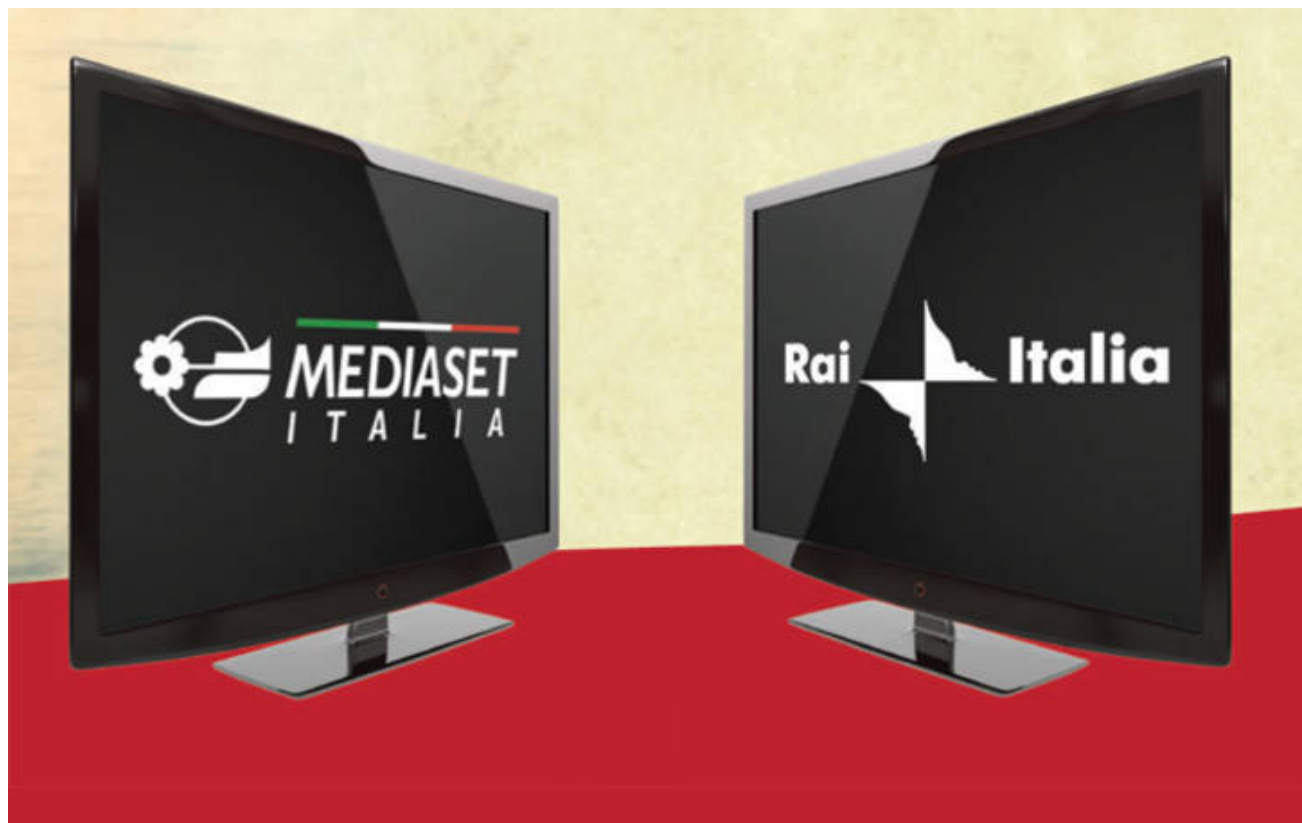




The Biggest Italian Private Television Group Launches in the U.S.

Nicola Vincenzi (February 14, 2012)



Mediaset Italia is here. Interview with Patricio Teubal, the dynamic manager who made it happen.

The first time we met Patricio Teubal, Head of Sales at Mediaset Distribution, it was at a lunch in New York in September 2010, when he was presenting to the Italian and American media the international strategy of Mediaset - the media empire of then Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi. Born in Buenos Aires and still in his late thirties, Mr Teubal is the perfect example of the modern multi-cultural executive: he has a double (French and Argentinean) nationality and a mixed Hungarian, French, Syrian and English ancestry.

Now the project he has been working on for years is ready. Mediaset Italia is available on Comcast and Time Warner Cable and it just launched on Cablevision's iO TV Channel 1195 a couple of weeks ago. In the latter case, customers can even subscribe to an "Italian Package" which includes both Rai (the Italian state television) and Mediaset Italia (its biggest competitor) together, with big savings.



The launching of Mediaset Italia in the United States and elsewhere in the world is an important development for his group, and Mr Teubal in understandably pleased. We reached him again in Italy for this short interview.

Why did Mediaset decide to launch its international channel? What will you broadcast?

Mediaset wants to bring its programming to the Italians and Italian speaking public that live outside Italy. Being the largest private media company in Italy Mediaset's programming is a very important part of the Italian TV offer, which had been missing from the international market until now. We are very proud to have Italian speaking people around the world watching our programs, those that for several decades now have been a part of Italian daily life.

There are a few millions of Italians abroad who speak Italian and this seems to be you primary target. But there are dozens of millions of people of Italian ancestry who have lost their mother-tongue. 18 millions of them live in the U.S. alone. Do you have anything in the pipeline for this potentially huge Italy-loving audience?

Our first step was to serve Italian speakers, and this is our current focus. As you well say, there are many Italian origin people that do not speak Italian because they are 2nd or 3rd generations (or even 4th!). We have ideas in mind in order to serve them too in a second stage of our overall project, and I personally can't wait those days arrive.

RAI - the Italian state television, has been the only Italian channel abroad for decades. How do you plan to compete?

RAI and Mediaset have two completely different styles. The same way that we have maintained a head-to-head competition in Italy, being many times ahead, we will achieve abroad. We know to have the best content there is in the market, and this will turn out to be many subscribers around the world. It is not them that we have to convince that our channel is the #1 Italian channel abroad, it is the acquisitions person within the operators, who typically will not be Italian. However, they do have information and that is the reason why in such a short period of time we have closed deals with Comcast, Time Warner Cable, Cablevision, Verizon and Dish Network.

In the US, television audience is declining, especially among the youth, while growing numbers of people connect via the web and mobile devices. Does Mediaset have any innovative online plans to reach this audience?

Mediaset is aware that new media is growing quickly and represents an alternative to traditional ways of watching TV. Mediaset Italia will definitely have an online and Mobile offer. Our aim is to reach the major amount of Italians in the US and around the world, an all possible platforms.

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