



YouTube creator Phil DeFranco launches a new brand and channel to expand news network

Rogue Rocket is a production company established in 2017 by Philip DeFranco, a YouTube Top Creator and online entrepreneur who has a long-established and award-winning YouTube channel with over 6M subscribers.

OPPORTUNITY

Philip DeFranco wanted to expand his reach and engage new audiences. Under the umbrella of the Rogue Rocket production company, he saw an opportunity to use the expertise from his YouTube daily show to launch a new channel (called "Rogue Rocket"). The channel would cover news, information, entertainment, and pop culture, and allow DeFranco to showcase more on-screen talent, increase content output, and utilize documentary-style storytelling.

APPROACH

Rogue Rocket built up its digital video team and established a new studio, complete with equipment, for ongoing, sustainable digital video production.

Defining and growing the organization: As a first step, Rogue Rocket created an org chart to determine gaps in the current team that needed to be filled. Many current staff were promoted, and new staff were hired (including on-screen talent). The team was then trained in digital video best practices, including areas like conducting in-field interviews, adding voice-overs to videos, gaining proper clearance approval, etc.

Creating the brand: The team then focused on creating a distinct look and feel for the [new YouTube channel](#). This included set redesign, all new graphics packages, and an evaluation of new lighting and camera equipment. They wanted the channel to have its own signature aesthetic so as to not be compared to or confused with the legacy "Philip DeFranco Show".

Establishing the studio: They purchased editing gear, cameras, lights, monitors, software, etc. and set up the studio – the idea being that they'd establish a space to enable long-term, sustainable digital video content creation.

Experimenting with format: The team wanted to take a more singular, deep-dive, mini-documentary approach as compared to Phil DeFranco's signature channel, with an emphasis on expert interviews. They explored different tones and styles in their writing, and tested voice-over only videos, standard 'host present' videos, and a mix of the two. They also explored a range of video lengths and evaluated how that impacted audience retention rates.

RESULTS

Rogue Rocket designed and established a studio from which it launched its brand new YouTube channel.

- **Increased organization size by 20%** and expanded training programs to existing staff to **increase productivity and output by 100%**.
- **Over 6M views** on the new channel that built its audience from scratch.
- **230K new subscribers** to the channel.

LEARNINGS

Audiences want a variety of formats: While the team initially created long, deep-dive documentaries (20-30 minutes), they found that audiences also responded to more easily consumable, shorter videos. The audience engagement and growth from the longer videos did not always reflect the time, effort, and resources it took to create this type of content. For brands looking to start a YouTube channel, it's worth considering a mix of different format types to appeal to a broad range of audiences.

Starting from scratch on YouTube is difficult: Even when you follow digital video best practices, growing a brand new channel doesn't necessarily happen overnight. For example, the Rogue Rocket team focused on creating high production value content but found that didn't translate to increased audience growth or interaction. Also, while consistency in upload schedule helped them build a decent viewer base, it didn't necessarily translate to sustainable interest or growth.

Loyalty takes time to build: The team found that brand loyalty was built over time, not immediately. Compared to the legacy "Philip DeFranco Show", which has an intensely loyal fanbase because it has been running for over a decade, viewers of the new Rogue Rocket channel were often drawn to individual stories, rather than the channel as a whole. In part, this was due to the fact that finding the right personality or voice for a YouTube channel – someone who connected to the audience – is really challenging.

First appearances matter: Thumbnails and titles on YouTube account for a huge part of success in a video being discovered on the platform. Regardless of production value, subject, or talent, the 'wrong' title and/or thumbnail could stifle views and audience interest.

“ **Brand creation is our biggest asset. We had a voice, a look and feel, and a mission statement as a new independent news YouTube channel. We worked on building up the clout of a fresh new face, which wasn't easy coming off the legacy of such a well-known YouTube talent.** ”