

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Genesis, evolution, and improvement of the management of Canal Educativo 2 of Cuba: its key processes

Génesis, evolución y perfeccionamiento de la gestión del Canal Educativo 2 de Cuba: sus procesos clave

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Abstract In Cuba, all television is publicly owned and plays a significant social and cultural role. Each television channel has its unique characteristics in terms of programming and function. The management of interrelated processes as a system is a topic of current and necessary research for efficiently improving television production in the Canal Educativo 2 Budget Unit. A mixed-methodology approach, combining theoretical and empirical methods, is employed. The genesis of the channel is described, along with the functions for which it was created. From 2004 to the present, the channel has gone through three stages, the characteristics of which are evident in this work. A diagnosis of the channel's current situation is made, and its weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities are described. The quality management work carried out is analyzed, which demonstrated the need to refine its process map by improving and completing the information related to key processes. This paper proposes the design of a new key process map, comprised of four processes. Diagrams for each process and their corresponding sheets are developed to improve the organization's quality management. This will ultimately lead to greater efficiency in television production on Canal Educativo 2.

Keywords cuban television, television channel, quality management, process management, key processes.

Resumen En Cuba toda la televisión es pública y desempeña un importante papel social y cultural. Cada canal televisivo posee sus propias características en su programación y función. La gestión de los procesos interrelacionados como un sistema es un tema de investigación actual y necesario para perfeccionar de forma eficiente la producción televisiva en la Unidad Presupuestada Canal Educativo 2. Se utiliza una metodología mixta con métodos teóricos y empíricos. Se describe la génesis del canal, así como las funciones para las que se crea. Del año 2004 hasta la actualidad el canal ha transitado por tres etapas cuyas características son evidenciadas en el trabajo. Se realiza un diagnóstico de la situación actual del canal y se describen las debilidades, amenazas, fortalezas y oportunidades que lo caracterizan. Se analiza el trabajo en la gestión de la calidad que se realiza lo que evidenció la necesidad de perfeccionar su mapa de procesos perfeccionando y completando la información relacionada con los procesos claves. El trabajo propone el diseño de un nuevo mapa de procesos clave conformado por cuatro procesos y se elaboran los diagramas de cada proceso y sus fichas correspondientes para lograr una mejora en la gestión de la calidad de la organización con lo cual se pretende lograr una mejor eficiencia en la producción televisiva en el Canal Educativo 2.

Palabras clave televisión cubana, canal de televisión, gestión de calidad, gestión por procesos, procesos clave.

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Introduction

Television, whether public or private, is a vital component of contemporary media systems. As a meaning-producing institution, politically, economically, and culturally conditioned, it cultivates the interests of the dominant class in the mass consciousness of any political system. This form of social communication serves as a powerful tool for socialization, education, and informing the audience (Dogutas, 2021). When used for positive purposes, television is an excellent tool for introducing norms, values, principles, and behaviors through codes in the structuring of messages, which can sometimes be difficult for the public to perceive.

In Cuba, the 2018 Social Communication Policy of the Cuban State and Government responds to a constitutional mandate. It synthesizes the set of objectives, principles, standards, and aspirations in the field of social communication, referring to the interests of society as a whole, encompassing all sectors and all citizens (Cubadebate, 2019).

Article 3 of Law No. 162/23 “On Social Communication” (National Assembly of People’s Power, 2024) defines social communication as:

“The sociocultural process that constitutes the basis of human relations, sustained by the exchange and interpretation of data, information, knowledge, ideas, opinions, messages and meanings between people, between these and groups and organizations, between and within organizations, and between these and society; it contributes to social interaction, the production of meaning, the formation of individual and collective identity, dialogue, debate, consensus, participation and popular control” (p. 810).

In Article 4, it is established that:

“The Social Communication System is the integrated and interrelated set of communication processes and actions, which are articulated between all the organs, agencies and entities of the State, mass and social organizations, associative forms, media organizations and other economic and social actors” (p. 811).

Social communication processes, also known as communication processes, are the social practices that materialize in the creation, production, distribution, circulation and exchange of content, through social media that share content of public interest through different channels, media, technological platforms and networks, in historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts (National Assembly of People’s Power, 2021).

