



## Grupo Milenio experiments with an evergreen 'soft' news format to engage new audiences

Milenio is a Mexican publisher covering politics, business, entertainment, and sports.

### OPPORTUNITY

Milenio wanted to reach more users with stories that encourage or generate change. It saw an opportunity to experiment with a new evergreen format that featured 'soft' news and human interest stories as opposed to the 'hard' news it has historically focused on.

### APPROACH

Milenio took a methodical and thoughtful approach to creating and testing this new format, by first defining the scope of the project and the team, putting in place significant pre-production processes, then developing robust plans for launch, measurement, and iteration.

**Defining the project and building the team:** Milenio wanted to test the performance of an evergreen series telling the human side of people who work in different professions. This was one of its first forays into 'soft' news, so the team relied on YouTube and Google trends to help them uncover the angles and professions that their audience would be most interested in. They named the project, "¿Cuánto Gana?" ("How much do they earn?") based on the searches people do on Google when looking for a new job. They relied on YouTube best practices to decide on things like episode length and distribution strategy. They staffed up the digital video team, hiring a head of content, filmmakers, designer/editors, and on-screen talent — the idea being that this team would be the core of long-term, sustainable digital video operations.

**Heading into pre-production:** With the team and project scope in place, Milenio got to work. The producer coordinated with the team to define topics for the first 10 episodes and started sourcing interview subjects. The graphic designer created a visual identity for the series (typefaces, curtains, logos, etc.) and the scripts for the first few episodes were written and edited.

**Shooting and launching the series:** The first two episodes were filmed in the second half of June, with the first episode (made up of four videos) released in early July. The team used the Premieres feature on YouTube to amplify the launch and also created promotional materials, which were distributed via Milenio's digital platforms.

**Keeping the series going:** The Milenio team had a well-planned workflow, which enabled them to release one new episode every Sunday. They shot two to three new videos per week, with the video editor working on two videos at any given time. The team always had a pipeline of several episodes completed well in advance of planned launch dates. In the middle of September, they expanded to publishing two videos per week (Saturday and Sunday).

**Assessing impact:** From the release of the first video, they measured views, watch time, comments, and reactions. For the first couple of months, they simply compiled these insights, but starting from episode nine they began making tweaks to the content. Based on viewer feedback they adjusted the narrative of upcoming episodes, and also changed the thumbnails and titles to boost discoverability. Milenio will continue to measure impact and adjust content as needed so it better resonates with audiences.

### RESULTS

Grupo Milenio's first foray into 'soft' news stories and evergreen content was a huge success.

- **Over 120** videos published.
- **2.9M** total views.
- **Over 143K** total hours of watch time.
- Two videos in the series generated **600K+** views and **45K+** hours of watch time.

### LEARNINGS

**Take a data-driven approach to experimentation:**

Experimentation is key to success, but make sure your decisions are grounded in hard data, not hunches. There are many ways to measure success of content — engagement, views, audience feedback, etc., and a hybrid approach is usually the most effective. In addition to these metrics, Milenio also relied on audience feedback to make decisions on what to produce next or which changes to make. For example, at the end of each video Milenio's interviewer would ask the audience what jobs they'd like to see covered next. Viewers were invited to provide opinions in the comments sections and Milenio liked or replied to the remarks that were helpful or positive.

**Find a publication strategy that best engages your audience:**

Milenio found that uploading more snackable and streamlined episodes worked better for engaging audiences, rather than longer episodes. For example, they experimented with releasing the four segments of each episode as one video, but found that dividing each episode into four separate videos gave them an opportunity to attract different users with varied interests. It also helped them identify what types of content attracted the most viewers, and if one of the four videos performed well it often boosted the other three when they were promoted as suggested content.

**Have a strategic and agile workflow:** Because nothing ever goes exactly to plan, build a buffer into your workflows and production schedules. Milenio had weeks when they were unable to shoot due to last-minute interview cancellations or changes to talent schedules. However, because of their organized yet flexible processes, they never strayed from the pace of premiering at least one episode per weekend.