

Imagina flexes its muscle

Spanish outfit to debut at MIPTV

By Pamela Rolfe

MADRID — When Spain's Imagina International Sales makes its debut this month at MIPTV, it will be as the new Spanish entertainment powerhouse, offering product from a dozen prolific Spanish producers.

The global sales company will handle a catalog of finished shows and formats from Spain's two biggest TV producers — Globomedia and Mediapro — and 10 other independents. In Spain, the negotiation of formats has traditionally been reserved for the pro-

ducer and not a sales company.

Javier Mendez oversees the sale of formats, new technology initiatives and new rights deals, while Geraldine Gonard handles the catalog of finished shows — or “canned product,” as it is called. Both report to Imagina Sales GM Jose Huertas.

“Normally, formats are sold by producers directly in Spain,” Gonard said. “Now we have a large range of product we can deal with for television, and it makes us unique in Spain.”

The sales outfit is a wing of

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Imagina — the heavyweight Spanish production group formed by the titanic merger of Globomedia's parent company, Grupo Arbol, and Mediapro television interests. The interests include the controlling stake of free-to-air TV channel La Sexta.

The catalog includes nearly 3,000 hours of TV programs, documentaries and feature films. For the moment, much of its library is made up of TV programs. But executives have said films will carry a larger weight in the future.

The catalog will be unveiled at MIP, but also among its stock are such TV hits as “Los Serrano,” “Aida,” “Periodistas” and “The Show of Flo.” It also will boast a solid lineup of feature films and documentaries.

A spokesperson for Mediapro

declined to give details before the presentation at MIP.

Imagina International Sales' launch in January left an orphaned Grupo Pi, the sales operation that previously pooled the product of Globomedia with fellow TV producers Boca Boca, Drive Entertainment and Video Mercury.

Although only a 25% stake in Grupo Pi, Globomedia contributed the lion's share of the catalog. Drive also has signed on with Imagina's sales arm to handle its productions, leaving Boca and Video Mercury alone at Pi, which will continue to operate.

Gonard said the company will use MIP to test the new waters.

“We are focused more on TV and have a different kind of catalog now,” said Gonard, former GM at Grupo Pi. “Maybe our clients will be different. We'll have to see how they react at the market.” ■