The Institute of Information and Social Communication (IICS) is the agency of the Central State Administration responsible for conducting and monitoring the Social Com-

munication Policy of the State and the Cuban Government; proposing its improvement; and contributing to fostering a culture of dialogue and consensus in society (National Assembly of People’s Power, 2021). It also directs and supervises the strategic and integrated management of the country’s Social Communication System.

Social media that are socialist property of the entire people or political, mass, and social organizations, under the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, are entirely public service. Consequently, in the media sphere, media whose essential mission is to produce and share content to inform, educate, and entertain are also public service.

In this regard, it is worth considering the opinions of experts on the subject regarding the concept of “public television. According to Rincón (2001), public television is “a medium that prioritizes its public nature to overcome its commercial vision and achieve its civic density, which tells us how we become a social collective” (p. 24).

For Caffarel (2005), “public television must promote and transmit values, root the principle of citizenship, and generate critical awareness. Although its objectives also include achieving high audience levels and, if possible, leadership, this should not be its essential objective” (p. 23).

For his part, Gutiérrez-Gea (2016) states that “public television was considered to have a cultural function, therefore, it had to raise the standards of quality and diversity in order to provide high-quality cultural and informative programming” (p. 1) and Giráldez-Clemente (2020) considers that “public television must have the purpose of serving a public interest by proposing programming with informative, educational, entertainment and cultural content, and aimed at serving democracy and the citizen” (p. IV). Public television stations, first and foremost, serve a public service function. Through them, citizens’ right to information is guaranteed, and they contribute to civic, cultural, social, and educational training, understood in the deep and universal sense (Caffarel, 2005).

In public television, quality must take precedence over market considerations. The value of program quality on public service television is conceived as an element that enriches the social experience (Gutiérrez-Gea, 2016). Quality is a fundamental principle that must be developed in all television stations; however, in public institutions, it must be implemented with even greater emphasis. Identifying quality criteria, discussing the achievements and shortcomings of their programming schedules in terms of quality, aiming for a range of programs that incorporate as many quality criteria

as possible, and elucidating through research what viewers and producers understand as indicators of quality are some of the aspects that will allow television stations to achieve variable programming capable of meeting audience expectations. The general concept of quality in Cuban television consists of “the satisfaction of the demands of the target audiences, according to the characteristics of the program, per established requirements”.

Television programming is today the fundamental strategic element for television networks, enabling them to become truly competitive companies and gain audience preference (Olivares & Sulbarán, 2020). A programming schedule must contain a logical, structured, value-promoting, competitive offering aligned with audience needs.

Organizations seeking continuous quality improvement rely on the ISO 9000 (2000) and ISO 9001 (2015) standards and attempt to integrate strategic planning with quality management and process management.

The purpose of this paper was to analyze the evolution of Cuban television’s Canal Educativo 2 (CE2) and propose actions to improve its quality management, focusing on key processes that must be taken into account within the organization.

Methodology

A mixed-methodological approach was adopted, integrating information derived from focus groups with findings obtained through direct observation and interviews. On the theoretical level, analysis and synthesis were employed as research methods, tools that facilitated the interpretation of data extracted from the documentary review and allowed for the condensation of fundamental ideas associated with the problem under investigation. Furthermore, the historical-logical method enabled the reconstruction of the stages through which the canal has evolved since its founding, providing a diachronic view of the object of study.

At the empirical level, documentary analysis was used, which included a critical review of scientific articles, specialized books, master’s and doctoral theses, as well as reports from the Channel’s Board of Directors, the Internal Communication Management Manual, the 2023 TVC Programming Folder, regulatory documents linked to the regulatory framework for social communication, and texts related to quality management. This review allowed for the assessment of contemporary approaches and the establishment of theoretical connections with the channel’s institutional practice.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten channel employees—four of whom were founders of TVC and

six from CE2—all of whom had recognized experience in the subject matter under study. These interviews allowed us to delve deeper into the perceptions the actors themselves had regarding television production management. Through direct observation, key information was collected for the analysis of established operational processes.

