



stv statement 2009

Overall strategy / major themes for the year

stv, which holds the broadcast licences for the central and northern regions of Scotland, has a clear vision to be Scotland's most influential, relevant, innovative and trusted media brand. We are distinctly Scottish, have a strong recognisable brand and market positioning, and are well placed to deliver creative and relevant programming for our viewers across Scotland.

The company is also at the heart of news and current affairs in Scotland and performs a vital educational role in the life of the nation, providing a platform for new talent and internship for those wishing to embark on a career in broadcasting.

At the heart of stv is the fervent belief in public service broadcasting, the celebration of regional difference and the production of culturally authentic Scottish content. Our plans for 2009 highlight our commitment to an increased level of locally produced, high quality Scottish content, in line with our promise to take greater control of our schedule.

Ofcom is due to report back on its Review of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in 2009 and the results of this will inform our strategy for the future. stv is fully committed to being a public service broadcaster, serving Scotland as part of a strong Channel 3 network.

We reject the idea of a single UK-wide Channel 3 licence, an idea which has been mooted by both Ofcom and ITV, as we believe the interests of Scotland, and of the Nations and Regions of the UK, are best served by the retention of the Channel 3 network with dedicated licences providing strong relevant content for regional audiences.

We believe that plurality of news services is crucial and that public service beyond the BBC is critical. stv is committed to delivering our comprehensive Scottish news service, which is highly valued by viewers, alongside a wide range of creative non-news programming.

As a commercial broadcaster, our primary target demographic is all adults across Scotland, plus 16-34s and ABC1s as a specific target group, and in 2009 we will aim to maintain our position as the most popular peak time station in Scotland.

We will continue our strategy of experimenting with, and taking greater control of, our regional schedule and intend to deliver even more non-news programming for 2009. For example, we plan to establish a late evening Scottish slot, which will bring with it a wealth of opportunities for creative scheduling. Ideas at the moment include the creation of music, entertainment and factual slots, showing content that is relevant to a Scottish audience and will appeal to varying demographics.

stv can and does deliver PSB in a digital age, across platforms. Our digital strategy will be intensified in 2009, enhancing our current online offering involving catch-up services, archive programming and bespoke content made specifically for the website. Plans around the Homecoming are well underway and this will encompass exclusive programming and online activities, as well as engaging with our staff to celebrate this initiative. We also plan to launch a new news site, utilising our well-resourced newsgathering operation across the country to ensure the best, most comprehensive news coverage online.

2009 brings stv even closer to Digital Switch Over (DSO) and we will work closely with Digital UK in Scotland to communicate this initiative to our viewers, making the switch as seamless as possible. stv north is due for switch over in 2010 and stv central in 2011, so 2009 will be a crucial year for transition.

Ofcom recognises the important role that stv plays in the delivery of PSB and given that the current model is economically unsustainable for commercial broadcasters, we are focussed on developing ideas for new models for PSB delivery in future. stv cannot be regarded in the same way as the English regions and throughout 2009 we will work hard to safeguard our distinct service which is highly valued by viewers.

Significant Changes

This statement is written on the basis of the proposals in Ofcom's PSB Review and under this, stv's non-news production requirements will be a minimum of 1.5 hours per week.

In 2009, stv will continue to have a minimum obligation for MG ALBA funded Gaelic in peak time viewing and we will also be required to air MG ALBA funded material in non-peak viewing.

stv will continue to produce regionally funded Gaelic programming but at a minimum level to be agreed with Ofcom.

Innovation, Experiment and Creativity

In our digital age, increasing numbers of viewers are going onto stv.tv to catch up on news, programming and entertainment. We launched our world class video site last year, which allows viewers to catch up or access archive programmes, and we plan to develop our online offering further. We will create bespoke programming for the web and intend to launch a new news site, aiming to engage with our audience in innovative ways online.

In 2008 we experimented with our schedule, opting out of the network where we felt it would be of benefit to both ourselves and our viewers. In 2009, we plan to experiment even more with creative scheduling, and will strive to develop recognised stv slots, featuring regular recognisable genres with strong Scottish content.

Tier 2 arrangements

Our programme plans for 2009 are designed to meet or exceed all minimum licence quotas for stv.

In non-news, each licence will share a total of 1.5 hours of programming per week, making a total of 78 hours across the year. This will include 29 hours of current affairs. The number of hours of licence funded Gaelic is to be confirmed. This total of 78 hours may be subject to change following Ofcom's final decision.

The schedule for 2009 has not yet been confirmed but we have a host of original programming planned, covering a range of genres from entertainment to factual, sport and current affairs, utilising both regional and network slots.

stv very much regards these figures as a floor, not a ceiling, and we plan to outperform our targets in non-news.

We are confident that we will meet our targets in relation to independent productions in 2009 via the Network. stv remains supportive of the independent production community and we will commission independent productions on a merit basis. At our headquarters in Pacific Quay we have been able to offer favourable rates for independent production companies to use our third floor space and post production facilities. In the past year we have built fruitful relationships with Shed Productions, Talkback and Modern Media and we hope to further develop our ties with the independent production community going forward.

