

Telemundo formulates plan to test YouTube-first series to engage a new audience

NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises (Telemundo) is a media company that produces and distributes high-quality content to US Hispanics and audiences around the world. Telemundo Network features original entertainment, news, and sports content across 30 local stations, 50 affiliates, its national feed, and digital platforms. Its news-focused YouTube channel has over 3M subscribers.

OPPORTUNITY

Consumer behavior is increasingly becoming more omnichannel across screens, and Telemundo saw the need to address this in its programming. It wanted to better serve existing audiences across all platforms, and find ways to attract new audiences — particularly younger Latinx consumers who lean more English-dominant — and saw an opportunity to do so by experimenting with a new mobile-first English-language video format.

APPROACH

Telemundo undertook research to get a better understanding of its audience, built up its digital video team, then designed workflows and processes for creating new mobile-first content.

Defining the format: Based on a deep understanding of the needs and consumption behaviors of YouTube news audiences, Telemundo defined a new mobile-first format it wanted to test, called “RADAR2020”. This 15 minute weekly news show would be aimed at 18-34 year-old Latinxs and their friends, and would fearlessly discuss and explain important stories and issues that matter to the Latinx audience. This format was unique for Telemundo for a number of reasons, but primarily because it had previously only published clipped linear content to YouTube; the new format would be created specifically for digital platforms. Also, it would be in English rather than Spanish. And, it wasn't a news rundown, rather it would explain issues that matter in a practical, positive, and humorous way to set up a dialogue within the community.

Conducting segmentation research: Telemundo's development team conducted audience segmentation research to understand the audience that the innovative new format would be targeting. This also included looking at what performs well in the news genre for that specific audience on YouTube.

Building up the team and talent: As a next step, Telemundo started an extensive search for new staff and on-camera talent. It wanted to cast talent and hire a production team that reflected the diversity of the audience it aimed to reach. Many of the perspectives and English-language capabilities it wanted to bring together were distinct from its core competency as a Spanish-language brand, so it hired a casting consultant to help conduct talent searches. This was a challenging process, and took far longer than expected, but Telemundo wanted to be sure to get this right.

Pivoting for a new reality: In the midst of brainstorming pilot ideas for the series, COVID-19 hit. Telemundo had to establish new production plans and workflows that would allow the team to produce and test content remotely, and draw in virtual contributors.

Shifting to digital priorities: Throughout the Telemundo newsroom, there has been a shift toward digital. Everyone is much more aware of YouTube, what it means to audiences, and why they should be striving for digital video success. The Head of News is now responsible for both linear and digital production, and Telemundo is introducing a digital scorecard so linear executives are measured on digital performance.

Looking to the future: Telemundo hopes to launch the new format for testing in the second half of 2020.

LEARNINGS

YouTube is a great platform for original content: Prior to this project, Telemundo had never considered experimenting with bespoke content for YouTube — the digital video platform was part of its content ecosystem, sure, but only for publishing clipped linear content. However, when the team undertook extensive audience and platform research they learned that audiences flock to the platform to watch YouTube-first content, and catering to these audiences can help drive huge growth.

Be prepared to pivot: You can't control for everything, so ensure your team has the ability to be agile. Like many other brands, Telemundo was impacted by COVID-19. But it found creative ways to operate in this new reality, and the team is now back on track, and preparing to finalize and test the new format, “RADAR2020”.

Publish a mix of formats to grow audience: Over the past decade, Telemundo has grown the audience of its news-focused YouTube channel to over 3M subscribers. But consumers increasingly crave variety in the content they consume. Telemundo realized that to continue to grow, it needed to branch out into new formats, including a bespoke mobile-first YouTube series.