



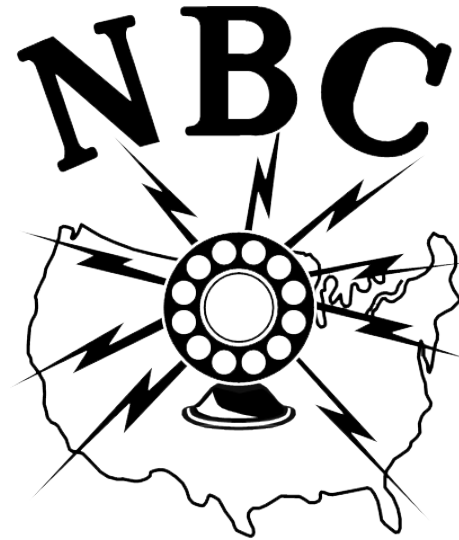
**NBC**

# BEGINNINGS

## 1926

Radio Corporation of America, a radio manufacturer, saw the the benefits of different local networks sharing the same broadcast, and decided to buy various local broadcast networks (including some from AT&T). Beginning with a station in New York, RCA consolidated nearly half a dozen local networks into one network that would become known as NBC, standing for National Broadcasting Service. NBC began broadcasting in 1926, and ownership of the company was divided among its founding companies: RCA owned 50% of NBC, General Electric owned 30%, and Westinghouse (a manufacturing company that had shares in RCA) owned the remaining 20%.

In 1933, after NBC outgrew its production room on Fifth Avenue in New York, the company moved to 30 Rockefeller Center. The building became known as "the RCA building", named after the parent company. After NBC was bought by Comcast, 30 Rockefeller Center became known as "the Comcast building".



NBC's first logo consisted of a microphone surrounded by lightning bolts, over an outline of the United States.



The next logo continued the motif of lightning bolts, but simplified the background graphics into an overall lighter logo.

# TELEVISION

## 1939

In 1939, NBC made the first television broadcast with a showcasing of the 1939-1940 World's Fair. One of the more significant attendees was President Franklin D. Roosevelt (pictured on the right), who became the first U.S. president to appear on television.

At the time, television was still in its infancy, and while NBC was still experimenting with the technology, it sought to maintain its identity as a broadcaster of radio, as well as television. In 1943, the network debuted a new logo, adorned with a microphone showing the network's initials that was zapping out waves. The rigid lightning bolts on the left of the microphone represented the network's radio broadcasts, and the curvy streams on the right represented the network's television broadcast.



# NBC CHIMES LOGO

1953-1956



This wordmark, first introduced in 1953, displayed the network's initials on a three-bar xylophone, accompanied by a mallet; the musical instrument referred to the three-note chime that was used as an identifying introduction of radio broadcasts since early in the network's history. This logo employed a visual association to match the audience's auditory association with the network's chime. Given the long-standing history of the musical introduction, it was natural for the network to want to continue to implement it in its logo.

The visual should not be understood to be a completely accurate translation. Such as seen in the black-and-white image on the right, the xylophone's second (middle) bar is actually smaller than the third (rightmost) bar. This is because a smaller bar produces a higher-pitched note. In the color logo used by NBC, meanwhile, the xylophone's bars are arranged in descending order of size.



An example of a newscaster striking the three metal bars in order to produce the musical introduction.



Sheet music of the three notes. Coincidentally, the notes of the chime (G-E-C) are the same as one of the network's parent companies, General Electric Company.

# COLOR TELEVISION

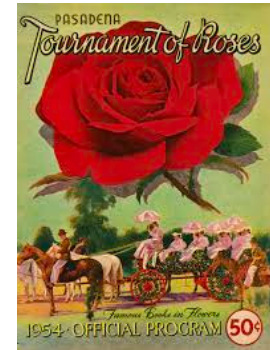
## 1954

In 1950, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved CBS's system of color television, and failed RCA's. Despite the approval from the FCC, CBS's launch of color television failed to succeed because of a variety of difficulties, most importantly the fact that color television broadcast was not compatible with the black-and-white television sets already owned by Americans.

