Henry Martínez, chairman of the board of directors of LAMAC (Latin American Media Advertising Council), talks about the organization's priorities, informing the advertising community of the benefits “Premium Video” can provide.

The pay-TV market in Latin America is challenged by the same issues that are impacting the industry in other countries, namely, competition from OTT services. In addition, some countries in the region are grappling with economic and political challenges. However, 56 percent of individuals in Latin America subscribe to pay channels, and 53 percent of these viewers watch three-and-a-half hours of premium video every day. Premium Video is the term LAMAC, a non-profit association representing 56 channels, coined to differentiate their professional programming from lesser-quality content available on some digital platforms. Henry Martínez, formerly president and managing director of Discovery Latin America, U.S. Hispanic and Canada and a founding member of LAMAC in 2002, is the chairman of LAMAC’s board of directors.

WS: What is LAMAC’s mission in this changing media environment?
MARTÍNEZ: LAMAC was formed almost 18 years ago. It’s made up of the largest U.S.-based media entities [A+E Networks, AMC Networks, Discovery Networks, FOX Networks Group, NBC Universal, Sony Pictures Television and Turner Broadcasting System and Viacom International Media Networks] that are focused on Latin America. We represent a variety of 56 different international Premium Video channels across the entire region.

The mission is to provide advertisers, direct clients, even advertising agencies with up-to-date, comprehensive business intelligence on this evolving world of multimedia platforms and Premium Video content, which is what our membership does.

WS: What are some of LAMAC’s priorities?
MARTÍNEZ: We are focused on illustrating the great content and the quality of the production values that exist on our networks. That’s what we are referring to as Premium Video nowadays—each member with its specific offering within its networks, curates high-quality content working with distinguished producers. That is the major differentiation between what is offered on our networks versus what may be found on myriad different digital sources transmitting video in some form or another. This does not relate to OTT; OTT is a bit of a different animal in that regard.

WS: What can Premium Video offer advertisers?
MARTÍNEZ: A curated environment that provides for a safe and appropriate place to align a brand with its target audience. If you want to reach a particular demo, you can selectively do that. You can position a brand within the context of programming that is of high quality and very suitable to that brand, rather than risking that the programming or the video material may have absolutely no relationship and potentially be offensive to the viewer.

WS: What has been the advertising community’s response to Premium Video and LAMAC’s advocacy?
MARTÍNEZ: It has been an evolutionary process and we continuously adapt our priorities to keep up with the needs of the industry. Brand leaders have always found in LAMAC a wonderful ally to navigate the technology-rich, data-fueled world through insights and research.

One of those priorities is to work on audience measurement and to advance data science. Clearly, that is an area to which the digital platforms bring a strong suit of cards, if you will, in that they have the ability to hyper-target in an algorithmic fashion that goes above and beyond the capabilities of traditional [linear channels’] audience measurement technology.
That said, the audience measurement standards that we have in our industry are audited and evaluated by independent research panels. They are trustworthy because they are third-party objective. We work very closely with audience measurement services to improve sample sizes, measurement standards, and now, with the development of new technologies, there are opportunities that are just being implemented. In the U.S. and U.K., they have started incorporating set-top box data alongside audience measurement information.

**WS:** I've read that some advertisers are becoming frustrated with some digital platforms because the content they offer doesn't always provide a safe environment for brands. Also, a considerable percentage of clicks are not done by people but by bots.

**MARTÍNEZ:** There is caution in the air with regards to brand safety and invalid traffic. Premium Video providers who are working in the traditional legacy business and AVOD platforms are trying to focus on the environment, the alignment with the viewer and the safe curated product that they provide. Those are the real pillars of our industry. But advertisers got lost with all the excitement and enthusiasm around a variety of new and revolutionary things that are happening in our industry. Part of our job at LAMAC is to highlight the benefits of a safe environment and auditable audience metrics that Premium Video offers to advertisers.

**WS:** And you will be highlighting the advantages of Premium Video at the LAMAC summit?

**MARTÍNEZ:** Part of the reason we are doing this event on November 14th is that we want and need to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas. We can foster relationships across companies, clients, agencies and audience measurement services. As I said, there are a variety of advanced television systems that are being developed and implemented. We are seeing that in the U.S. and some Western European markets. We’re talking to many of them about the possibility of implementing some of those systems in Latin America, as well.

*News published on November 13, 2019 in TV Latina*