

## Quick Ramp with Quality Results for FCC Digital TV Transition

Anticipating the 2009 transition of U.S. television stations from analog to digital transmission, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched a national digital television (DTV) consumer education campaign. The campaign was established to help citizens adapt their older analog televisions to receive digital television signal transmissions. Given that the most affected consumers were likely to be late adopters of the technology, much of the consumer interaction was forecasted to occur over the telephone. The FCC contracted with TeleTech Government Solutions (TTGS) to implement the call center portion of their consumer education campaign. TTGS's support was provided in two rounds.

### TeleTech Government Solutions - Round I FCC Support

TeleTech Government Solutions is unmatched in its ability to answer the Government's needs for large-scale, rapidly deployed direct-to-consumer contact solutions.

For the FCC Consumer Center "DTV Hotline", TTGS was one of the partners retained to provide support to the public during the planned digital television transition on February 12, 2009. During the ten days prior to commencement of the program, TTGS recruited more than 2,500 resources in three U.S. locations, to staff and support an expected 59,000 hours of 24x7 phone support coverage. On February 11, 2009, the Digital Television Delay Act was signed by President Obama and enacted into law to extend the date for the completion of the nationwide DTV transition from February 17, 2009 to June 12, 2009. As a result, call volume to the 1-888-CALLFCC number fell to less than one-third of the anticipated volume. Reacting quickly to this change, TTGS adapted its staffing so that its support costs would remain commensurate with actual volumes.

### The Effects of a Delay

Prior to the February transition date, the FCC predicted that call volumes during the week surrounding February 17th could exceed two million calls. The DTV Delay Act allowed broadcast stations to postpone their cutover giving consumers more time to prepare, and resulting in a lower call volume during the transition than was initially forecasted.

During the three-day period from February 15th through February 17th, 2009, approximately one-third of the low-power broadcast stations completed their transition to digital signals. As national network affiliates were exempted from transition, calls to the 1-888-CALLFCC number fell well short of anticipated volumes.

## A TeleTech Quick Response Solution

By leveraging a TeleTech@Home solution and rapidly re-planning staff schedules, TTGS worked with the FCC to downscale its capacity each day to meet only the required needs of the incoming calls. Through this optimization, TeleTech reduced staffing costs to one-half of the original projection.

## TeleTech Government Solutions – Round II FCC Support

A signed contract for Round II FCC DTV support occurred on April 24, 2009. Recalling the overcapacity that they risked in February, the FCC initially requested only 100 seats to be launched (70% English and 30% Spanish) the first week of this program. Recruiting at this phase was facilitated by mining an extensive candidate database that contained many of the employees who worked on the Round I DTV transition in February. TTGS trained employees through the weekend and was able to launch the program in five days. The initial group comprised 100 English-speaking associates at the Niagara, NY service delivery center and 40 Spanish-speaking associates at a partner location in Florida.

In the following weeks, the FCC requested additional staffing, bringing operations to 1,000 associates as calls from consumers increased. TTGS distributed the growing staff across several sites to establish baseline operations in readiness for a staffing surge, leveraging the TeleTech GigaPOP<sup>®</sup> to centralize call volume and consolidation reporting for the program.

Other challenges identified from our Round I experience were mitigated by the TTGS approach:

**1. Unpredictability of Overall Call Volumes** – though we could have modeled call volumes based on Round I data, the truth was that we could not know the extent of the public's need until it was upon us. Our operations plan had to demonstrate a practical level of flexibility to respond to both upward and downward changes in order to maximize the value that the FCC received for its investment in this program.

**2. Call Clustering** – Our experiences in Round I demonstrated that call volumes spiked to over five times normal levels during the busiest hours of the program. By incorporating a large percentage of part-time and work-at-home resources, our operations plan needed to concentrate resources to address call volume peaks while reducing the inefficiency of off-peak staffing costs.

**3. A Multi-site, Multi-vendor Support Model** – Though flexibility is gained by deploying multiple sites using multiple vendors, we recognized that this arrangement would complicate operational management and reporting. We understood that it would be necessary to utilize our GigaPOP technology, to function as a consolidation point for most of the total call volume and all of the operational reporting for the program. Using the GigaPOP freed the FCC from the details of a multi-vendor solution.

**4. Quality of Support** – One of the most significant challenges of executing short-term programs is recruiting and developing a skilled front-line workforce. A successful program requires that each associate be versed in responding appropriately to a variety of inquiries, many of which will not closely adhere to the predefined calling scripts. The TeleTech team had a unique perspective on the challenges posed by this program in Round I and we developed a strategy to ensure that we trained, monitored, and managed the staff according to FCC requirements.

The FCC designated May 21 as a “soft test”. A soft signal was transmitted to televisions receiving analog signals asking viewers to call the FCC if they saw the note on their screens. The resulting call volume was extremely high, prompting the FCC to contact TTGS and request an additional 3,000 associates to bring the full support total to 4,000 associates by June 10th.

