

THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION



Jordan Levin-Led Generate Generates \$6M in Financing Former CEO of The WB Named CEO of Production and Management Studio

By Ben Grossman
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Production and management studio Generate secured \$6 million in its first round of financing and announced that cofounder and former The WB CEO Jordan Levin will assume the role of CEO.

The financing came from Velocity Interactive Group, a digital-media-investment outfit run by former News Corp. executive Ross Levinsohn and former AOL executive Jonathan Miller, as well as from venture-capital fund MK Capital, led by Mark Terbeek.

“Generate represents the wave of the future for production and management companies,” Levinsohn said. “The management team led by Jordan has been able to successfully build upon its traditional media track record to score in the digital-media world with original Web hits like *HPC*, as well as innovative work for brands like American Eagle Outfitters.”

The company subsequently unveiled several new projects for its digital-production slate, including the next installment of *Pink-The Series*, a Web series about a female assassin that has racked up more than 4 million views since its launch last September.

Also in tap is Web comedy *LaQuisha*, based on a character made popular on the *Kevin and Bean* radio show, as well as *Knockers*, from sketch-comedy group Good Neighbor.

With Levin becoming CEO, the management arm will be run by founding partners Dave Rath and Kara Welker, as well as Jared Hoffman, who joined the company last January from CAA.

Founding partner Pete Aronson will serve as head of creative affairs, Ivana Ma becomes head of new media and Matt Winslow serves as vice president of marketing.

Formed in 2006 with private funding and a deal with MTV Networks at launch, Generate has focused on producing original content for digital distribution, as well as talent management. Its original Web series have included *The Andy Milonakis Show* and its management clients include Janeane Garofalo and Fred Savage.

“Between production efforts and management clients, we think we can say we are one of the leading suppliers of comedy content across the Web,” Levin said.

He added that the next step for the company is to staff up in both development and production, and that a large portion of the new influx will go toward funding and financing original productions. Those could be a full series or, in some cases, a few sample episodes that could be taken to advertisers to solicit partnerships.

Generate's focus is on monetizing around content and pushing what it develops as wide as possible using multiple sites, as opposed to one channel or destination.

"Our bet is that in a world of increasingly commoditized distribution, where there is more demand on content, professionally produced content in the digital space will attract some of those blue-chip advertisers that have been reluctant to jump into this space," Levin said. "Our first two years were about testing the thesis -- the next two years are about diving in deeper and testing these models."