

Hispanic Programming Is Evolving

Traditional linear delivery is still king in the world of Hispanic programming; OTT programs lag.

By Michael A. Kashmer / *Digital Broadband Programming Consultant*

Spanish-language programming continues to thrive with the addition of new networks from Central and South America. There are two main reasons for this: First, these broadcasting groups are financially and technically able to offer their programs in a compelling way that attracts Spanish-language speakers. Second, the increasing number of Central and South American immigrants to the United States is certainly a factor. Most of these residents are working to attain citizenship, buy homes, keep their children in school and live their versions of the American dream.

Hispanic network programmers offer viewers myriad choices – traditional linear channels (novelas, talk, news and game shows), sports (soccer, championship games, FuboTV), music (in English and Spanish, awards shows), children’s TV (Disney Junior, Nick, CN) and movies (CineLatino, EstrellaTV).

Some newer nets offering additional Spanish-language programs and packages include Olympusat-VEMOX, YipTV, WhereverTV and Pongalo MOOVIMEX, among others.

The 16th Annual Hispanic TV Summit, presented by Broadcasting & Cable and Multichannel News, was held in New York City in October. The event was produced by Schramm Marketing Group, which is celebrating 25 years of multicultural marketing to this fast-growing video segment.

Despite the hype about over-the-top video, or OTT services (TV via high-speed internet connection rather than cable or satellite), which attract younger viewers, Spanish-language networks continue to depend on linear channels for survival.

Speakers said rumors of linear TV’s demise were premature, especially for Hispanic channels, and there were ways for linear and on-demand options to work together. Subscription video-on-demand providers, such as Netflix, have had some recent success with this genre, including “Money Heist” and “Velvet.” They serve Spanish-language content next to English-language content, helping to grow demand for content in both languages.

Multigenerational Hispanic households watch shows such as “Breaking Bad” and networks such as ESPN Deportes in addition to a host of Spanish-language shows. Spanish-language programming tiers are still a tough sell, however. Tiers allow distributors to make attractive content available for an extra charge, and without this additional revenue, these shows might not make it to market.

This dual programming strategy – basic and paid tiers – has yet to find a welcoming place among Spanish programming choices. Friday Abernethy, senior vice president

of content distribution at Univision, remarked, “You have to worry about the economics of the deal as well as how content moves from platform to platform.” Abernethy used the phrase “future proof” to describe deals that allow enough flexibility for consumers and distributors that both can say that they have some control. She added that asking Univision’s viewers to pay for a tier just didn’t seem like the right thing to do.

Abernethy continued, “We’re not just speaking Spanish or English, but we are moving easily between them. If you have to go somewhere else to get Spanish-language content, viewers are going to be underserved.”

LATINAS ON THE RISE

Stacie de Armas, vice president for strategic initiatives and consumer engagement at Nielsen, said, “Latinas’ newfound confidence will have an undeniable impact on our consumer-driven society, forging a wider path in the mainstream, using technology to serve as brand and culture influence.”

De Armas noted that “ambicultural Latinas move fluidly between their cultures, driving intercultural affinity by sharing [their] root culture with friends, family and coworkers. Latinas are truly at the forefront of this crossover trend.”

Latinas in the United States are flexing their economic and social muscle. Here are some recent developments:

- Latina majority-owned firms make up 44 percent of all Hispanic-owned firms and 15 percent of all female-owned firms.
- Latinas are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic white women to use social networking sites such as YouTube, Instagram, Google+, Snapchat and Twitter. They review products and show their support for brands and companies.
- The relatively young Latina population is undergoing dramatic growth – 37 percent between 2005 and 2015, with 77 percent of that growth coming from U.S.-born Latinas.

The summit featured a number of speakers, all bullish about the Hispanic sector. The soaring Latina population, the boom in Latina entrepreneurship and Latina consumption patterns are driving growth and awareness of all things Hispanic. ❖

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