



Daniel F. (Dan) DiFonzo

Daniel (Dan) F. DiFonzo is the founder and president of Planar Communications Corporation (Planar). Since 1989 Dan, individually and with Planar teams, has provided technical and marketing services to major satellite communications organizations for both spacecraft communications payloads and advances in mobile satellite terminals largely based on phased array antenna technology.

Dan joined Comsat Laboratories in late 1969 in the Antenna Department of the Microwave Lab. He and fellow Lab colleagues were privileged to be part of the many significant developments in satellite communications including pioneering advances in the technologies of dual polarization frequency reuse and multiple shaped beam satellite antennas. Dan had several positions at Comsat including several management positions at the Labs, a year in Corporate Development and, upon returning to the Labs he was vice president and assistant director of Comsat Laboratories. He was also VP and general manager of Comsat's Systems Division before starting his own company in 1989.

Dan and his company, Planar, has been engaged by major spacecraft companies such as Lockheed Martin, Space Systems Loral and O3b (SES). He had a leading role with Motorola for the first-generation Iridium phased array multiple beam satellite antennas. He worked with Matsushita (Panasonic) for the development and commercialization of a flat panel antenna for direct broadcast satellites (DBS) reception that he had fathered while at Comsat and that became a commercial product in Japan.

He acted as CTO and had leadership roles at several companies including: Gilat/RaySat, Phasor Solutions, Isotropic Systems, and Parry Labs for advanced developments and commercialization of low-profile mobile SATCOM flat panel and phased array terminals.

He received the BEE degree from Villanova University, Villanova, PA, the MS degree from California State University, Northridge, CA, and he completed the doctoral course requirements at George Washington University, Washington, DC.

Dan has authored or co-authored more than thirty publications and conference presentations, authored four book chapters, including the chapter on Satellites and Aerospace for the CRC Electrical Engineering Handbook, and taught courses in satellite technologies and antennas. He is an inventor or co-inventor for 11 patents and several further patent applications.

He was a member of the National Research Council Panel on Assessment of National Institute of Standards & Technology Programs and he was a member of the IEEE Committee on Communications and Information Policy. He is a Senior Member of the AIAA, and a Life Member of the IEEE Communications Society and the Antennas and Propagation Society, having served as Chairman of the Washington, DC AP-S Chapter during 1981-1982. In 1986 he was a member of a US Government (NTIA) and industry group that visited China to study that nation's telecommunications status. He is the recipient of a Marquis Who's Who Lifetime Achievement Award.