

La Nación establishes a digital video team and tests new formats to help reach a younger audience

La Nación is an Argentinian newspaper that has been in operation for 150 years. In the last several decades it has started to complement its text-based investigative reporting with more visual and innovative content, including data visualizations, interactive graphics, audio, and video.

OPPORTUNITY

La Nación wanted to find new ways to reach a younger audience, while still maintaining its hard-hitting journalistic integrity. It saw an opportunity to build up digital video capabilities and increase non-text reporting by experimenting with new visual formats and expanding its online video presence.

APPROACH

La Nación built out its digital video team and tested new video-first content to help reach a younger audience and grow its YouTube channel.

Establishing the team: La Nación established a dedicated video team and hired nine new staff with digital video skills, including a channel manager who analyzed key metrics and performance to drive YouTube channel growth. La Nación also trained a number of existing staff in digital video best practices — for example, print journalists were trained on how to best speak on camera.

Building a studio: La Nación built a dedicated digital video studio. It incorporated many features the team would need to create high-quality video-first content, including green screens and computers dedicated to video editing. It wanted to give the team the ability to film and edit quickly, so videos could be published soon after they were shot (within 48 hours).

Experimenting with formats: The team developed three new digital video-first formats to test what would resonate with their audience:

- A **weekly news show** called “En Tránsito” that was hosted by the popular Argentinian radio personality, Diego Scott. The show explained and demystified breaking news and other trending topics in a lighthearted way.
- An **hour-long documentary** about the then-Presidential candidate Alberto Fernández, which was published soon after he was elected. He was an unknown figure and the team invited relevant people from across the entire political spectrum to talk about his life, including Fernández himself. By mid-2020 the documentary had over 400K views.
- Several **investigative series** about timely and relevant topics, which were presented by internationally recognized, award-winning investigative journalists such as Hugo Alconada Mon. The team covered never-before revealed information about different topics under investigation.

Measuring for success: The team takes a metrics-driven approach to growth — they test and learn, then iterate based on what works for their audience. The team tried out different topics and formats, and were not afraid to abandon content that didn't work (e.g., short, fluffy videos) to focus energy on what did (e.g., long-form videos). They prioritize watch time and views, then subscribers, because they believe the first two metrics lead to the third.

RESULTS

La Nación successfully established a dedicated digital video team who increased video production and helped drive channel growth, particularly amongst younger viewers.

- **Growth in subscriber numbers**, from 120K to 350K within a year.
- **Growth in channel views**, from 3M to an average of 8M per month.
- **Reached younger viewers** in the 18 to 35 age bracket.

LEARNINGS

Invest in your team: Producing digital video is hard and requires a team that works well together. La Nación invested time and energy into hiring the right people for the job, and saw great success because each staff member had a clearly defined role that made a tangible contribution to digital video production.

News audiences favor long-form content: YouTube news audiences want to watch longer content that dives deep into topics — a sure way to lose viewers is to give them a click-bait headline without the context and substance to back it up. La Nación found that its audience preferred hard-hitting, high-quality journalism, but on the occasions viewers engaged with lighter, shorter content, it was generally after they'd watched longer-form stories first.

Listen to your audience, but maintain core values: Listen to your audience by engaging deeply with performance metrics and also reading comments. Learn to adapt quickly to what viewers want without abandoning your core values. La Nación is known for its journalistic integrity, so while it used audience insights to shape many content decisions, the team made sure every story lived up to their high standards of news reporting.

“ We went from minute-long videos to an hour-long documentary (with everything in between) and the results proved successful, from views, subscribers, watch time, business opportunities, and more. ”