The SWOT analysis facilitated the identification of the main problems in both the channel’s internal and external environments, serving as a basis for categorizing existing weaknesses, threats, strengths, and opportunities. All the information collected was rigorously systematized, allowing for a comprehensive diagnosis of the channel’s current situation and, based on this, the development of a proposal for designing key processes that would respond to its institutional interests.

Results and discussion

The budgeted unit known as Canal Educativo 2 (CE2), a television station with its own legal personality and independent administration, is subordinate to the General Directorate of Cuban Television (DGTVC) and consequently to the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT), which has become the current Institute of Information and Social Communication (IICS).

The institution was created by Resolution No. 237 dated April 29, 2008, of the Minister of Economy and Planning, and Resolution No. 44 dated May 28, 2008, of the President of the ICRT; its social mission is to satisfy the informational, educational, cultural, social guidance, and entertainment needs of the population throughout the national territory, through the production of television programs in different genres and categories per the culture and traditions of the territory (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2008; Cuban Institute of Radio and Television, 2008).

The analysis of historical data, complemented by previously unpublished information related to the origins and evolution of the CE2, from its founding in 2004 to the present, allowed us to identify and delineate three distinct stages in its institutional history. This diachronic approach enabled the characterization of key moments in the channel’s development, as well as an understanding of the internal dynamics that shaped its management and strategic projection within the context of Cuban television.

The first stage is the founding and initial expansion (2004–2019). The channel’s genesis dates back to April 18, 2004, the date of the inaugural broadcast of the Second Cuban Sports Olympiad. This broadcast marked the launch of CE2 as a new channel within the national television system, pri-

marily focused on coverage of the sporting event. Following the event, the channel adopted a programming profile of eight and a half hours daily, characterized by its thematic diversity and its focus on promoting general culture among the Cuban population.

From its inception, CE2 was designed as a platform for disseminating educational, cultural, and socially oriented content. Its strategic lines aimed to stimulate audiovisual projects that fostered the comprehensive education of citizens, as well as to promote historical and sociocultural values with an emphasis on national and Latin American traditions. The channel's mission was to contribute to improving the population's quality of life through television programming with a strong educational and cultural component.

In line with these objectives, during this period, the approval of television projects was managed under strict compliance with production schedules, training processes for technical and artistic staff were strengthened, and the development of complementary digital channels was promoted. In this context, the MiTV channel was launched on July 1, 2013, targeting children and adolescent audiences, broadcasting seven hours a day of national and international content selected for its educational and cultural quality (Grupo Creativo, 2024).

Likewise, on June 10, 2013, the Clave channel was established, the first of its kind within the Cuban Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) system. This channel focused on broadcasting musical content—musical videos, concerts, documentaries, and other audiovisual products—to promote a culture of aesthetic and audio appreciation for both national and international creations (Canal Clave, n.d.).

However, towards the end of 2019, under a state political and communications strategy, the Presidency of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT), in coordination with the General Directorate of Cuban Television (DGTVC), agreed to permanently cede the CE2 signal to the Latin American news channel Telesur, providing 24-hour coverage. From that moment on, CE2 ceased to operate as a broadcaster and began concentrating its efforts on producing content for other television platforms in the country, while maintaining its digital channels.

This period, although characterized by the commitment of its employees and the effort to maintain quality programming, revealed significant organizational weaknesses. These include a lack of proper strategic planning, improvisation in production processes, poor-quality audiovisual content, repetitive broadcasts, and the persistence of inadequate labor practices, all of which negatively impact the quality of the

television service.

The second stage, related to the functional transition and operational crisis (2020–2023), began on July 1, 2020, when CE2 began to redefine itself internally as a production entity. Under this framework, it focused on complying with new guidelines that emphasized generating content for other channels, such as Cubavisión, Canal Educativo, and Canal Habana, while continuing to improve its digital channels, especially the Clave channel.

This period was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the country's monetary restructuring process. These circumstances exacerbated existing material constraints, leading to a significant loss of human capital and a direct impact on program production and the quality of audiovisual content.