A few years later, RCA made dramatic improvements to their system of color television, and won approval from the FCC. By 1953, RCA's television network NBC was sharply rivaled by the successful television network CBS. Although a third television network, ABC, was already established at the time, CBS posed a much greater competitive danger to NBC.

On the first day of 1954 came a breakthrough: NBC's airing of that year's Tournament of Roses Parade was their first color television broadcast.

NBC's interest in producing color television was based on its value of offering high-quality content to its viewers; it seemed like the next step in the industry. Additionally, there was a desire from NBC's parent company, RCA, to be able to profit from its production of color television. The relationship between NBC—a network that wanted to improve its content by broadcasting in color and needed to supply its viewers with color televisions in order to do so—and RCA—a producer of color televisions needing a network to commit to broadcasting in color in order to motivate the sales of color televisions—evolved from that of a parent and child, to that of symbiosis.



Unfortunately, sales of RCA's color television sets was slow, so in 1956, the network debuted their new logo that acted as a genius marketing tool: the peacock.







# TRAPEZOID N & "PROUD" N

1975-1979 & 1979-1986



The "trapezoid N" logo of NBC was first used in 1975. Ostensibly another attempt at a less-complex logo comparable to its rivals' logos, the geometric letterform was unfortunately short-lived; just a year after it was first used, a PBS-

affiliated station in Nebraska sued NBC, claiming that NBC copied its logo.

Embarrassingly, NBC learned that the logo that cost them about \$750,000 to design, was indeed nearly identical to that of the Nebraska station, which cost the latter only \$100 to design.

Feeling confident about its letterform, and wishing to avoid the burden of designing a new logo, an out-of-court settlement was reached in which NBC was able to keep the logo, but paid the suing station \$25,000 for the cost of designing a new logo and \$500,000 in color television equipment.



A few years after NBC's expensive blunder with the original trapezoid N, the network decided to merge the geometric logo with the already-well-known peacock. In addition, a tagline was added, and thus the "Proud N" was created.

The "Proud N" advertising campaign arrived when NBC was suffering from unfavorably low ratings. The approach attempted to bring optimism to the brand of the network by reintroducing the peacock (albeit with a toned-down color palette) that had been the source of pride when first used.

Unfortunately, the campaign was not successful. In addition to the network being marred by poor ratings, the complexity of the "Proud N" made it unappealing when shrunk on camera, and the slices in the background did not accurately represent the letter N.

# MODERN PEACOCK

1986-present



In the year of NBC's 60th anniversary of commencing broadcasting, the network unveiled its new logo: a simplified peacock.

This new peacock stood with six brightly-colored feathers, each one representing a different division of NBC's offerings (for example, the yellow feather represented its delivery of news, and an orange feather represented sports programming). Its body sits gracefully among its feathers, creating space in the center of the logo without subtracting from the feathers. One final, small detail holds great significance: the head of the peacock confirms the animal being represented, and its look to the right signifies the network's outlook and affinity to move forward. The base of the bird is flat, allowing for an easy transition to the wordmark of the network.

The peacock was NBC's third new logo in just over a decade, and it would appear that the network had learned from its past brand productions—both successful and unsuccessful. Although the "Proud N" logo was the first logo to actually include the peacock, the simplified peacock marked a beginning of a new era for NBC. Over the following years, the peacock saw the network flourish: its television ratings soared with shows like *Cheers* and *The Golden Girls*, the network won the rights to broadcast the Olympics, and its still-long-running sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live* featured a new cast that was favored by audiences.



# IDENTITY

*font, colors, chime*

## Kabel (bold)

(used for workmark)

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMN**

**OPQRSTUVWXYZ**

**abceefghijklmn**

**opqrstuvwxyz**

## Source Sans Pro

(used on website)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN

OPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnop

opqrstuvwxyz



#fcb711



#f37021



#cc004c



#6460aa



#0089d0



#0db14b



Pictured here is the sheet music of the three-note chime that has been in use since the network's early days as a radio broadcaster. Although no longer used at the beginning of every broadcast, the chime can still be heard occasionally such as when its streaming app is launched.

Since 1986, the six-feathered peacock has been used as the logo for NBC. While the network's initials appear below or to the right of the peacock in most uses, a translucent silhouette of the peacock is used on-screen during broadcasting, appearing in the bottom-right corner (known as a "digital on-screen graphic" or "on-screen bug").



