selling installation components. But he was young and wanted first to finish with school and then study at a university. "I was always interested in Psychology and so I started working towards that." It was an unusual combination that in the end helped him out with his customers. But no matter what, he now had a college degree. "I could



1. All the satellite cables meet here. Seven satellite receivers are used for reception. The 3D channel from RedeTV can be seen on Carlos' flat screen monitor. It can be received all over Brazil via STARONE 2 in C-band.

2. Carlos demonstrates to us using a Trimax signal analyzer that there's no problem with reception. "It's the only satellite that can be received in Brazil with such a small antenna."



always work at something else”, says Carlos who is free to do what he wants. But he’s too much of a TV enthusiast; anything else would probably just irritate him. He runs his business together with his daughter: “I might have to hire a helper soon.”

So how is his business doing? “I sell about 1000 receivers a year. In 2011 70% of them were HD models, 20% SD models and 10% analog boxes.” Receivers make up 60% of his sales followed by 30% LNBs and then 10% splitters and DiSEqC switches. “This adds up to about US\$100,000 dollars in sales a year.” For the future he’s expecting the number of combo receivers to increase thanks in large part to the strong expansion of the ISDB-T terrestrial network with all of its new HD channels.

At first glance the origin of his customers is surprising: “20% of my shipments go to the Pará province in northern Brazil. It’s a sparsely populated area and for that reason satellite reception is often the only way to get TV. And since those people might still be very poor, they somehow manage to get the money together and quite often buy the components from my shop.” It’s interesting to note that Carlos achieves only 30% of his sales from his own website (www.antenaomega-digital.net); 70% of his sales are generated by his presence on the Internet platform mercadolibre, the Brazilian version of eBay. Foreigners are another large customer segment; they want to watch their TV from home or TV in their native language. “On my website I show those who are interested what channels in what language can be received here.”

So, what’s this “Tubo” or “Turbo” from Carlos all about? “It’s an extension tube that amplifies the received circularly polarized signals in the C-band.” This tube with the reception probes is placed in front of the LNB and aids in the reception of weaker signals. “It replaces the Teflon tab that would otherwise be used to separate the cir-

1. Carlos sells all varieties of LNBs in his Internet store.

2. Sky took over DirecTV a few years ago. The dishes that were used for DirecTV became useless - that is until Carlos had a special adapter built for him. It lets you install the new LNBs on the old dishes; the small plastic adapter is still a bestseller for him.



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cular signals”, explains Carlos. As you can see, both names actually make sense: it’s a “Tubo” (tube) as well as a Turbo for satellite reception. “Only a few enthusiasts know about this and even fewer dealers sell this device.”

Carlos, the Psychologist, is always on the lookout for new ideas that he can offer to his customers. “I’m an optimist and I’m looking forward to the future”, says Carlos. There’s nothing to stop the continued growth of his small company .

1. The shelves are full of LNBs. Naturally Carlos also sells PFA LNBs for the Ku-band.

2. “El Tubo des Carlos”: with this extension tube Carlos improves the reception of circularly polarized signals.

3. A look inside this tube: multiple reception probes enhance the reception of circularly polarized signals.

4. Can you see the satellite dishes? Only if you look really close can you recognize the dishes: (from left to right) 60cm for SATMEX 6, 60cm for C2, 60cm for ESTRELLA DO SUL 2, 60cm for GALAXY 28, 80cm for TELSTAR 12, 160cm for NSS 806 in the C-Band, 130cm for INTELSAT 9 in the C-Band, 60cm for GALAXY 28 and to the far right 150cm for STARONE 2 in the C-Band