We plan to subtitle all of our regional programming in 2009.

Programme Offer

News

Ofcom's research shows that four fifths of people agreed with the statement 'TV is an important source of news about my nation/region', and this rises to 90% in each of the devolved nations. The same survey showed that almost nine in ten people thought it important that the main TV channels provide nations and regions news and that plural supply is highly valued. (Ofcom's Second PSB Review: Phase 2) To this end, we will invest in our news service and work hard at ensuring we provide excellent, comprehensive, impartial coverage both nationally, regionally and locally via our flagship news programmes, *Scotland Today* and *North Tonight*. We are absolutely committed to providing our valued news service, offering a strong alternative to the BBC.

It is evident that news is highly valued by the people of Scotland but is commercially unattractive. As part of our submission to Ofcom's PSB Review we have made the case for a small public subsidy in the longer term to maintain our comprehensive news service.

North Tonight and *Scotland Today* will continue to provide high quality, accessible and original news stories for strong audiences at 6pm every evening. In addition to our main 30 minute evening programmes, we will provide a 5 minute insert into the ITV Lunchtime News and headlines into the evening and late ITN news, across both

regions. We will continue with our split-news local bulletins for the north and south regions of stv north's transmission area; and the east and west regions of the stv central transmission area. These sections are often the most popular parts of the programmes and we are delighted to have invested in this valuable infrastructure and presentation to deliver for our audiences.

We will continue to have journalists based in our production centres in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Inverness, Aberdeen, at Holyrood and Westminster, allowing us to deliver comprehensive coverage throughout the year.

Both *Scotland Today* and *North Tonight* achieve very positive audience shares, consistently beating their main 6pm competition of the BBC national news. In 2009 we will continue to deliver a range and balance of fresh, relevant news stories and in-depth, critical reports where necessary.

Behind both of our regional news programmes is an ethos of story telling and connecting with our viewers. We want to bring them the news that matters to them in an accessible and friendly format.

Interactivity is key to our news offering and in 2008 we vastly improved our online offering with an increased dedicated online news team. The news section of our website, stv.tv, is fed by reports from *Scotland Today* and *North Tonight* and is the most popular section of the website. In 2009, we intend to enhance further the depth and range of news content on the site and will be launching a new news site with a breaking news facility making our news immediate, relevant to Scotland and accessible on more than one platform.

We offer the option of downloading reports from the programmes, which is a very popular service with our viewers. Live programming streaming has proved to be very popular and will continue to be developed. We'll continue to welcome viewer's news via email and mobile phone and continue to connect with our viewers via our daily online blogs.

We once again hope to be involved in the People's Millions, giving profile to worthy community projects across the country and inviting viewers to vote via text or phone for the project they think most deserves to win a cash sum.

News is of key importance to us at stv and to our viewers and to this end we are appealing to Ofcom for a small public subsidy to maintain the high quality service we currently provide moving forward.

We would also be happy to provide a dedicated news service for the Scottish areas of the Border Television region, providing Borders news in the context of a wider Scottish news programme, and have advised both ITV and Ofcom of this. Our existing infrastructure and the success of our current local opt-outs means we are well-placed to serve this area.

b) Current Affairs

stv remains committed to strong current affairs programming, reflecting politics and wider issues to our viewers. We have an experienced and dedicated political team, all of whom bring a wealth of experience to our current affairs output.

In 2009 we envisage our weekly current affairs programme, *Politics Now*, returning. Hosted by our political correspondent, Michael Crow, the show will cover all of the political action and issues from Holyrood, with debates and interviews each week. As and when the political climate requires, we will opt out of the Network schedule to bring viewers lively debates on local by-elections and significant political events.

Our *five thirty show* often allows current affairs to be covered in a more accessible way for viewers via its magazine style format.

c) Other Programmes

At time of publication, the 2009 stv schedule was in the process of being finalised. Whilst our quota will reduce to 1.5 hours per week in 2009, we regard this as a floor and not a ceiling. We will over-deliver at our own commercial risk and commit to doing more in 2009 than in 2008. With Alan Clements on board as stv's Director of Content, we have exciting plans for dedicated first-run Scottish programmes with higher budgets and excellent production values. We intend to work with a range of UK digital partners to create appealing original productions, driving significant value into such programming via partnership deals. The ITV Network will be utilising a number of slots for the English FA Cup in 2009 and we regard this as an opportunity to invest in and showcase more home-grown Scottish programmes as part of the stv schedule.

We intend to experiment and diversify our programming, aiming to reach a wider audience than previous. Whilst our target audience continues to be all adults, we will develop a suite of programmes offering a strong mix of content in a shoulder-peak evening slot, aiming to capture targeted demographics. For example, we plan to bring football back into the schedule, aimed at a significantly male audience; and a music/entertainment show, directed towards a younger demographic. We also intend to introduce a factual strand, looking at the history and culture of Scotland.