Despite the structural change, many of the deficiencies inherited from the previous era remained, preventing a substantial transformation in the channel's organizational patterns and strategic management. The worsening of internal problems reflected the lack of a systemic approach that effectively articulated planning, resources, and production processes.

Starting May 1, 2024, CE2 underwent a profound institutional transformation as part of a new directive issued by the DGTVC. This marks the third stage of its organizational restructuring and strategic projection (starting in 2024). This transformation mandated that programs broadcast on other channels, along with their production teams, would officially become part of those channels' workforces. At the same time, music-based programs were transferred to CE2 to integrate them into Clave's programming lineup.

The primary objective of this reorganization was to optimize content distribution on Cuban television and enhance the positioning of the Clave digital channel, which has achieved high levels of acceptance among national audiences. During this phase, the channel defined a new mission, vision, and institutional values; formulated concrete strategic objectives; designed its process map; and improved its audiovisual production planning.

While the changes introduced represented a step forward compared to previous stages and demonstrated a positive evolution in the channel's strategic management, structural and organizational factors persisted that limited the achievement of the expected results. However, the new approach allowed us to glimpse a phase of progressive consolidation, supported by criteria of quality, efficiency, and institutional coherence.

As part of the research process, semi-structured interviews

were conducted to identify the perceptions, assessments, and experiences of staff directly involved in the television production processes of CE2. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained provided critical insights into the current state of the channel's internal management.

In terms of organizational communication, 90% of those interviewed rated the communication relationship between employees and higher-level managers as "fair". It was found that, on many occasions, work teams do not receive timely information about changes in procedures, work styles, or other operational arrangements. Likewise, limited staff participation in decision-making was identified, especially regarding the implementation of new dynamics within the production process. This perception reflects a weak participatory organizational culture, as well as structural flaws in internal feedback mechanisms.

Eighty percent of participants stated that collective efforts to meet production plans are not adequately recognized or considered in the evaluation of results. This is compounded by the lack of systematic practices for collecting and analyzing data, both internal and external, necessary for providing feedback and driving continuous improvement in production operations.

A critical issue highlighted in the assessment was the lack of human and technical resources. All those interviewed (100%) agreed that the lack of specialized personnel—such as scriptwriters, sound technicians, cameramen, lighting technicians, makeup artists, among others—along with the limited availability of technical resources, directly affects the fulfillment of production plans. Programs are often produced with incomplete production equipment, which leads to improvisation, diminishes the quality of the audiovisual product, and compromises the technical and aesthetic coherence of the broadcast content.

Another relevant finding was the limited institutional knowledge of management tools. Seventy-five percent of those interviewed stated they were unaware of the existence of a map of the channel's key processes, limiting themselves to identifying only the operational phases of the television program production process. Furthermore, it was reported that these phases are not always adequately followed, partly due to inadequate labor practices and structural deficiencies.

Sixty percent of respondents indicated that program delivery deadlines are not consistently met due to a lack of time and the limited viability of some production plans. This situation generates internal tensions that negatively impact the planning and quality of the content broadcast.

A particularly critical aspect was the lack of a culture of

indicator-based evaluation. One hundred percent of those interviewed were unaware of the existence or use of quality management indicators that allow them to measure, monitor, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of key processes. This methodological gap limits the possibilities for control, feedback, and continuous improvement in the channel's organizational management.

The assessment identified both achievements and significant shortcomings that require urgent attention. The evidence collected facilitated the identification of the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), which should be considered as a starting point for designing and implementing corrective actions aimed at improving quality management in the channel.

The institutional assessment of CE2 has identified a set of weaknesses that limit the efficiency of its key processes and compromise the quality of its audiovisual products. Among the primary deficiencies are the evident deterioration of its physical infrastructure, as well as technological obsolescence affecting both production and support services equipment. This is compounded by the insufficient use of information and communication technologies, particularly in obtaining and analyzing strategic information for television production. This situation is exacerbated by persistent difficulties in designing and implementing production plans, which generate discontinuities and impact content planning.

