

ARTERO MUÑOZ, J. P. *Modelos estratégicos de Telecinco (1990-2005)*. Madrid: Fragua, 2007 (Colección Biblioteca de Ciencias de la Comunicación; 10), 290 pages. ISBN 978-84-7074-230-9.

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### How to be successful without dying in the attempt

The work signed by the lecturer from the Universidad de Navarra, Juan Pablo Artero Muñoz, offers a review of the history of Telecinco since it started up to 2005, the time when the TV channel had established itself as the leader in Spain both in terms of audience (22.3% share according to Sofres) and also in profit, achieving 290.3 million euros net profit that year (Telecinco, 2006). And it did so without dying in the attempt, as happened with La Cinq, the French Mediaset channel that, with a similar strategy to Telecinco (copied from the Italian Canale 5), succumbed after only a few years.

To date, this kind of bibliographical work on specific cases has not been very usual in academic spheres related to communication, although ever-growing number of agents in the communication sector will surely make them more customary in the future. This one in particular comes from the author's doctoral thesis, developed in the Department of Information Enterprise at the Universidad de Navarra, which unites a dual tradition incorporated perfectly into this volume: firstly, the one that gives the department its name, its specialisation in communication companies, and, secondly, case studies, which have been extensively applied to different works on other relevant companies in the area of communication, such as Globo Media and Canal Plus, to give a few most recent examples (Bardají, Gómez Amigo, 2004; Herrero, 2007). It also links with other contributions such as the one that, centred on the commercialisation of the Spanish television market, won the 2005 Audiovisual Communication Research Award given by CAC, by the UAB lecturer Laura Bergés (2005).

Case studies do not provide us with a view of the situation of a sector nor do they elaborate theories or states of the issue in this respect, but they do provide practical knowledge of the object of study which can be of great interest, not only to get to know the object itself but also to study its applicability to other similar objects of study.

The case of Telecinco is interesting because it is one of the main agents in the Spanish audiovisual scene. It should be

pointed out, however, that the author does not limit himself to studying Telecinco only as a "TV broadcaster" but also as a communication group, including divisions such as Publiespaña, responsible for the group's publishing, and Estudios Picasso, its audiovisual production arm, now called Telecinco Cinema. Moreover, references frequently appear to the context in which the channel is developing, with particular emphasis on its direct rivals, the private channel Antena 3 TV and the state-owned TVE-1, especially when talking about programming policy and audience ratings.

The almost 300 pages of this volume are divided into three broad sections, each one corresponding to a five-year period in its history. Five years that coincide with the three different CEO's for the channel: Valerio Lazarov (1990-1994), Maurizio Carloti (1995-1999) and Paolo Vasile (2000-2005).

A relatively comprehensive review of the different aspects is provided for each of these phases, attempting to interrelate them based on four broad factors: the corporate structure (shareholders), the editorial model (programming), the commercial model (advertising) and the financial model (the company's accounts).

The first of these factors explains all the movement of shareholders for the channel in this period until the Italian company Mediaset took over and the channel became listed in 2004. A story not exempt from internal convulsions and battles, such as the one that led to the exit of the company promoting the channel, the publisher Anaya, just after its phase had started, or the failure of the German group Kirch.

With regard to the editorial model, the different programming strategies followed by the channel are reviewed, from *Mamachicho* to *Gran Hermano*. Here is one of the most valuable contributions of this volume, which shows how, in the mid-1990s, the channel had to change its worn-out programming model for another, more innovative one, with the transformations this produced. It went from a model based on light programming full of variety and externally produced fiction to another that reinforced news and increased the channel's independence by, for example, producing its own fiction products.

Other changes related to the company's administration and finance were more gradual but also make themselves felt, as well as the relations to develop content with external suppliers, such as independent production companies, film production firms and North American majors. The author analyses the relative importance of each of these components at each moment, resulting from the programming model implemented in each phase.

In the section dedicated to the commercial model there is an analysis of the Publiespaña case, the first case of outsourcing advertising management in Spain, right from the word go. The tensions between the commercial and programming strategies, controlled by different people, are highlighted, as well as the resolution of these via a difficult balance achieved through a tough management strategy exhaustively described in this book. Also of great interest are the data provided by the author on the advertising rates for the channel and the commercial policy according to the broadcast band, information that is normally out of reach of researchers.

Finally, the financial section analyses the accounts and statements of the company and investigates the most relevant aspects at each moment, from the decapitalisation undertaken in the mid-1990s to the high profits achieved as from the turn of the century.

These four factors, present in the three chapters, offer the reader insight into the fate of a channel that, from the arrival of Maurizio Carlotti, adopted the maxim of "producing television to sell advertising" that could very well be the summary of the content of this monograph.

To carry out this work, the author has made use of a complete list of documentary sources, both from Telecinco and also general to the sector, as well as in-depth interviews and a survey of some of the decisive figures in the period analysed at the Mediaset channel, and has accomplished the most comprehensive study in existence to date on the channel. Among the virtues of this work we might highlight its applicability to other areas, as it gives us an image of each of the aspects that go to make up a communication company that is the benchmark for general television in Spain. The book is therefore useful for different approaches to the communicative object, be it programming, structure, company management or, obviously, a historical approach. The whole final volume therefore manages to summarise and provide an explanation of 15 years of a complex history that has evolved up to the present day and that, within the context of the digital switchover, promises to go on offering keys with which to interpret communication firms and the TV industry.

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