



## TV makers plan even sharper displays for future sets

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LAS VEGAS – With high-definition televisions now in 87% of homes, TV makers have accomplished their mission of selling [HDTV](#) to consumers. Their new goal: to whet your appetite for bigger screens with even more impressive picture quality, as much as four to 16 times the resolution of your current HDTV.



Tim Loehrke, USA TODAY

Samsung executives Joe Stinziano, left, and Tim Baxter showed the company's new 55-inch super OLED TV at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

TV makers that have pushed 3-D television technology for the past two years "are finally focusing on that concept of bringing people television with better pictures. That's a very good thing, and eventually that will pay off for them," says [Phil Swann](#), president of TVPredictions.com.

The [Consumer Electronics Association](#) forecasts an overall TV sales dip this year to \$17.2 billion from \$18.4 billion in 2011. And fewer consumers, 32%, intend to buy a TV, down from 35% last year, says consulting firm Accenture.

Stressing picture quality over 3-D could stimulate sales, says Myra Moore, president of Digital Tech Consulting. DTC forecasts that TV sales will remain largely flat in 2012 and 2013 (with increases of 1% and 2% annually). What's coming:

**OLED.** Last week at the [International Consumer Electronics Show](#) here, Samsung and LG had on display new 55-inch superthin organic light-emitting diode displays that are expected to hit the market later this year.

These displays are the same resolution as current HDTVs — 1080p, meaning the display is made up of 1080 lines with 1,920 pixels each, or about 2 million pixels. However, these OLED displays are thinner — about 4 millimeters thick — and lighter, weighing about 16 pounds.

The biggest selling points for OLED displays are their faster response times, ultrarealistic color saturation and ability to reproduce brighter whites and darker blacks. OLED's superiority over current displays helps "virtually eliminate motion blur even in the fastest-moving scenes ... for a picture that is jaw-dropping in detail and lifelikeness," says Samsung's Dave Das.

Samsung and LG plan to have the 55-inch OLED sets in stores during the second half of 2012. Neither would discuss price, but they expected them to cost at least \$800 to \$1,000 more than top-of-the-line 55-inch models. "It will come at a premium over standard LCD or LED," says Tim Alessi of LG Electronics. But "Even the average, non-critical viewer can

easily tell there is something different about this TV."

**4K.** LG, along with other TV makers such as Sony, also unveiled new displays that offer four times the resolution of current HDTVs. That is especially beneficial as consumers opt for larger TVs. LG showed an 84-inch 4K LCD display that will come to market later this year (no price yet). "You get a nice solid detailed picture even if you get close to the screen," Alessi says.

That added resolution provides detail and depth for more vivid images. "It's more natural, like looking out a window," says Sean Cassady of Sony, which demonstrated a 4K prototype display that uses a new Crystal LED technology with individual red, green and blue light-emitting diodes on each pixel.

Sharp went so far as to display a 8K big-screen prototype that would deliver 16 times the resolution of current TVs. The company did not reveal its plan for releasing 8K sets, however. "This is just a statement to say we are ready for the future," says Sharp Electronics' Chris Loncto.

"TV really didn't change that much for years" beyond the addition of color, stereo and closed captioning, says Mark Richer, president of the [Advanced Television Systems Committee](#). "But television has to change now as quickly as other industries change. It can't stay the same."

The ATSC is developing new standards for higher-resolution TV content. "One of the questions," Richer says, "will be, 'How is that going to be best delivered? Over fiber systems, cable, satellite or terrestrial broadcasting?'"

Standards groups worldwide, the [U.S.](#) included, are discussing a global next-gen TV standard. Ahead of the game is Japan, where broadcaster NHK plans — during the Summer Olympics in London — to test its Ultra HD system, which has 16 times the resolution of current HDTV and 22 surround-sound audio channels.

"People ask, 'Why do you need that?' But when you see it, it knocks your socks off," Richer says.