

MyNews experiments with formats, channel memberships, and new partnerships to drive sustainable growth

MyNews is a Brazilian YouTube-only news channel that focuses on politics, economics, and finance. Launched in 2018, it now has more than 300K subscribers.

OPPORTUNITY

MyNews wanted to increase their number of channel subscribers and saw an opportunity to attract new audiences by trialing different formats. They also wanted to introduce a membership program to make digital video more sustainable, and began encouraging new sponsorship and partnership possibilities.

APPROACH

To achieve their objectives, MyNews expanded their existing team, experimented with new formats, and worked on building valuable partnerships with suppliers, creators, and audiences.

Building a team with ethical journalism at its core: MyNews went through a rigorous hiring process to increase their core team of editors, presenters, and digital video specialists. But they recognized the challenges associated with being a rapidly growing organization (e.g., disparate values, approaches, etc.). Early on, they developed a code of ethics that highlighted innovation and journalistic integrity, so the whole team would be on the same page from day one. Then, to set the team up for success, they purchased new equipment and software (e.g., computers, microphones, recording and editing programs).

Experimenting with new formats: MyNews already published several daily and weekly news digest programs, but wanted to uncover other formats that would resonate with audiences. First up, they tried a personality-driven format, where the same presenter would deep-dive into a different topic each episode. This generated a lot of engagement as audiences felt like they had a more intimate and personalized viewing experience. MyNews have since rolled out the format to other topics/ themes. They also experimented with a debate format (where two people with opposing views would discuss one topic) and an explainer format (where a single topic is explored through research and interviews). These two evergreen formats are driving significant engagement with a younger audience.

Optimizing existing formats: While MyNews were experimenting with new formats, they also wanted to increase production of formats they knew worked. They liaised closely with existing partners at the Brazilian Stock Exchange and YouTube production spaces to strategically optimize content production and increase output — using existing resources, they were able to produce an additional weekly program as well as a daily news program about finance and economics.

Developing partnerships to help scale the business: MyNews concluded it would be more cost effective and sustainable to build partnerships with suppliers and use space and equipment on an ad hoc basis, rather than setting up hubs in every city. They partnered with existing studios in different parts of the country (e.g., São Paulo, Brasília) and helped local news reporters set up digital video studios in their homes. They were also able to grow their advertising partnerships by creating new formats that could be adapted to advertisers' needs.

Introducing a membership program: As a way to increase revenue and develop a fully sustainable channel, they developed a membership program that offers fidelity stamps and exclusive

content. They've found the most effective way to drive membership has been to create additional content for already popular segments/shows and add calls to action to their videos. Moving forward, they're planning to spend more time analyzing new ways to attract members.

RESULTS

MyNews saw excellent channel growth and a significant increase in subscriber numbers in the first 11 months of 2019.

- **130% growth in subscribers** (from 133K to 305K).
- **2X average monthly views** on the channel (from 1M to 2M).
- **More than 2.5X monthly watch time** (from 220K hours to over 630K).
- **The average view duration was >15mins** (up from 12.5mins).
- **16X revenue** growth.

LEARNINGS

Find new ways to tell stories on YouTube: Digital video audiences have different needs and expectations compared to traditional news audiences. MyNews found that testing and experimenting with new formats, and giving the journalism team the space to creatively try new things, was the best way to find what worked (and what didn't!). Patience is key in this process, so commit to building your digital video strategy slowly, always be testing and learning, and be prepared to pivot as needed. Create a culture so your teams enjoy the creative discovery process as much as production. This way, you'll find the best formats, times, and places to connect with audiences in a way that drives sustainable growth.

Encourage your team to experiment with technology: There are plenty of technology options out there to help you create better, cheaper content, faster. Push your teams to experiment with new technology solutions and share their findings and use-cases with everyone else. You can all learn from each other and, ultimately, you'll find the best way for your brand to produce more with less.

Credibility, integrity, and innovation drive results: Right from the start, MyNews have put credibility and integrity at the center of their strategy. They've found prospective partners and new audiences respond well to this approach, and maintain that journalistic integrity and a commitment to quality and innovation are the keys to their YouTube news success.