

Shaping a New Era in Media for Hispanics

An Interview with **Mónica Gil**, Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative & Marketing Officer, NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises

EDITORS' NOTE *Mónica Gil is responsible for the operations, growth marketing and strategy and insights for NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises. Additionally, she oversees Corporate Communications, Corporate Affairs, Government Affairs, Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts. Prior to Telemundo, Gil was Senior Vice President and General Manager of Multicultural Growth and Strategy at Nielsen where she was responsible for accelerating growth opportuni-*



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ties for a wide range of blue-chip media clients. Earlier in her career, she was a senior member of Antonio Villaraigosa's political campaign team and was part of his historic mayoral victory in Los Angeles in 2005. Gil has received multiple industry awards. Most recently, she was featured in Variety's 2020 New York Women's Impact Report and inaugurated into the 2020 class of Multichannel News Wonder Women. In 2019, she was named to the Aweek 50 and honored by Cynopsis as one of the "2019 Top Women in Media." She was also named one of People en Español's "25 Most Powerful Women" in 2018 and was the recipient of City Year's "2018 Business Leaders of the Year." Gil is a member of the Latino Advisory Panel to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and is a board member of the National Women's History Museum. She is a former board member of ProAmerica Bank and Girl Scouts of the USA. Gil earned a B.A. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. from the University of Southern California School of Public Administration.

COMPANY BRIEF *NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises (corporate.comcast.com/company/nbcuniversal/Telemundo) is a world-class media company leading the industry in the production and distribution of high-quality Spanish-language content to U.S. Hispanics and audiences around the world. This fast-growing multiplatform portfolio is comprised of the Telemundo Network and Station Group, Telemundo Deportes, Telemundo Global Studios, Universo, and a Revenue Strategy & Innovation unit. Telemundo Network features original Spanish-language entertainment, news and sports content reaching 94 percent of U.S. Hispanic TV households in 210 markets through 30 local stations, 50 affiliates and*

its national feed. Telemundo also owns WKAQ, a television station that serves viewers in Puerto Rico. Telemundo Deportes is the designated Spanish-language home of two of the world's most popular sporting events: FIFA World Cup™ through 2026 and the Summer Olympic Games through 2032. Telemundo Global Studios is the company's domestic and international scripted production unit including Telemundo Studios, Telemundo Internacional Studios, Telemundo Internacional,

Underground Producciones, an internationally renowned production boutique based in Argentina, as well as all of the company's co-production partnerships. As the #1 media company reaching Hispanics and millennials online, the Revenue Strategy & Innovation unit distributes original content across multiple platforms, maximizing its exclusive partnerships with properties such as BuzzFeed, Vox, and Snapchat. Through Telemundo Internacional, the largest U.S.-based distributor of Spanish-language content in the world, and Universo, its cable network, the company reflects the diverse lifestyle, cultural experience and language of its expanding audience. NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises is a division of NBCUniversal, a subsidiary of Comcast Corporation.

Will you provide an overview of NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises and discuss what you feel have been the keys to its strength and impact?

NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises is a global media company and the #1 U.S.-based producer and distributor of Spanish-language content for U.S. Hispanics and audiences around the world. Our growing multi-platform portfolio includes the Telemundo Network and Station Group, Telemundo Deportes, Noticias Telemundo, Telemundo Global Studios and Universo, our cable network. Our company is fueled by original content made by U.S. Hispanics for U.S. Hispanics. Recently, Telemundo redefined Hispanic media to become the #1 Spanish language broadcast network in weekly prime time for three consecutive years. In addition to our contemporary scripted storytelling, we offer breaking news, world-class sports events – including the FIFA World Cup™ through 2026 and the summer Olympic Games through 2032 – and highly-rated specials and unscripted reality competitions.

Our strength has been to develop and execute a content strategy across all platforms that represents the Latino of today anchored on culture-centric narratives that are both Latino and American. We have made bold decisions at the network, taking risks and breaking stereotypes. As our audience continues to evolve and explore new ground, we're shaping a new era in media for Hispanics who look to connect with their ambicultural American journey.

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How has NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises adapted the way it works to address the challenges and uncertainty brought about by the global pandemic?

Our number one priority has been to keep our employees safe and healthy while continuing to serve 60 million Latinos at a time when they need reliable information and entertainment more than ever. We quickly shifted our employees to work from home. In the space of a week, we organized all our employees across the country to work remotely and installed hardware to accommodate increased connectivity, including for film editors and show talent/anchors. Our employees adapted, pivoted and allowed us to continue running our business and seamlessly stay on air under challenging circumstances.

