THE DIGITAL TV SWITTOVER
TOP TIPS FOR MAKING IT TO THE OTHER SIDE

Your digital switchover plan is in itself a living and breathing ecosystem that needs to be managed and maintained on a regular basis.

My name is Matt Seaman, Platforms Director, Inview and I’ve been involved in the digital switchover process with the UK and Nigeria. In this document I want to share with you some insights that will help you keep on track throughout your project across the good, the bad and the down right ugly.

My top tip for helping you get to the other side and cultivating a healthy digital TV environment is to really focus on careful planning at the before stage. All your groundwork here will ensure the during and after stages come together with minimum disruption to the plan.

Enjoy working on your switchover project; you really are changing the nation.

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DOING THE GROUNDWORK – THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOUR SWITCHOVER TAKES PLACE:

TECHNOLOGY
Consider the TVs people own, along with the new technology of a set top box. Will new technology be provided, subsidized or advised upon? Ensuring relevant advice is available for viewers helps them understand what their current situation is and if they will have to change – always remember when it comes to viewers this is mandatory so support on education and understanding of technology is very important.

INFRASTRUCTURE
This can cover numerous things; Are there relevant power supplies / masts for signal / coverage, reception and interference / aerial upgrades? Do people even have electrical infrastructure in more remote areas? All infrastructure must be reviewed and/or put in place, this may be different region by region so ensure to check carefully when doing your country switchover – there will be time and cost implications to this so working it into the schedule early is essential.

PEOPLE
Get everyone involved from project managers in government, local/regional councils, operators and broadcasters in your country, local technology providers, volunteers who can help support the switchover – everyone needs to know about the whole journey you’ll all be going on together.

CULTURE
Adoption of services is heavily dependent on socio-economics and demographics, make sure there is support and education available for those in need. From our experience the elderly demographic often need more help.

TRAINING
Education, training and support, there are many people working on the switchover project and developing the technology and infrastructure along with those people who may provide services and advice to the customer/user during the switchover. Everyone needs training and this needs to be to an adequate standard depending on how heavily involved they are with support services.

TIME
Allow plenty of time to execute and go through the switchover journey, take the time to ensure all your infrastructure is set up and everyone is trained ensuring a smoother experience for the rest of the switchover (for example in African countries there is more infrastructure work to be done in the before stages for the switchover to take place).

PHASED APPROACH
Don’t attempt to switch over an entire country in one fell swoop. Instead, focus on one city/region at a time this will usually be dependent on population and infrastructure but needs to be looked at on a case by case basis.

TRANSITION
Everyone must be told about the switchover in advance to help the transition be as smooth as possible. Depending on the project the transition from analogue to digital may involve freeview television, pay-TV or a mix of both. Always remember this is mandatory for viewers so a smooth transition helps lead to a positive outcome.

SUPPORT
Provide a customer support service
• Share platform knowledge
• Customer enquiries – From set top box advice to service setup and retuning during the switchover. Having people there to answer questions is essential
• Troubleshooting – Pixilation / tuning, disappearing channels and freezing.

TRIAGE
It is important to consider the manufacturer of all set top boxes needed for customers who want the ability to view digital TV after the switchover. Some things to think about are:
• Depending on the project the transition from analogue to digital may involve freeview television, pay-TV or a mix of both?
• Do you have the right transmitters and technical support in place?
• If you are going to provide national support, there must be people who know how the setup and retuning on all available set top boxes work.

COST
Consider the costs to both the country and individual. Careful planning and management of funds and compliance are both important to serve a successful switchover.
• Subsidizing is a popular practice by governments and regulatory bodies - make sure you explore this option at an early stage.
Things to think about for on the day of the digital TV switchover:

**CONSISTENCY**
There must be a consistent message delivered throughout the whole process to avoid confusion. This consistency is key during the actual switchover but is also very useful before and after to ensure that viewers are comfortable with moving from analogue to digital.

**STICKING TO THE PLAN**
It’s important not to veer away from the strategies put in place during the before phase. Things may take longer than originally planned for but always keep the end goal in mind; this keeps everyone on the same page.

**CHANGE MANAGEMENT**
The switchover is mandatory so it’s worth ensuring everyone is onboard and change management is in place and adherence to any changes in the switchover process is important.

**TERRITORY**
Different regions/territories/cities often switch over on different days – it’s imperative to think about the preparation for each area.
- Expect an increase in contact volumes before, during, and a few days after each area/regional switchover.
- Allow for enough, but not too much time between each area’s switchover within one country.

**RESOURCES**
Are all of your resources in place and easy to utilize? This includes contact centres and people on the ground. Is the technology ready when you hit go?

**AVAILABILITY AND SCALABILITY**
Will there be extra people available at times of need when various territories switch over in phases? Scaling up and down for support with people or technology helps you work through the switchover with more ease.

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**BEFORE**
Getting started is often the hardest part. It’s definitely the longest part. All the time spent planning and preparing will pave the way for a smooth switchover experience.

**DURING**
Delivering a great switchover experience means putting the consumer first and making the process easy to understand and follow – for everyone.

**AFTER**
You may think your work is done, but there will be re-tuning work to be done and ultimately there is the question of content monetisation.

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**THE BIG SWITCH – IT ALL COMES TOGETHER ON A SINGLE DAY (OR SERIES OF DAYS)**

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**DAVID SCOTT CBE**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
digitaluk

“I am most grateful to you, and all your staff, for handling the digital television switchover customer interface so professionally. You are making a really terrific impact on helping those who need advice”

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For more information please visit digital-switchover.tv or get in touch:

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