# USAGE

## *Olympics*



Since 1988, NBC has held the rights to broadcast the Summer Olympics. The broadcast is produced by the company's subsidiary NBC Sports, and is aired on its main network, and is also often broadcast on its sister networks.

Although NBC was not the first network to win the rights to broadcasting the Olympics, its choice of pairing the brand of the network with the brand of the Olympics proved to be engaging.

A significant difficulty with this pairing was that both the NBC peacock, as well as the Olympics rings, featured several colors; to include both in the same image might appear too busy, causing the image to diminish in overall quality and—more importantly—one logo could distract the audience from the other logo.

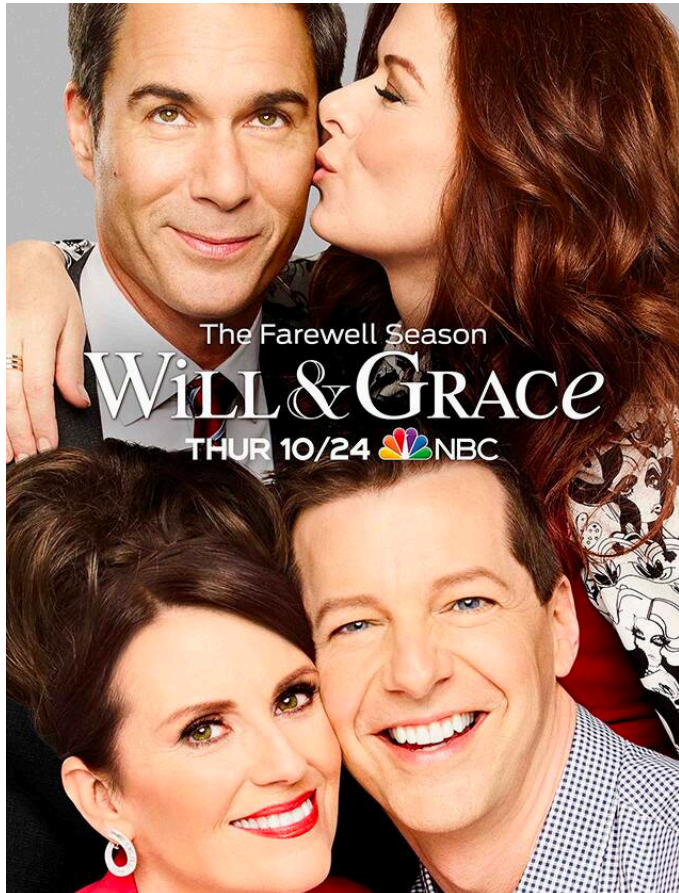
Using a colorless version of one of the logos would be a simple but effective solution, but would still pose the issue of deciding which logo to use without color. Ultimately, the logo of NBC was kept in color, while the logo of the Olympics was used without color.

While the five iconic rings in the logo of the Olympics can still be recognized without color, the boastful colors of NBC's peacock are what make its logo stand out. For NBC to go through so much work of pairing its branding with that of the Olympics, it would only make sense to strongly use NBC's most iconic element of its brand identity.



# USAGE

## posters



This is real.

## THIS IS US

SEASON PREMIERE **SEPT 26** | **TUESDAYS 9/8c** NBC  
AFTER THE VOICE

When advertising, NBC includes its logo in order to indicate to the viewer that the content is available on NBC. Its size is greatly reduced to avoid distracting from the content of the advertisement, but the iconic peacock is still easily recognized.



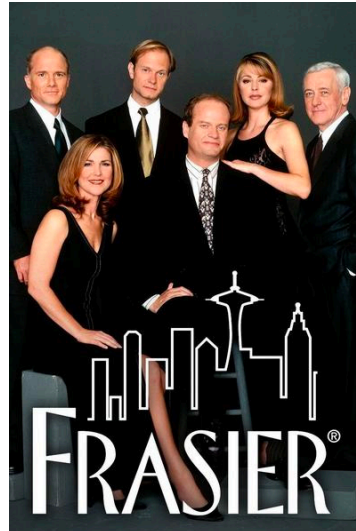
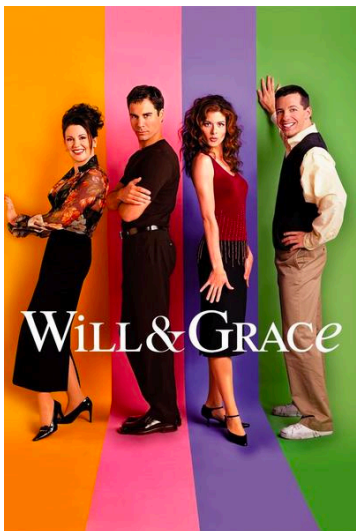
# "MUST-SEE TV"