### **TeleTech Government Solutions and the FCC Launch into Action**

TeleTech Government Solutions assembled an experienced launch team with the capabilities and expertise that the FCC needed to address the June 12th extension date call center capacity requirements. TTGS reunited many of the key resources that supported the February transition into an agile and low risk solution for the FCC. With a domestic infrastructure capable of handling over 6.5 million calls per day, and a standing workforce of over 11,000 U.S. based staff, TTGS offered a flexible support solution for the FCC.

#### **Recruiting and Hiring**

Job fairs were held immediately at seven service delivery centers (Niagara, NY; Stockton, CA; Tempe, AZ; Moundsville, WV; Uniontown, PA; Springfield, MO; and Melbourne, FL). Job fairs were also held at TeleTech’s corporate headquarters in Englewood, CO where Spanish-speaking applicants could be recruited most effectively. Recruits were encouraged to complete a HirePoint application prior to attending the job fair. As time was of the essence, HirePoint (TeleTech’s online recruitment portal) was utilized to expeditiously sift through

the pool of applicants to find the applicants with the exact skill set required by the FCC. Candidates were then brought into the respective center for a 20-40 minute interview. If the candidate met all of the FCC's requirements, they were hired on the spot and provided with a location where they could take the drug test required by the Government. In addition, background checks were conducted on each hired employee.

### **Learning Services**

After the 4,000 associates were hired, TTGS' seasoned learning services professionals were engaged. The new TTGS associates were divided into two tiers based on requirements from the FCC. The Tier I group (3,000 associates) participated in three days of classroom training followed by two days of nesting. Tier I was primarily comprised of general care associates. The Tier II group (1,000 associates) had an additional two days of classroom training and three days of nesting. Tier II responsibilities had more technical support components. TeleTech University provided soft skills training.

### **Workforce Management and Quality Assurance**

Since the FCC DTV project was unprecedented, there was no historical call volume data to use as a benchmark. TTGS' workforce management team had to coordinate the scheduling for 4,000 associates over a 24x7 time period. The plan was to centralize workforce management in the Niagara, NY center. Niagara would serve as a global operations support center (OSC) with smaller OSCs at each of the other sites. With this configuration, workforce scheduling would become more flexible and allow for faster reaction times to the ebb and flow of the call volumes.

The quality assurance team was also centralized in the Niagara center. The FCC required two call monitors per associate per week. Service level agreements (SLA) were based on a scale of 1 to 5 and the average quality assurance (QA) score was 3.95. About 97% of the associates across all centers received a score of 3 or higher.

### **TeleTech's Technology Solution for Round I and Round II**

For this FCC project, TeleTech rapidly deployed associates to answer the DTV transition calls up to 24 hours a day during each of the peak transition periods beginning on February 17, 2009 (Round I) and on April 27, 2009 (Round II). TeleTech successfully recruited, trained, and launched this FCC call center

support program in various service delivery centers as well as through TeleTech@Home.

To accommodate the aggressive timelines for each round, the technical solution utilized the TeleTech U.S. footprint achieved via our centralized data center, the TeleTech GigaPOP<sup>®</sup>. Use of the TeleTech GigaPOP<sup>®</sup> - characterized by high availability, redundancy, and scalability - minimized the risk related to aggressive ramp timelines while providing the FCC with quality results. The solution consisted of the following core components:

Leveraging both the TeleTech GigaPOP<sup>®</sup> and vendor relationships enabled the FCC to meet the DTV Consumer Education Order with TeleTech providing capacity for 4,000 concurrent quality service delivery center seats in less than three weeks.

- Automated Call Distributors (ACDs) providing dynamic call routing to best-skilled associates at various TeleTech service delivery centers in:
  - Tempe, AZ
  - Stockton, CA
  - Niagara Falls, NY
  - Moundsville, WV
  - Uniontown, PA
  - Springfield, MO
  - Melbourne, FL
  - Englewood, CO
  - Four TeleTech partner locations
- Secure wide area network (WAN) / Internet for approximately 4,000 concurrent seats
- Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliant quality assurance recording with secure remote access for call playback and calibration
- Secure associate desktop integration with FCC applications
- Robust reporting of caller interactions with secure remote access to customer management system (CMS) for near real-time monitoring and reporting
- TeleTech procurement of voice capacity to accommodate approximately 4,000 concurrent calls with 50% queue capacity

## Results

The success of the FCC DTV program could not have been accomplished without TeleTech's vast experience with rapid implementations; the use of proprietary human capital tools to expedite the recruiting and hiring process and better match the applicants to the skill sets needed; and last but not least, hosted and centralized technology, which allowed faster deployment with reduced costs.

Some of the highlights of the program were:

- Accepted over 1,000,000 calls
- Met client required service levels throughout
- Average Handle Time (AHT) was between 7-8 minutes for both English and Spanish calls. This was 21% below the client's threshold of 9-10 minutes for AHT
- 97% of interactions exceeded quality targets
- Comprehensive ad-hoc reporting for accurate headcount, staffing, and attrition figures throughout the program