Our daily magazine-style show, *the five thirty show*, will continue in 2009, continuing to develop after its 1st successful year with a new energy and focus. Focus group research carried out in 2008 revealed viewer affection with the programme and its presenters and we intend to build on the relationship, introducing stronger content and increased viewer interaction.

Our non-peak Gaelic offering includes a fascinating six-part series on astronomy; an exploration of the supernatural presented by Evelyn Coull; and an odyssey tracing one of Scotland's finest products, the salmon.

Our strong mix of planned original productions will be of relevance to viewers across both licence areas (north and central), reflecting cultural identity where relevant and engaging with the audience via high quality content.

We have expressed a desire for greater flexibility in the network schedule but are committed to significantly over-delivering in the area of non-news, as we have done in 2008. By opting out of the network schedule to show strong Scottish production, we remain consistent in our approach to delivering relevant, accessible programmes for our viewers, at our own commercial risk.

Additional Matters

Cultural and Other Diversity

stv remains committed to diversity both within our workforce and on-screen. For four years now we have received the 'Two Tick' award from Job Centre for inclusive employment practices and we aim to win this again in 2009.

We will continue to offer our one-minute programme opportunities, which offer minority groups in the community access to a broadcast audience. In 2009, we are investigating the idea of introducing one minute programmes for charities.

As reflected in earlier sections of this report, our content teams will work to pull together a varied schedule which reflects the distinctive cultures, institutions and communities across Scotland. We will continue to broadcast a common schedule for non-news across stv north and stv central, ensuring a broad range of regional and culturally diverse material is available across the country.

Promotion of Media Literacy

We will continue to make our viewers aware of the nature of the content on stv, allowing them to make informed decisions about their viewing and ensure that it is relevant and appropriate for them. We have dedicated announcers who are well knowledgeable regarding programme content and compliance procedures, ensuring viewers are fully informed via on-air announcements. stv's marketing and PR activities also strive to enlighten viewers as to the nature of our content.

We frequently promote our website and video site both on-air and in the press, allowing viewers to access additional information and support material on our programming as well as catch-up and archive services. With increasing numbers of viewers utilising online services, we will continue to update the content available via our video player which encourages viewers to engage with television via new technologies.

Content is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on stv.tv. This means that programming which may be broadcast on stv after the 9pm watershed will be available as part of the catch-up service at any time. Where there is an on-air warning given with the original transmission we will indicate this online with a G and give a short explanation as to the reason for guidance. There is also an option online to restrict access to content.

stv is a committed member of the Media Literacy Forum and will actively attend meetings in 2009. Throughout 2008, stv has engaged with a number of politicians and opinion formers to make clear our priorities as a Public Service Broadcaster moving forward in a digital era and these messages have in turn been relayed via the press and public debate, encouraging wider understanding.

Digital switchover for stv's two licensees takes place soon (stv north in 2010 and stv central in 2011) and we will work closely with Digital UK's representative in Scotland to communicate fully the implications of the initiative. Where possible, we will support the organisation via public relations, on-screen promotional information, via our current affairs programming and online at stv.tv and we have devised a comprehensive marketing plan to ensure a co-ordinated and effective approach. We

recognise that consumer knowledge is key to a successful switchover and we will help facilitate this as far as possible.

As a broadcaster we have been transparent about our place in the broadcasting landscape and have communicated this via many channels, including studio visits by the public, community groups, educational institutions and via presentations to industry groups and various organisations including SCDI and Chambers of Commerce. We will continue to work with a range of bodies in the related creative industries including SISG, BAFTA Scotland, RTS, SCDI and RSAMD, to promote awareness and understanding.

In 2008, we began a large public affairs campaign, engaging with politicians both in Holyrood and Westminster, and other interested bodies during the PSB Review. With many parties very interested in the future of broadcasting in Scotland, and indeed the future of stv itself, we will continue with this programme well into 2009 in order to safeguard the existence of what is a much-valued and recognised service for the people of Scotland and ex-pats across the world.

We will continue our relationship with Common Purpose, an organisation which works with adults and children to create fully engaged and properly informed citizens, to develop leaders of society. We anticipate studio visits at both our Glasgow and Aberdeen studios. We will also continue to open our doors to members of the public, educational institutions and community groups and will offer our usual range of studio visits, in a bid to encourage greater understanding of broadcasting in Scotland.

Public Input

Viewers regularly contact us via our feedback initiative, Your View – either by telephone, email or through the contact form on our website. Our viewers continue to be of paramount importance to us in 2009 and we will always welcome feedback on our programming, brand, schedule and online activities.

We plan to carry out further extensive research in 2009, including a brand tracking expertise, a usability study for our online offerings and some focus groups on some of the programming strands we are considering launching in the New Year.

We also anticipate gaining valuable feedback via our frequent studio tours throughout the year, which allow us to engage with the public on a more first-hand basis.