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## 2 Hispanic Networks Hope Swap In Affiliates Makes Good Ratings

February 13, 1989 | By Constanza Montana.



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Cable television has made viewers more sophisticated, he said. Cable stations often don't appear on their appropriate station numbers, so people are used to flicking through 30 channels to find their favorite channel,

Lobo said. Remote controls also facilitate the channel zapping.

Whatever confusion did exist, was eradicated within a week, he said.

After the switch, we found out that people generally watch programs, not networks.

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If this is borne out in Chicago, WCIU, whose audience ratings have lagged behind WSNS, may pull ahead. Hispanic television's three top-rated shows,

Sabado Gigante, Primavera and El Extranero Retorno de Diana Salazar, are carried by Univision, now affiliated with WCIU.

When you swap networks, the first change you notice is that the station that has picked up the network that was No. 1, will tend to move to No. 1 place, said Richard Tobin,

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president of Miami-based Strategy Research Corp., which monitors Hispanic media. ``Univision is a good deal stronger`` than Telemundo, he said.

And the station carrying the stronger network will have an easier time drawing its audience into their locally produced shows, he said.

WCIU not only gained some of Hispanic viewers` favorite television shows but also probably won a favorable compensation agreement from its new partner, ``because Univision had nowhere to go`` when its contract negotiations with WSNS broke down, said Zeke Montes, publisher of Tele Guia, the Spanish version of TV Guide.

In addition, WCIU also gained national advertising dollars it didn`t earn before as well as local ad revenue that follows shows and not stations.

But Univision may have fared less well in this marriage. Though the station has extended its Hispanic programming into the weekends, WCIU doesn`t carry all of Univision`s programs. Instead WCIU mixes its Latino programming with English-language stock market reports and ethnic shows such as the

``Persian Hour.``

However, Telemundo, has gained a full-time Hispanic television affiliate. When this 2-year-old network was broadcast over WCIU airwaves, its programming was limited to the late afternoons and evenings five days a week. Now it appears seven days a week on WSNS.

``Channel 44 is more attractive to us because of the longer programming hours,`` Telemundo`s Silverman said. ``The switch to a larger schedule with a more loyal audience is going to be very beneficial to us.``

And WSNS may be the big loser in this shakeup. The station lost some of Hispanic television`s premier shows and a large chunk of Univision`s national advertising. Lamas is still bitter about his station`s divorce with Univision. ``They will pay for it,`` he said. ``Univision won`t be the leader in Chicago ever again.``

To survive, WSNS must count on a loyal audience it has built up since it first came on the air in 1985. ``Channel 44 will not rely so much on programming, but on the relationships they have established by carrying the heavier network before,`` said George San Jose, president and executive creative director of San Jose & Associates, a Chicago advertising company.

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But both stations are vulnerable as far as advertisers are concerned. Each station`s fall audience figures are no longer applicable because of the swap in network programming. So media buyers are taking advantage of the situation.

Some are adopting a cautious approach and waiting for the dust to settle before purchasing ad time. Others are brokering better deals before the spring ratings come in.

``Both stations are going to have unproven programming at this point,``

San Jose said. ``So we`re making media buys on a speculative basis. We`re taking a chance. So let`s work out a rate that`s beneficial to me.``

George L. San Jose, president & chief creative officer of The San Jose Group, a multicultural advertising agency.

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