



READY FOR VANCOUVER

TVN, part of ITI Group, is Poland's largest private media group. Whichever area of broadcasting and entertainment you look at, TVN is present and very active. It runs 10 TV channels, including 24 hour news channel TVN24, owns the leading web portal Onet.pl, is through its majority shareholding of "n" involved in one of the most advanced projects of digital TV in Europe, plus much more. Early in 2009 TVN set up **TVN News & Services Agency** as a separate business unit – a process that Special Projects Manager **Filip Lachert** was closely involved in

At TVN, the idea of establishing an agency had been around for some time, and in the spring of '09 the decision was taken to go ahead with the project. The basic idea is to make available to external clients the technical and editorial resources of the TVN group. This allows us to streamline a lot of processes and generate extra revenue with things we would be doing anyway.

What are the core services?

Broadly speaking, there are two groups. The first is content, the other is broadcast and technical services. It's a time-consuming

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process but we are making available to our clients the whole news archive of TVN, including aerial footage recorded by our newscasters. We have also secured access to the national TV archives and this is available to our customers, both in Poland and abroad.

Over the years TVN has invested substantially in equipment – we operate about 20 SNG trucks plus multi-camera OB vans and so on – and now we are granting access to that equipment for interested parties, and we also manage production of events – news events, entertainment, concerts etc.

Is your operation at the 2010 Winter Olympics similar to the operation you ran in Beijing?

Every single event of this kind has its own challenges. During these Winter Games there are several venues, Vancouver city and also Whistler. We are present in both, so logistically it is more difficult than Beijing. Also this time, we are not only focusing on traditional broadcasters. We have observed a very strong growth in electronic media content demand and drawing on the experience we have with web services, we are offering services to web portals and internet media and producing content for them from the Games - which is a bit tricky because we are non-rights holders for this event.

The Beijing Olympics were the first completely in HD. Is that the norm

for Vancouver?

HD is definitely now the standard for sports production. News clients are still mostly happy with SD but we have some clients who expressed interest in receiving HD transmissions even for news purposes. As far as news coverage is concerned, these days everyone is looking for a cost-effective solution. We are now seeing more and more IP based transmissions for news, and that is a major change - it's no longer satellite or fibre only. I believe that the sports production is always at the cutting edge of new technological developments, for example our digital platform has the most HD in Poland and we broadcast all Champions League matches in HD.

Who are your customers?

We are focused on news channels because news production is something we have extensive experience in, TVN as a brand is well-known in Europe for news. France 24 is one of our clients – we do a lot of projects for them – for example in Germany during the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. We were the only company in Poland for years to offer any services for foreign media. Now TVN Agency has helped to streamline processes and come up with a professional offering. We provide news content and services to a number of European media and even though we are not a member of Eurovision, all Eurovision members always come to us when they need services from Poland or Central Europe. We also work extensively with Japanese broadcasters who are interested in Central Europe. TVN Agency only started in 2009 and we are still focused on the European market but we are looking to expand - we are presently looking for partners in North and Latin America.

And the competition?

We are rarely in a position where we have to compete, we are usually the best choice for broadcasters looking for services from Central

Europe, even the global names contact us. Obviously we are in a competing situation when we go far abroad, like in Vancouver.

Your website launched in November – is business via the web increasing?

Definitely. The creation of TVN Agency has met with a huge response, and interest in the region has surprised us. Previously Central Europe did not have an entity capable of providing such complex services, and now we provide something like a one-stop-shop. For companies interested in a long-term relationship we set up a framework agreement which enables the customer to access all the archive and current material via the web site. You order online and delivery is a matter of choice – as file transfer, via fibre, satellite or on cassette.

The media scene in Poland is very vibrant, the pace of change is very fast. What are the latest trends and developments?

Our growth has been very intensive for the last 10 years. We are now catching up with Western Europe regarding the introduction of DBV-T and that is something that is shaping the market right now because once DBV-T is in full operation it will allow broadcasters to present up to 15 channels to the national audience via terrestrial distribution, compared to the five that are on the market right now. So everyone is getting ready for that because the increase in the number of channels distributed also means a lot more content is required.

Has Poland weathered the economic crisis better than most countries?

We have experienced a slowdown from 6% annual growth to 2%. It's definitely not as bad as everyone thought it might be. We are still hiring, not firing. Last spring when we were considering the possible effects of the economic downturn on TVN, the company prioritized content and staff as its two prime

Top: TVN helicopter over Warsaw
Middle: Tomasz Nabakowski, CEO TVN News & Services Agency
Bottom: TVN headquarters in Warsaw



assets. It was decided to get staff working on new projects trying to jump ahead rather than cut back on staff, which has proved successful, as new projects are now at full speed and we don't have to look around for new recruits.

Looking ahead, what's in the pipeline?

We are organizing together with Ukraine the Euro 2012 – that's going to be a very important project for us.

Filip Lachert, thank you. ■

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