



Best Practice: City-Government TV Broadcast Service

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CITY: New York City

POLICY AREA: Technology

BEST PRACTICE

NYC TV (Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications) is the publicly-owned broadcast service of New York City, distinguished as an innovator in municipal television.

ISSUE

NYC TV replaced New York City's previous broadcast outlet when Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg recognized the stations' potential to link New York City residents with their municipal government. New programming revitalized the once overlooked station.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

NYC TV strives to provide the best in localized television content, with a focus on making the City more accessible to viewers. NYC TV's programming initiatives are geared towards stimulating economic development, supporting tourism, and cultivating a general interest in the City of New York.

IMPLEMENTATION

NYC TV launched in the summer of 2003, and it quickly moved into producing original, NYC-themed programming. The content was designed to inform, entertain and showcase all that is great about New York City – neighborhoods, arts, culture, history, diverse communities, and more. Prior to NYC TV, the City's TV station would show government hearings and meetings, often months after they actually occurred, with no programming schedule for viewers.

Situated within the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), and with content ranging from informative and entertaining shows to coverage of New York City proceedings and traffic conditions, NYC TV reaches millions of households and viewers in the five boroughs of New York City, as well as other parts of the designated market area for television, including parts of Long Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut. NYC TV oversees one broadcast TV station (WNYE-TV channel 25), one full power broadcast radio station (WNYE 91.5 FM), and five cable channels (71, 73, 74, 75, and 93). NYC TV illustrates how the City is using technology to provide New Yorkers with an easy-to-use source of government services and information.

NYC TV also produces Radio NYC, the on-hold programming heard on the City's phone lines. Radio NYC is a compilation of timely Public Service Announcements (PSAs), evergreen informational messages, and quick station identification messages known as station IDs, read by agency commissioners, officials and celebrities, and scored to music of mixed genres.

COST

NYC TV is an important source of revenue for the City of New York. In addition to leasing time to international programmers, NYC TV also generates revenue through its operation of live racing feeds for Off-Track Betting (OTB). Additional revenues come in the form of federal grants, sponsorship and underwriting dollars, and DVD sales. NYC TV has annual budget of less than \$10 million dollars.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

NYC TV reaches 7.3 million households, potentially 19 million viewers, in the New York designated market area for television via its broadcast channel, which is available to New York City, as well as homes in New Jersey, Long Island and Connecticut. The network is also available in 1.8 million households in the five boroughs of New York City, or 4 million viewers potentially, through its five cable channels. NYC TV streams content online at nyc.gov/tv and makes video clips available on demand through its online broadband video player, NYC TV-On Demand available at nyc.gov/nyctvod.

Looking ahead, NYC TV will focus on increasing revenues for the City of New York through underwriting and sponsorship dollars as well as grant monies. Strong programming that showcases the varied aspects of City life will further support efforts to increase awareness and viewership of the network.

TIMELINE

June 2003:	Mayor Bloomberg announces the launch of NYC TV and its slate of original programming about New York City.
December 2004:	Mayor Bloomberg announces programming deal for The History Channel to provide NYC TV with \$1 million in New York-centric historical programming.
January 2005:	Mayor Bloomberg announces the merger of WNYE-TV and WNYE-FM with NYC TV.
April 2005:	NYC TV wins 8 New York City Emmy awards, second only to commercial broadcaster, WNBC-TV.
August/October 2005:	NYC TV airs the first-ever Video Voter Guide for NYC primaries and general election, in partnership with the NYC Voter Assistance Commission.
August 2006:	Mayor Bloomberg announces that WNBC will broadcast more than 100 hours of NYC TV originally programming on WNBC-TV.
August 2006:	Mayor Bloomberg announces that NYC TV original series, "Secrets of New York," will be aired nationally on over 100 PBS stations around the country.
September 2006:	NYC TV makes popular shows available on DVD.
February 2007:	Mayor Bloomberg announces a record 34 New York Emmy nominations received by NYC TV for excellence in programming.
June 2007:	Mayor Bloomberg announces a second season of "Secrets of New York" requested and made available nationally to more than 100 PBS stations.
September 2007:	Mayor Bloomberg announces the launch of NYC TV's online broadband video player, NYC TV-On Demand, featuring more than 500 clips of NYC TV original shows and content.
October 2007:	NYC TV launches the first of four video blogs to go with its popular television programs.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the challenges that NYC TV faces is a limited marketing budget to boost awareness of the network and its programming, so it has created several innovative and unique partnerships to extend its reach. Another example: key parts of NYC TV's physical plant are outdated, which affect broadcast operations, so the network seeks grant dollars and other federal support to defray the cost of equipment upgrades.

LEGISLATION

The federal government has mandated that all broadcasters move their signal to the digital tier by February 2009 to free up analog spectrum, especially for public safety purposes. NYC TV is well on its way to meeting this federal deadline.

TRANSFERABILITY

NYC TV has become a worldwide model for municipal television. Cities such as Seoul, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston have looked to NYC TV to improve their own stations. The following are examples of original NYC TV programs with formats that may be transferable to other cities' television networks: \$9.99 – offers tips on fun free or inexpensive activities across the five boroughs, including parks, museums, restaurants, galleries, and more for under \$10 a day. Blueprint | New York City – takes viewers in and around the iconic structures and landmarks that grab the attention of visitors and native New Yorkers alike. This Emmy-award winning program features landmarks such as City Hall, Coney Island, Gracie Mansion, Central Park, and many more.

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