



El Trece, Telefe Team Up to Celebrate Friendship Day

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Competing Argentine free-to-air channels Telefe and El Trece joined forces for the first time to create an institutional spot in honor of Friendship Day, celebrated July 20, as the country faces political and social unrest.

Leandro Rosenzveig, head of on-air promotions at Telefe, says every year the channel creates a spot to mark the date. "This time we wanted to do something different, more disruptive, and go a step further from the [typical] emotional spot with friends."

Repairing "the crack"

Damián Ber, on-air promotions creative executive at Telefe, wanted to address the idea of repairing the division that exists in Argentina and across the world.

"There's this increasingly black or white view, in thoughts, in actions-everything is quite divided," he says. "In Argentina this is called 'the crack,' but it is seen throughout the world. Friendship Day was a good opportunity to present a calming and common message from leading media corporations Telefe and El Trece."

The term "the crack" was introduced in Argentina in late 1989 by journalist Jorge Lanata to refer to the divisions between factions of Argentine society. It gained momentum in the 21st century and is reflected today by the polarization between the kirchneristas who support former presidents Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, and those who defend current President Mauricio Macri.

The idea of two opposing channels joining forces for a common message was transgressive, and very well received on both ends.

"I saw the potential and also the difficulty behind it," says Rosenzweig, although he recognizes there were no obstacles along the way. The proposal was passed down the line by executives at Telefe and El Trece during the Martín Fierro Awards for Argentine radio and television—an annual ceremony where, in recent years, "the crack" has been made apparent through speeches and applause from one side or the other.

This effort to come together led Telefe executives to work with El Trece's Marcelo Capurro, head of on-air promotions, and Alejo Perez Labat, creative supervisor.

"I was shocked, in a good way," says Capurro. "We're always looking at the ratings to see who's winning and suddenly there comes the good news of being able to do something together."

A Common Adventure

The initial idea was to unite each station's main stars: Susana Giménez hosts a Telefe program that bears her name, and Marcelo Tinelli hosts Showmatch on El Trece.

The process emphasized communicating the importance of working together and using differences to bring people closer.

"It was an adventure and a very important exercise for both channels because the two companies put rivalry aside to form a homogeneous team," says Ber.

It all led to people working collaboratively across both channels with two directors working jointly, Telefe contributing the lighting and El Trece providing the cameras and technical services. Telefe edited the promo and El Trece developed the graphics.

"It was a learning experience to decide and accept what each of us was contributing," says Rosenzweig. "We both worked very professionally and it was interesting to get to know how our counterparts work, what their thoughts are, what they look for, what motivates them."

"We found out that we have much more in common than not," says Ber.

Capurro describes it as a light-hearted process.

"This is why it came out so well; because there was no pressure from the channels' management trying to see who gained an advantage over the other."

Producing Spontaneity

The spot was produced quickly due to the stars' busy schedules. It was shot in an hour and a half with four cameras: one dedicated to following the celebrities, one exclusively for Susana Giménez, one exclusively for Marcelo Tinelli and one to focus on the details of what was happening. Producers were able to capture the spontaneity of their interactions in more or less one take.

The spot opens with each celebrity walking into the theme song of their respective shows. "First, we created dramatic tension with separate arrivals until they finally met up. We then captured their actual meet-up, which ran smoothly," says Ber.

From there, the music changes to a score written by the team to "express something warmer and more touching," says Ber.

Giménez and Tinelli were given no script but instead were invited just to talk to one another.

"The idea was to show how two competitive people, who work for two competitive channels, could sit at a table, drink a toast, and wish each other a Happy Friendship Day," Capurro says. "The goal was to show that, beyond working and competing, they are human beings."

Seeing the stars in a different context sets an intimate and reflective tone.

"That was the goal, to which they readily agreed," says Ber.

Strategic Launch

In the week leading up to the release, the channels ran a teaser with the phrase "On Friendship Day, the most important thing is for people to join together." The channels' logos were added a couple days later, and the spot premiered on both channels simultaneously on July 16 at 10 p.m.

The piece ran on air and on social media, and on each channels' respective affiliated stations.

Both channels presented the logos of the other in an inverted order, with Telefe showing the El Trece logo before its own, and vice versa.

"It was a question of sensitivity and camaraderie. These subtle details are very important to us," says Rosenzveig.

"The idea was to capitalize on the channels, [to make it clear] that they were the ones who chose to join forces and bring their celebrities together for this message," says Capurro.

The two channels' taglines also were combined into a unique hashtag: #PrendeteJuntos (#TuneInTogether) (from the combination of El Trece's "Tune in on El Trece" and Telefe's "Always Together").

The spot was titled SUMAR, Spanish for "join together" and composed of the first syllables of the two stars' first names: Susana and Marcelo.

Opening New Windows to the Future

El Trece and Telefe are open to creating something together again for next year or for another celebration. According to Capurro, "in Argentina, free-to-air TV has always created bonds, because of its history and significance during the country's complicated moments."

The project generated a positive response, especially on social media and on comment threads.

"For many people, the spot kick-started their thinking about new things in common, between people, neighborhood clubs and politicians," Rosenzveig says. "It triggered the urge to seek common ground while setting aside differences. This gave us great satisfaction."

All in all, this initiative spurred new expectations that this type of work can bring positive change to Argentina.

Version español: El Trece y Telefe unen fuerzas con el spot SUMAR