## marketing

By the 1990s, NBC dominated the Thursday primetime programming block against its competitors. To market its success, NBC labeled its Thursday primetime programming block as "Must-See TV." Ranging from sitcoms like *Will & Grace* and *Friends*, to dramas like *Law & Order* and *E.R.*, NBC showcased a diverse set of television shows that received acclaim from audiences and critics alike.

The name "Must-See TV" creatively signified a sense of need for the audience to watch the programming: the audience "must" see it. The clever rhyme of such a short slogan helped keep it well-known, and possibly quickened the spread by word-of-mouth.

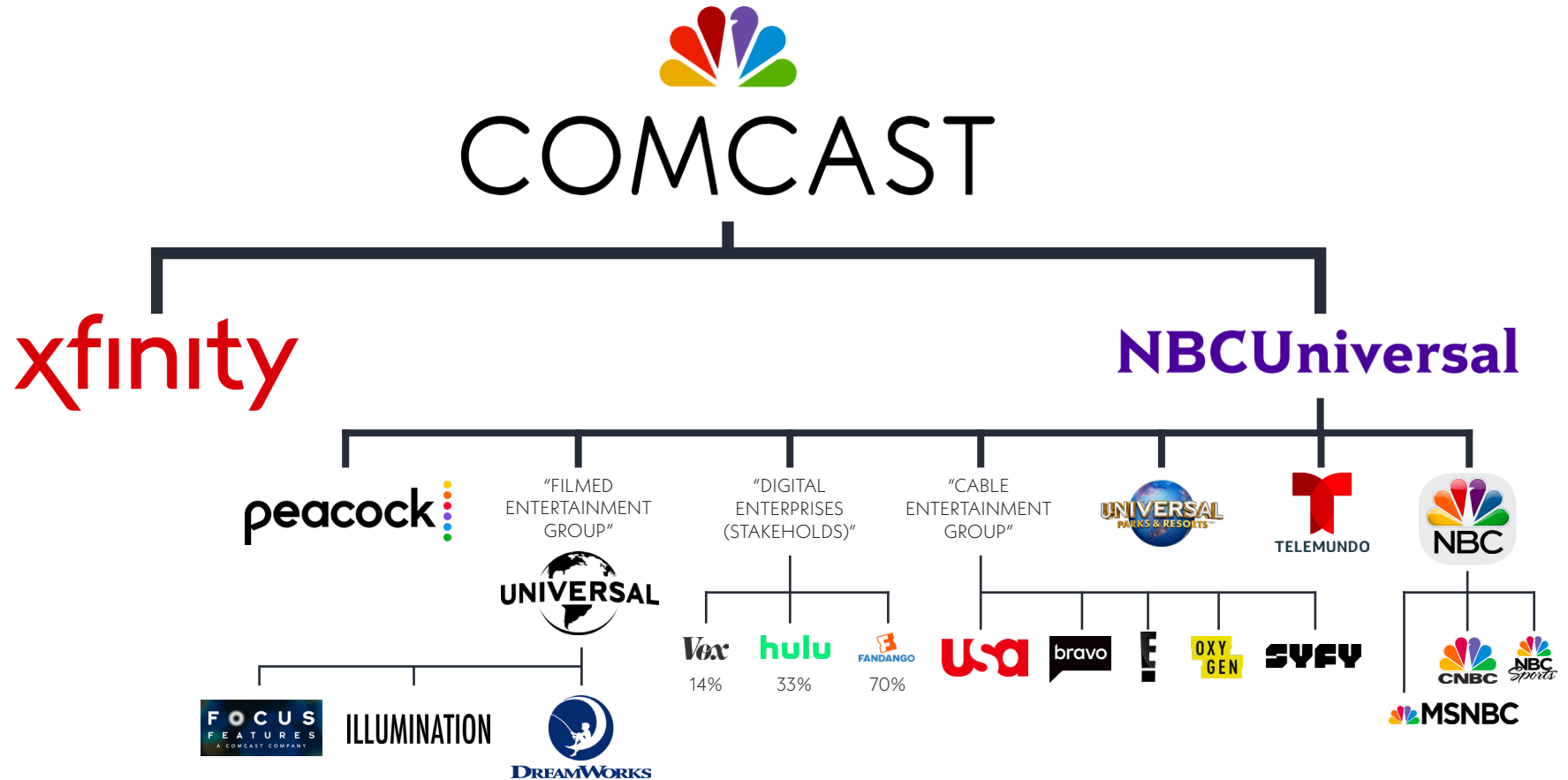
The network's ratings began to drop after the end of several highly successful shows, and attempts to replace such hits failed, resulting in the network omitting the "Must-See TV" name from the Thursday primetime programming block around 2006.



