



Fuse Media Unveils 7 New Shows, Touts Multicultural Millennial Growth

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Fuse Media revealed seven new original shows and 11 returning series, all aimed at the brand's audience of multicultural millennials.

New projects, announced Wednesday at its upfront presentation, include Hip-Hop Houdini, an unscripted series premiering July 17 that follows street magician Smoothini as he engages with musicians such as Iggy Azalea, A\$AP Ferg and Lil Jon; Side Gig (working title), a comedy adventure series that pairs Grammy-winning artist T-Pain with innovative young entrepreneurs; The 212, a docuseries that follows six breakout millennials on the pulse of the New York City music, fashion and art scenes as they catch the eyes of some of music's biggest stars; and Hip-Hop@45 A special series of long and short-form content celebrating the 45th anniversary of hip hop, and set to debut this summer across all Fuse Media platforms.

Michael Schwimmer, Fuse Media president and CEO, highlighted strong year-over-year growth in 2017, saying Fuse Media increased its core audience by 33 percent across its linear network, and 49 percent across non-linear video views.

The programming lives at the intersection of music culture and multiculture,

leaning into Fuse's music foundation and a commitment to reflecting a young, diverse generation of Americans-which accounts for 44 percent of all millennials, according to the company.

"Our strategy to entertain and engage young, multicultural millennials across all of our platforms has come together," he said in a statement. "We're bringing together research, practical experience and a talented team to deliver what this audience has told us they want: a place to see themselves, their passions and values on display, including through authentic, multi-platform access to their favorite music artists."

The 2018-19 lineup will also feature the return of 10 series, including: a second season of Wilmer Valderrama's Hollywood Puppet Show, set to debut July 17, where untold celebrity stories are reenacted by puppets; Fuse Docs, a series of powerful documentaries, and the multiplatform show Future-History, which spotlights rising talent making an impact on the future of Fuse's viewers.

Fuse Media and Complex Networks will also team up for two more seasons of Complex X Fuse, a collection of never-before-seen short-form content from Complex, along with digital series Hot Ones, Sneaker Shopping, Everyday Struggle.

On its FM (Fuse Music) network, six recently-launched music video series are returning: Fuego, Hot List, Sugar High, Wanderlust, FM 19 and Run the World, which bring music fans curated playlists that dive deep into the genres they love.

The company also announced an additional 11 series in development.

"Our programming reflects what is most important to the multicultural millennial audience, while tapping into our deep music roots as a gateway to all aspects of youth culture across TV, digital and social platforms," Fuse Media Chief Content Officer J-T Ladt said in a statement. "Side Gig highlights one of the most engaging voices in music while providing a platform to innovators that reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of our audience. The 212 is a unique approach to telling stories of youth giving up the status quo to live their American dreams; and with Hip-Hop Houdini and The Hollywood Puppet Show, we are using out-of-the-box formats to get an authentic look behind the curtain of the most influential voices of this generation."

In highlighting its strategy, Fuse Media pointed to a survey it commissioned through Insight Strategy Group that sheds lights on how to better reach millennials through programming that reflects their identity and challenges them, while also allowing them to laugh.

On the advertising side, the study found 86 percent of viewers prefer brands to tell stories rather than sell products, and 88 percent enjoyed ads showing multicultural experiences.

The company also launched Fuse Collab, an in-house creative, talent and event marketing division that creates content, experiential opportunities and custom events to ensure reach, distribution, engagement and revenue opportunities for all digital and branded content are optimized across digital.

"Our target multicultural millennial audience appreciates brands that are authentic, thought-provoking and reflect their values and passions," Jason Miller, Fuse Media EVP, ad Sales and integrated marketing, said in a statement. "We continue to engage our audience everywhere they consume content, and connect our brand partners' messages to them in a way that resonates most, with content native to each platform."

Photo: Fuse Media