Another aspect highlighted is the instability of staff in key positions, characterized by high turnover, low work motivation, and difficulties in filling the workforce with qualified professionals. This situation, combined with the absence of an institutional marketing strategy, limits the channel's visibility and positioning among diverse audiences. The high degree of centralization of decisions and the overload of functions on a small number of employees reflect a rigid and dysfunctional organizational structure. Added to this is the lack of systematic training and ongoing development programs, which are essential requirements for staff technical development and continuous quality improvement.

In terms of communication and visibility, the channel lacks an institutional website that enables the effective dissemination of its products, services, and added value, nor does it capitalize on the digital environment to establish connections with its audience. Furthermore, the channel's reach remains limited, as it relies exclusively on the availability of televisions and decoders for digital signals. The underutilization of recording studios, ineffective directing methods, and weak management of television production complete a picture characterized by fragmentation, improvisation, and

limited in-house production.

In the external environment, the channel faces significant threats that affect its operations and competitiveness. The intensification of the economic, financial, and trade embargo imposed by the United States, along with restrictions stemming from international isolation, limits access to technologies, specialized software, and benchmark audiovisual content. Furthermore, the existence of more attractive job offers in other forms of ownership and management, as well as the presence of national companies that produce high-quality audiovisual content, represents a factor of pressure on the channel. Added to this is the limited allocation of financial resources by the state, which restricts the channel's ability to invest in technological and training improvements.

However, the channel has strengths that constitute a solid foundation for its recovery and strategic development. It has highly qualified human capital, with professional experience and a strong institutional commitment. Its programming has achieved recognition in the local market, thanks to the quality of its content and its alignment with the country's cultural interests. Furthermore, it maintains relationships with high-tech suppliers at the national and international levels, which opens up possibilities for incorporating comprehensive solutions into its processes.

The company's accumulated experience in audiovisual production, its use of high-definition digital technology, and its established links with universities of the Ministry of Higher Education (MES), as well as with the Cuban Institute of Music and other entities in the artistic sector, constitute strategic assets for strengthening its productive capabilities. It is also worth noting that CE2 manages the only channel of its kind in the country, with a musical and cultural focus that promotes both Cuban and international music.

The opportunities of the environment also provide a favorable environment for its future projection. The growing demand for entertainment content, coupled with the state's priority on digitalizing society, creates a favorable context for promoting the channel's digital transformation. The po-

litical will to encourage alliances between state and non-state entities allows for the development of productive linkages and inter-institutional cooperation. Furthermore, international markets are interested in native musical genres, and Cuban artistic talent is widely recognized, which could open doors to cultural exports.

The recent enactment of regulations related to Social Communication and the possibility of establishing agreements with prestigious institutions, both national and international, further consolidate this framework of opportunities. Finally, the public has begun to perceive improvements in the channel's programming and image quality, indicating a progressive recovery of its credibility and relevance.

The results indicate that, although the channel currently has a process map, its employees' lack of awareness represents a significant weakness in operational management. Furthermore, the processes identified as key cover only the phases linked to production, without incorporating fundamental aspects such as programming transmission or systematic audience analysis. From an analytical perspective, it is clear that these processes can and should be improved. Several processes identified in isolation within the channel constitute interdependent segments of a single audiovisual production cycle.

The absence of flowcharts, process data sheets, and quality assessment indicators seriously limits the possibility of implementing an evidence-based management system, making it difficult to measure, compare, and improve the effectiveness of institutional operations. These findings, far from constituting insurmountable obstacles, offer a solid diagnostic basis for implementing concrete actions aimed at comprehensively transforming the channel's quality management.

Figure 1 presents the CE2 key process map, the result of the diagnostic analysis. This diagram identifies four processes that structure the channel's operational dynamics. Each of these processes has been represented through specific flowcharts and corresponding technical sheets, detailing the main activities to be carried out. This systematic representation