By the late 2010s, a quiet revival of "Must-See TV" occurred, with the reboot of *Will & Grace* and the increasingly popular *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, a spin-off of *Law & Order*. Despite the success of these new shows, NBC has not yet been able to return to the glory that it had during the original "Must-See TV."

# PARENT COMPANY

Comcast



Mission statement of NBCUniversal: "To be the premier content provider for television and digital platforms, spanning all television."

\*Some subsidiaries are not shown, for simplicity

Comcast currently owns NBC, through its subsidiary NBCUniversal. Comcast has since adopted the peacock into its own logo, signaling the brand strength of the peacock.

# CHALLENGES

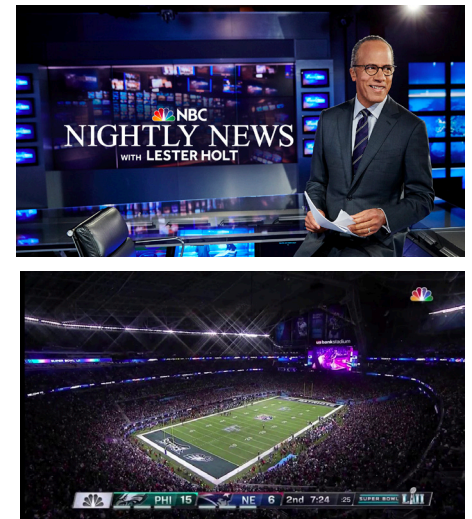
NBC is a free-to-air network, meaning its broadcast can be accessed by anyone at no charge. Because of its lack of subscription costs, NBC relies on sponsors for funding, and allows sponsors to advertise themselves during breaks in programming, known as “commercial breaks.” Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates free-to air networks like NBC, dictating that such networks are prohibited from broadcasting “obscene, indecent, or profane programming.”

Significant opponents to this are premium networks such as HBO that do not have commercial breaks, and are not bound by FCC regulations.

However, a problem shared by both NBC and HBO, as well as the plethora of other television networks, is that live television networks are only able to broadcast one thing at a time. In comparison, streaming services can host as much content as their servers have space for. Worsening this issue is the fact that the major networks often compete with each other’s programming, especially during primetime.

Fortunately, there is one significant aspect of television networks such as NBC that keep it distinct from streaming services: the ability to broadcast live.

The main point is that some content is meant to be experienced live. News, reality television, sports, and other unscripted content are more likely to be enjoyed live. This unique feature is key to the sustainability of the major networks—NBC, ABC, CBS, and Fox.



Examples of NBC’s live programming, clockwise from left: reality television, news, and sports.



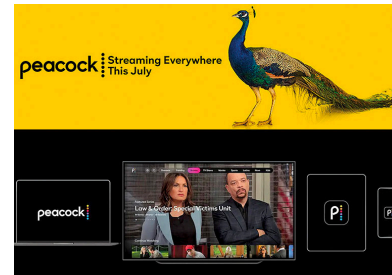
# PEACOCK (STREAMING)



As the Internet evolved and became capable of more complex technology, two particular movements that threatened NBC were expanding: streaming, and cord-cutting. The rise of streaming services, significantly more accessible than cable television, contributed to the increasing number of customers who dropped cable television. These trends have impacted both NBC as a television network, as well as its parent company Comcast as a cable provider.