In order to support our employees, we increased the cadence and volume of our internal communications including weekly pandemic newsletters and regular town halls with our executive leadership. We also instituted a variety of employee programs, including virtual wellness classes and an easy to access online health platform for their essential healthcare needs.

On the production side, we implemented strict health protocols under the banner “Stay Healthy, Work Safe.” We trained employees, put up new directional and safety signage around our building, and required personal protective equipment on sets, including face shields and face masks, coupled with daily rapid testing and temperature checks. Our studios rewrote scripts to reduce talent contact and interaction and moved scenes to outdoor settings.

In addition to our responsibility to our employees, crews and talent, we also had a duty to our audience who was being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. For many in our audience, Spanish language television is a lifeline that provides vital information to help them navigate today’s complex environment. We increased our news coverage and added nearly 15 hours a week of coronavirus-related stories, including prime time specials and news segments in daytime programming, as well as live coverage of the civil unrest in the wake of the George Floyd killing.

How critical is it for NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises to build a diverse and inclusive workforce in order to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the table when making business decisions?

As an organization serving the diverse Latino community, having a diverse workforce is not just

the right thing, it’s simply good business. When you look across NBCUniversal’s portfolio, Telemundo’s employees are over 90 percent diverse, yet we recognize there is always work to be done in order to become a truly diverse and inclusive organization. We always want to make sure we represent and look like the communities we serve. To that end, we have launched a company-wide initiative called *Diversity Now*, which is designed to ensure we represent the wide diversity of Hispanics in our employees, our content and our community efforts. Our top goals are to provide a more equitable and inclusive workplace by recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce, ensuring that our content reflects our viewers and the communities we serve, and to create a meaningful impact within our organization to address social injustice, issues of colorism, gender, LGBTQ awareness and race relations.

NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises places a major emphasis and commitment on corporate social responsibility. Will you discuss this focus and the areas that NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises supports?

Corporate social responsibility is part of who we are as an organization and our commitment to our viewers, our community, our clients and our employees. In 2016, we launched our award-winning initiative *El Poder en Ti* (The Power in You), which informs, educates and empowers our viewers to take positive actions in critical areas of personal growth, specifically focusing on four key pillars: education, health, finance and civic engagement. We’ve carried out a myriad of initiatives under the umbrella of *El Poder en Ti* that focus on empowerment and knowledge to inform, inspire and engage consumers across the Network and in our local communities.

This year, due to the pandemic’s unprecedented challenges for Hispanic entrepreneurs, we launched the *Nuestros Negocios* (Our Businesses) campaign. Partnering with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, we used our multiplatform portfolio to spotlight and promote small and medium-sized Hispanic-owned businesses to help them stay afloat.

We also implemented two major civic engagement initiatives this year. With *Hazte Contar* (Get Counted), we teamed up with more than 50 Hispanic organizations to educate our community about the importance of participating in the 2020 census. The second initiative was our largest multiplatform political news coverage and civic engagement program to date, DECISIÓN 2020. This

campaign resulted from our long-standing commitment to provide our community with objective information and the resources to participate in the electoral process. This national, year-long civic engagement initiative spanned across Telemundo’s national network and local stations. Under the campaign, we launched multiple national and local polls, expanded our news coverage and launched a myriad of civic engagement campaigns and events to encourage participation in the 2020 census and voter registration.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the industry?

The reality is that there are still very few women in positions of power not only in media, but broadly across industries. For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 85 women were promoted according to this year’s annual McKinsey and LeanIn.org annual Women in the Workplace study. We have seen some progress, but we still have a long way to go, especially when it comes to hiring and promoting women.

When you look at the representation of Latinas in traditional U.S. media, it is still lacking. There have been new, critically acclaimed Latino TV shows and movies bringing the Latino perspective to general market audiences, but Latinas hold ever fewer positions behind the scenes working as directors and producers and as an industry, we must address this. UCLA’s Annual Hollywood Diversity Report has been tracking behind-the-camera hiring data since 2014 and shows that white men still overwhelmingly dominate high-level TV executive jobs.

In addition, there still is a significant pay disparity for women and Latina women across all industries. According to a white paper we launched last year, Latinas earn 54 cents for every \$1 a white male earns. That means it takes a year and 11 months for a Latina to make the same salary as her white male counterpart makes in one year.

So, yes, there are opportunities, but they must be made available. For those of us in manager and executive positions, I feel that it’s our responsibility to play a key role in unlocking these opportunities, not just by teaching the hard skills, but also the softer, cultural notes that will make women stand out in a male-dominated workplace. I’m optimistic that more and more media companies will recognize the tremendous value we can bring to the table across all levels of organizations, from the entry level, to middle management, and certainly in the C-suite. ●