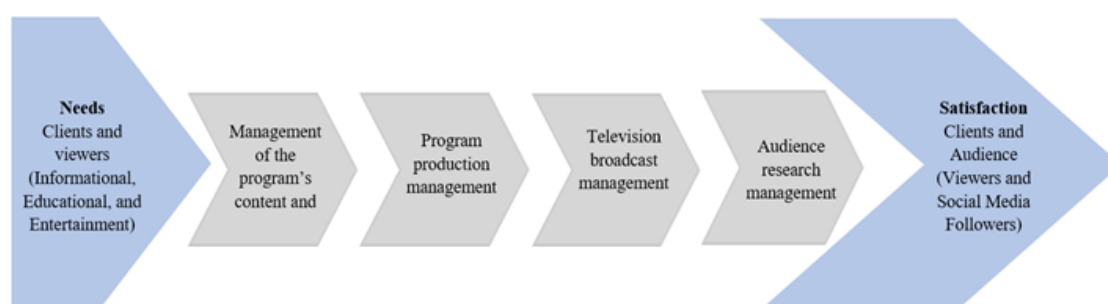


Figure 1. Map of key processes of CE2.

serves as a fundamental tool for refining television production management, providing a comprehensive and strategic view of the essential components that support the channel's operations. The management of the program's content and format represents the initial threshold in the television production process.

Figure 2 illustrates that this journey begins with an idea that can originate from multiple actors, including a commission from CE2 itself, the DGTVC (Directorate-General for Television and Television), the Presidency, production companies, organizations, institutions, legally recognized individuals or legal entities, or through public calls and competitions.

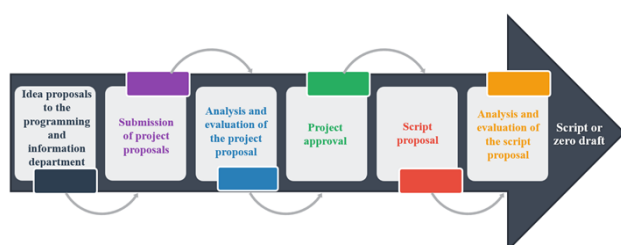


Figure 2. Program content and form management process.

Once received, the proposal is reviewed by the Programming and Information Department, where its relevance is assessed. If deemed viable, the project will be developed by the established parameters. This proposal is reevaluated, and if approved, the script will be written. Acceptance of the script marks the end of this phase, signaling the transition to subsequent stages of production. Thus, content and format management not only organizes the creative flow but also ensures the coherence and quality of the final product before it is released on screen.

Figure 3 reveals a second way to activate the creative mechanism within Educational Channel 2: the thematic assignment. In this case, the Programming and Information Department takes the initiative, requesting the development of specific content from various internal specialists, including journalists, program directors, and communicators, among others.

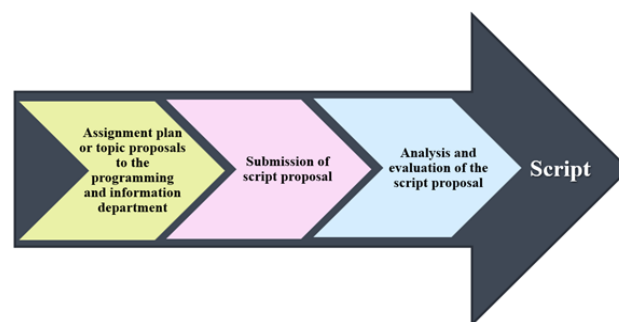


Figure 3. Program content and form management process.

However, this approach also allows for spontaneous proposals from these same specialists. In both scenarios, the process revolves around presenting a script, which, once evaluated and approved, marks the conclusion of this initial stage. This approach highlights the synergy between institutional planning and the team's creativity, reaffirming that educational television thrives on both programming intent and the collective creative impulse.

Figure 4 represents the comprehensive production process of a television program, comprising three fundamental stages: pre-production, production, and post-production. This process begins with the script feasibility study, from which the planning, organization, design, and control of the audio-visual project are defined. Key activities include forming the

