

DTV Transition Talking Points

Talking Points for the June 12 Digital Television (DTV) Transition

Television stations and state broadcast associations can expect to receive calls from the news media on and after June 12, 2009. To help communicate the broadcaster message to these news outlets, the National Association of Broadcasters has developed the following talking points to help stations and association spokespeople best represent the good work our industry has done in promoting the transition and helping viewers to prepare. Please feel free to use the points below under each subject heading.

Reporters will be most interested in the number of calls stations are receiving, and any problems viewers may be having. It is important that industry spokespeople convey accurate information in a positive light, continuing to highlight the success of the transition and the benefits to viewers.

Please do not hesitate to contact NAB's DTV transition team at (202) 429-5493 if you need assistance or have further questions.

Station Preparedness

Questions like: How many calls has your station received?

What did stations do to help viewers prepare?

- Our station has received XXXX calls, well within the range we were expecting.
 - Our station and others in the market have been vigorously preparing viewers for the switch to digital for the past two years.
 - The industry as a whole has spent more than \$1.2 billion educating consumers on the switch, on top of more than \$5 billion updating the entire broadcast infrastructure.
 - According to a national survey of television stations conducted by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), 9 out of 10 stations have conducted analog shut-off tests to help viewers determine if their television sets are digital-ready. Broadcast networks and local stations in more than 120 markets also participated in a national shut-off test on May 21 to urge viewers to get ready and test the national call center.
 - Stations have intensified their efforts over the past couple of weeks and have also been airing additional PSAs focused on the nuts-and-bolts of upgrading. Stations have also aired crawls and tickers in addition to public affairs programming and including coverage of the transition in their newscasts.
 - As part of the final push, networks and stations nationwide aired a special series of countdown spots that marked the final weeks, days and hours left before the DTV transition.
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Viewer Preparedness

Questions like: Were viewers ready for this?

What about viewers who weren't ready?

- The vast majority of affected viewers are ready, and awareness has been completely saturated in our market for months.
 - More than 98% of viewers were aware of the DTV transition in an April NAB poll; and more than 4 in 5 broadcast only homes had already taken steps to receive digital signals. Broadcasters met their goal of ensuring that every viewer knew about the transition.
 - We always knew that some viewers wouldn't make the transition in time. Our goal wasn't to change human nature – there are some folks who, no matter what prodding, won't turn awareness into action.
 - For example, 4.5 million eligible seniors did not sign up for the Medicare prescription drug benefit despite a deadline and an enormous campaign.
 - Possible Media Retort: But Nielsen's latest report says XXX number of homes are still not ready! Nielsen's measure of 'complete' unreadiness is inflated, because it does not account for people who have not installed their converter boxes yet or those who have coupons but have not yet redeemed them. Currently more than XXX coupons are active but not yet redeemed, and NAB research shows that nearly 40 percent of converter box owners have yet to hook up their boxes. Viewers who have bought converter boxes but have not yet set them up should not be considered "completely unready."
 - Because digital broadcasts are different, some viewers may need time to work through some of the same issues in digital as they had to get satisfactory analog signals. We are standing by to help any of our viewers who have trouble upgrading.
 - Some viewers who didn't test their equipment before the transition may temporarily experience problems receiving digital signals. In most cases, these problems can be easily resolved by phone.
 - In most cases, viewers will receive the same channels in digital that they received in the analog format, plus additional digital channels through multicasting. However some viewers may lose certain channels after the transition if the channels originate outside their market.
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Steps consumers should take today and tomorrow

- Viewers need to make sure their equipment is properly installed and rescan their converter box or digital TV set following the transition to make sure they can pick up all the DTV channels available.
 - In most cases, stations are broadcasting DTV signals in the UHF frequency band, so consumers should make sure they have a UHF/VHF antenna.
 - Viewers may need to reposition their antennas to ensure the best reception of DTV signals. To determine which antenna is best for your particular location, visit www.antennaweb.org.
 - If viewers have taken all the necessary steps and are still having trouble, they should contact the toll-free FCC number for help or call the station they're having trouble receiving.
 - Viewers who have not yet received their coupons should make sure at least one of the TV sets can receive digital signals so they can continue receiving television programming after the transition.
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Help for Consumers

Questions like: Where are consumers going for help?

