

DIGITAL UK APPOINTS SMITH & SMITH PR

Digital UK, the organisation in charge of digital switchover, has appointed Smith & Smith PR to implement its public information campaign across the North West.

The Manchester agency was chosen after a three-way pitch process to manage switchover communications in Granada, Cumbria and the Isle of Man.

These areas will have their analogue television turned off next year and replaced with a stronger digital signal. The Granada switchover, scheduled for October-December 2009, will affect ten times as many homes (2.8m) as those attempted before then.

Joe Smithies, Publicity Manager for Digital UK said: "We chose Smith & Smith PR because they're a small agency with real strength in media relations, public affairs and reaching diverse audiences. Switchover is a complicated subject and we wanted a serious, enthusiastic agency to help us translate the importance of the subject for media.

"I've no doubt they'll offer a great team to support our regional managers and get our messages out to the region."

Smith & Smith PR MD, Nathan Smith, said: "Digital switchover is such a significant event and one we're really excited to be a part of. Winning the account is a great achievement for Smith & Smith PR and I believe the team will produce a fantastic campaign for Digital UK."

Existing clients of Smith & Smith include Hamilton Bradshaw, the investment firm run by James Caan of BBC2's *Dragons' Den*.

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Digital television switchover is the process of converting the UK's terrestrial television system to digital. Between now and 2012, analogue channels will be switched off region by region and replaced with free-to-air digital TV and radio services (Freeview). Switchover will extend Freeview coverage to the whole of the UK and free up airwaves for new services such as ultra-fast wireless broadband and mobile television.

Digital UK is the independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2005 to lead the implementation of digital switchover. It is jointly owned and funded by the public-service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, S4C and Teletext), and the digital multiplex operators.

Images and video clips are available to media free of charge from vismedia.co.uk

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