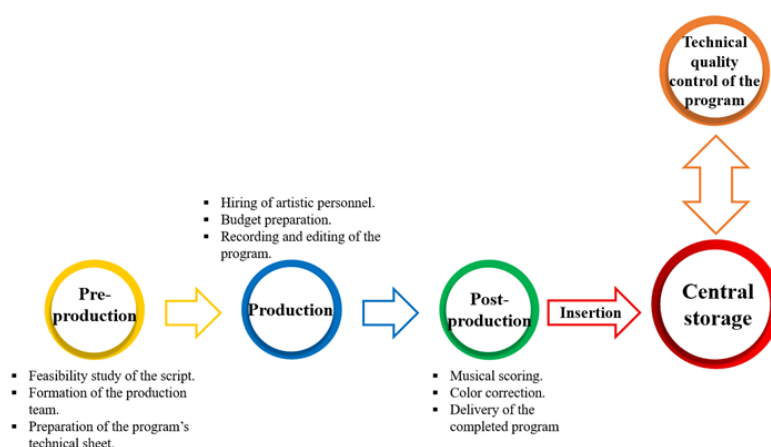


Figure 4. Program production process.

production team, hiring artistic personnel, preparing the budget and production specifications, and scheduling recordings.

Subsequently, the recording, scoring, editing, color correction, and final editing phases are carried out. Once the content is finalized, it is incorporated into the channel's central storage system. The process culminates with a rigorous technical and aesthetic quality control of the audiovisual material, and after approval, the program is ready for broadcast to the television public.

Figure 5 illustrates the television broadcast management process, which begins with verifying the programming schedule and confirming the programs authorized for broadcast. Based on this review, the playlist is created using specialized software that organizes and schedules the content on the transmission server. Once this broadcast flow is configured, the signal transmission begins. It is continuously monitored by both the internal system and the over-the-air broadcast to ensure the technical integrity of the content and

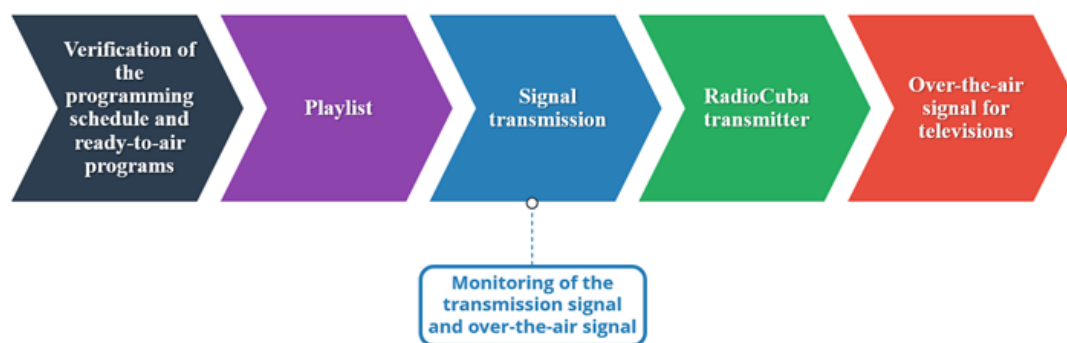


Figure 5. Television broadcast management process.

its proper reception by Radiocuba transmitters. This procedure ensures that the broadcast is executed accurately and in accordance with established standards.

The systematic study of television audiences is a key process within the television programming management system, as it provides precise indicators of the levels of acceptance, preference, and reception of the broadcast content. This process not only allows for the identification of weaknesses and strengths in the programming schedule, but also enables decision-making aimed at optimizing it, based on the

expectations, habits, and needs of viewers as consumers of the audiovisual product.

Figure 6 shows that the process commences when the Programming and Information Department presents specific requirements to a research team, either its own or affiliated with institutions such as the Center for Social Research (CIS). From there, a study is developed, the analysis of which provides feedback for programming decisions. This flow of information becomes a strategic resource for redesigning proposals, enhancing impactful content, and correcting



Figure 6. Audience study management process.

weaknesses, thus ensuring programming that is more aligned with audience demands and communication objectives.

Conclusions

Managing interrelated processes as a system improves the effectiveness and efficiency of television channels, especially in the Cuban context. After 20 years of operation and three evolutionary stages, CE2 revealed organizational weaknesses that prompted a thorough diagnosis. A new key process map was proposed, with four essential processes, their corresponding diagrams, and technical sheets, to optimize television production and improve institutional quality. This experience reaffirms the process-based approach as a strategic tool for continuous improvement.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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