What resources are available to folks who haven't made the switch?

- If your station is running a "nightlight" video or programming: After the transition, viewers in some high over-the-air markets can still access critical DTV-related information over their analog signals via NAB's educational video, which explains the basics behind the DTV transition and demonstrates how to hook up converter boxes, properly position antennas and scan for channels. Available in English and Spanish, it runs eight and a half minutes in length and is open captioned to be accessible for people with disabilities.
 - Stations are promoting the FCC's national number, **1-888-CALL-FCC**. The number is being staffed by thousands of live operators and will be available 24 hours a day.
 - Stations are offering local help and advice as well and will take calls from viewers referred by the FCC's national hotline.
 - NAB and local broadcasters are coordinating with the FCC to promote the 400-plus walk-in centers that are available nationwide to help consumers make the upgrade to DTV. Viewers can visit the FCC's Web site at www.DTV.gov to see if a walk-in center is located in their area.
 - At least 97% of television stations across the country, according to the NAB survey, have helped viewers by phone. If there are specific questions involving local DTV issues that national operators are unable to answer, viewers will be provided with the phone numbers for their top local stations to contact directly.
 - In some cities, DTV assistance centers are also available to aid consumers in the process. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights is operating several of these centers.
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Coupon Program

- The coupon program is still accepting applications for free \$40 coupons while supplies last. Every U.S. household is eligible to apply by calling 1-888-DTV-2009 or visiting www.DTV2009.gov. It should take 8-10 days for a coupon to arrive in the mail.
 - Coupons are transferable. Consumers can use unredeemed coupons from family and friends.
 - There is help available for elderly and disabled consumers who need a coupon or help obtaining and connecting a converter box. The National Association for Area Agencies on Aging is offering help through more than 100 local agencies nationwide.
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Technical Issues

Analog vs. Digital TV

Digital TV is different than analog. The vast majority of viewers surveyed by the National Association of Broadcasters report receiving far superior pictures and sound quality and more channels in digital than in analog. However, because the technology is different, reception is different, and some viewers with older antennas and in rural areas may lose reception of some channels. Broadcasters are standing by to help our viewers who may have reception trouble after making the upgrade.

Postage stamp effect

Digital TV does not have a smaller picture than analog TV, but many digital programs are produced with wider pictures intended for viewing on widescreen TV sets. When these programs are displayed on an analog TV with a converter box, black bars may frame the top, bottom or sides of the picture. However, the viewer can adjust for these variations using the remote control for the converter box. In fact, all converter boxes certified for the government's coupon program must include a feature that allows adjusting the digital picture to fill up the screen. Simply find a button on the remote with a label such as "zoom" or "aspect ratio," and keep pressing it until the picture looks right.

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Positive Overview

Questions like: Why is this happening?

Why is it important?

- The DTV transition represents a revolutionary change in television technology that will improve the television experience for viewers with crystal-clear pictures and sound. It also gives stations the opportunity to offer more free programming and channels than ever before – including free over-the-air HD for viewers who have HD sets.
- Broadcasters' number one concern is viewers and we are here to help. We've been participating in a massive consumer education campaign – the largest in television history – to prepare viewers for the switch and we'll continue to help our viewers through the process beyond June 12.
- The television industry's DTV consumer education campaign has been tremendously successful: there is universal awareness of the DTV transition and our messages have penetrated the most vulnerable over-the-air populations, including minorities, seniors and rural communities who are equally as prepared as the overall population.
- Americans are reaping the benefits of DTV. In a recent NAB survey, 75% percent of digital-ready households said they received better quality reception across all broadcast channels after upgrading to digital with a converter box. Among those households, nearly half (or 47 percent) saw a "major improvement" in their overall television reception. More than half (or 54 percent) of broadcast-only TV households are receiving more channels since purchasing a new digital TV set within the past 18 months.
- Broadcasters are working closely with our government partners at the FCC to ensure viewers get the help they need. Viewers can call the national DTV hotline at **1-888-CALL-FCC** to get answers to their questions about the transition. Callers who have questions that can't be answered by the FCC's call center operators will be referred to local broadcasters who can help them.