Further complicating matters, NBC did not have a centralized digital library for all of its content. Instead, different streaming services held varying content produced by the network, with the network's own website typically only holding the most recent episodes of shows.

NBC needed to advance in order to maintain its image as a well-respected content producer, as well as continue to act on its value of updating in order to improve the customer's experience.



In response, NBC unleashed its twofold solution: Peacock, its own streaming service that takes the name from its most iconic branding element.

Peacock enables NBC content to be experienced by viewers who have dropped cable and turned to streaming, offering the same user-friendly features of its competition such as being able to watch all content at once.

The streaming service also supported the cable service offered by its parent company, Xfinity, in a somewhat quiet incentive: Xfinity customers receive Peacock included in their subscription. While it is unclear as to whether this will draw in new subscribers to Xfinity, it could contribute to fewer customers dropping Xfinity.



# THE WAY FORWARD

While NBC may not have the same attractive qualities as the streaming services that it competes with, it does have age and well-respected history.

In the past, the network has shown to be committed to improving the viewer's satisfaction. From pioneering color television to creating its own streaming platform for all its content, NBC has showed interest in moving forward. Its modern logo is representative of this, with the head of its mascot looking forward.

Logically, it would make sense that the next step in NBC's brand identity would be to continue the commitment from the network to its viewers. However, what should first be considered is the inverse: the commitment from the viewers to the network.

The first step in advancing the network's brand identity would be to allow the viewers to feel connected to the brand in a way that makes them feel proud. The most effective way to do this would be for the viewers to directly display the brand in a public fashion. In the new branding, the viewer's display of pride for NBC would be realized via rewards.

These rewards would be earned by subscribers of Xfinity, as well as Peacock. The rewards would "cost" a set amount of "credits". Credits are earned by continuous monthly subscriptions, meaning that having a subscription for a longer period of time makes a subscriber eligible for more valuable rewards.

These gifts would be merchandise that would allow the viewer to proudly display their affection for NBC. Examples include stickers, water bottles, and hats. An example of higher-value reward is a ticket to the live recording of a popular show.



# THE WAY FORWARD 2

In the past, NBC has successfully used an identifier at the introduction of broadcasts, and the identifiers have since become strongly associated with the network. Perhaps the best example is the three-note chime that has been in use since its early days as a radio network.

This brand element should be continued to be used, but can be expanded. Just as the viewers are proud of watching NBC, so should NBC be proud of the content it is broadcasting. To demonstrate this, a quick voiceover at the beginning of broadcasts can be used. Using a voice that was familiar to NBC viewers for the first use of the peacock in 1956 (with the voiceover that began, "The following program...") was effective, as it used an already-existing association with the brand.

Replicating this in modern times, however, might be challenging; NBC has such a wide range of programming that there may not be one voice easily recognizable by the majority of viewers. Therefore, the voiceover at the beginning of broadcasts would be done by someone who would appear within the broadcast, such as a cast member.

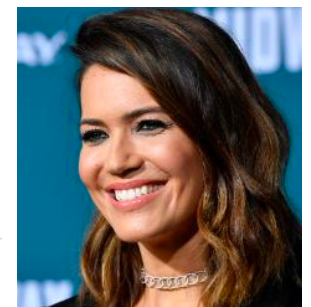
The voiceover used in 1956 was meant to proudly show the network's ability to broadcast in color. Since there is no new feature being showcased in these introductions—they are merely to serve as an identifier of the network and television show—the voiceover ought to be short and simple: "NBC proudly presents... [the name of the show]." Alternatively, the voiceover can also occur at the end of the broadcast, if it is deemed to be more fitting at the end than the beginning.

Although it is already extremely common for networks to quickly display their logo at the beginning (and, often, at the end) of their broadcast, using the voiceover from a cast member adds a unique flair. It also reuses NBC's branding tactic of including a familiar voice in the introduction of broadcasts.



"Saturday Night Live is proudly presented by... NBC."

"NBC proudly presents... This Is Us."





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