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New MTV Russia Due to Launch in October

By The Moscow Times

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Viacom International Media Networks will launch a new MTV Russia channel on cable television in October which will be more aligned to its global brand, according to a statement issued by the company Thursday.

Now the company is holding talks with cable, satellite and mobile operators to include MTV in its basic package.

As of June 1, MTV Russia will be fully owned and operated by Viacom for the first time in its 15-year history.

Previously, the channel was operated jointly with ProfMedia. Last September, the company decided to replace the channel with a new youth, information and entertainment-based channel called *Pyatnitsa*, or Friday.

The new MTV Russia will air shows such as "Pimp My Ride" and "Punk'd," the newspaper reported.

"The promotion of the channel will begin in the summer, including its new website. In September, a full-scale advertising campaign will begin," said Elena Balmont, chief executive of Viacom in Russia.

Studies show that 90 percent of MTV viewers in Russia aged 18 to 34 years prefer American television shows and channels, while 75 percent like watching shows from the UK.

Now Viacom owns 10 channels in Russia: Nickelodeon, Nickelodeon HD, Nick Jr., MTV Dance, MTV Hits, MTV Rocks, MTV Live HD, VH1 European, VH1 Classic and Paramount Comedy.

In the next several years, MTV is expected to enter the top 20 most popular pay channels in the country, Balmont said.

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