

Lights, camera, ACTION: How to launch a TV channel successfully

By [Doron Revivi](#)

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NEVE ILAN, ISRAEL: Establishing a TV channel is no easy feat. In order to achieve a successful launch, many factors need to be considered. This can be a daunting task as decisions need to be made as to how the channel will be distributed, how to create, purchase, collate and manage content rights, in what regions the content resonate, localisation, archiving and how to manage the station as effectively as possible whilst generating revenues from the output whether it is via a pay channel or Free-To-Air (FTA). All in all the aim is to provide high quality content to your target audience and the list of considerations may seem endless.



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Achieving this alone is difficult, which is why we are seeing many new TV channels and stations are looking for specialist partners to work alongside them and take away many of those initial headaches. By working hand-in-hand with a partner that can provide a full end-to-end service, the launch of a TV Channel should pave the way for successful ongoing relationship and provide a model to benefit the broadcast industry.

Selecting the right method of distribution

A key priority when launching a new TV channel is ensuring it has interesting, newsworthy and high-quality content. But it's not just about having the content; channel owners need to think about how it will be managed and distributed to the target audience.

This leads to the first decision; what is the channel's business model? The broadcaster needs to assess whether they will generate revenue from the pay-TV's, who will sell and market the channel to its subscriber base, or whether they go down the FTA route and sell commercials. This decision will influence the next question as to how the channel will distribute content. Should they distribute via fibre, satellite or over IP? Should they opt to launch on a satellite then which one should they go for? For example, do you go for a satellite that addresses the DTH market or a contribution satellite to reach the pay-TV's? Or one that reaches both? The internet may have global reach and be cheaper and faster to implement, and broadcasting directly to a customer may be more straightforward, but channels also need to consider that broadcasting through a pay-TV provider could reach more viewers. It all depends on the channel's preference and cost factors. But this is the ultimate start-up decision.

Moreover, what may be the right distribution for the channel now may not be the same in five or ten year's time. Broadcast technology and the way in which audiences consume content changes at a rapid pace and the method of distribution may need to adapt to meet the ever-changing demands of end consumers. A TV Channel owner needs to find a partner that has flexibility and the experience in video signal handling to distribute content impeccably via different methods and across

different platforms, whether via TV or mobile devices, if they are to secure a successful future.

Selecting the right services for a broadcasters needs

A key factor broadcasters are increasingly considering is the requirement for a one-stop-shop to provide them with the most advanced technology and services ranging from content pick-up, manipulation, transcoding, storage to playout and distribution. Finding a provider to offer these services is extremely advantageous, as it can cut a lot of time and extra costs such as deploying additional technology that a channel would not use to its maximum capability. Moreover, broadcasters can rely on the provider to manage the technology without investing in additional internal resources and training staff.

The channel will need to meet potential partners, explain their end goals, and work out a best method to playout, archive and deliver the content to the target audience in the most effective approach. Some channels may need to consider quality vs. price, and think about whether they would like to broadcast in SD, HD or even 4K. There will be a price behind each service and this is dependent on the channel's specific budget and business model.

Broadcast service providers need to be able to stand out against the competition, and a way in which this can be done is through the level of service and guidance they offer new channels. Being there from day one to offer consultation can prove invaluable to a successful launch. Something which SatLink focuses on heavily is being there to help a channel succeed, and if need be, advise on how to improve services.

One area, for example, that is critical to many TV Channel operations is the ability to localise the content and create new feeds to suit audiences in different regions. A good provider will have the expertise to advise on any regional idiosyncrasies and manage and localise content as required, for example, through dubbing, subtitles or Qtone insertion for local advertising. This removes this management headache from the broadcasters. Providers will also have the flexibility to not only manage the content according to your specifications, but also manage the ad inserts and take overall responsibility for archiving the content so it is easily accessible in the future. Partners need to have the ability to react quickly and serve new feeds so the channel can close deals and maximise available business opportunities.

Potential challenges

Time limitation is one of the biggest challenges in launching a new TV Channel. Setting up the operations to broadcast content fast is something that can be achieved with structured procedures. For occasional users, setting up quickly for sport or event coverage is at many times a priority, and by offering a prompt turnaround, a partner will appreciate and trust their distributor. This is one of the reasons why broadcasters should look to providers that also offer these Occasional Use services as it demonstrates they have the capability to offer fast deployment of services when required, which could be advantageous to the channel in the long term.

Creating market awareness of a new channel is also another hurdle to leap across, and how you market the channel will play a big part in its success. If you decide to use a Pay-TV platform, viewers need to know you're there. A specialist provider, with contacts in the different territories and markets, will be able to guide the broadcasters with who to engage

with and potentially introduce them to relevant distributors to help them sell the channel to the pay-TV's. With the right partner, guidance can be given into how best to approach this challenge to gain maximum traction and market awareness with the resources available.

Creating a successful partnership and continued success

Creating a good partnership between the channel operator and technical service provider is a vital component in growing and flourishing in the broadcast market. Offering a flexible service with a quick to implement time frame is an added bonus and channels can take advantage of this opportunity whilst being accompanied through the launching process. With a myriad of components to think about broadcasters want a partner that can proactively take ownership of the technical and content management processes so that they can focus efforts on other areas of the business.

After investing a lot of time and effort, and after a successful launch, it is important to continue to provide support and guidance. As channel owners look at the sale, purchase and production of the channel, distributors such as SatLink are providing something other providers don't: reassurance and diminished risk. Broadcasters can have the full 'trouble free' package as they rely on the expertise of the distributor and by taking into account all of these factors and implementing the correct procedures from the outset, a long and well-respected partnership can be formed.

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