

How Michelle Phan Became Everyone's Beauty Bestie



About YouTube Channel

- www.youtube.com/michellephan

Goal

- Share her beauty, fashion and lifestyle tutorials with the broadest audience possible
- Grow overall viewership, subscriber base and watch time for her videos

Approach

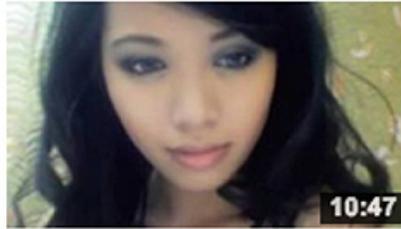
- Committed to the platform with consistent uploads
- Produced videos related to holidays and trending topics
- Interacted directly with fans

Results¹

- 6.4 million total subscribers
- 18 million average monthly views
- 2.9 million average views per video

Introduction

Michelle Phan was one of the earliest YouTube adopters to share beauty tutorials. Over the past seven years, she has uploaded more than 300 videos that have positioned her as a how-to influencer, with more than 6 million subscribers and almost 1 billion video views.



Seductive Smokey Eyes Tutorial
5,577,377 views 5 years ago

Committing to the platform with consistent uploads

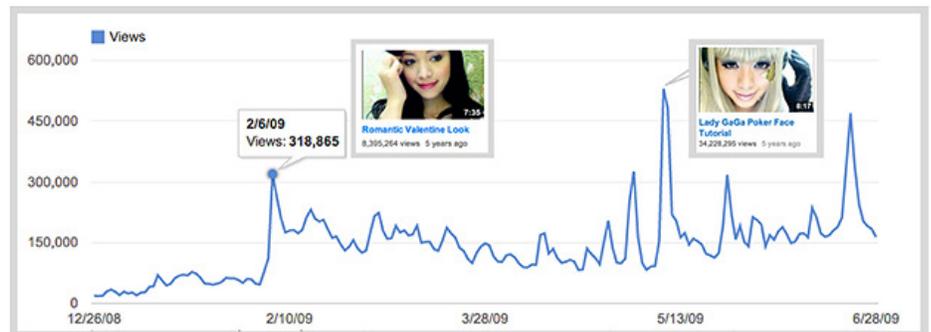
Michelle started uploading tutorial videos in May 2007. "Seductive Smokey Eyes Tutorial," her first video to surpass 100K views, was only her tenth upload. This video proved to be a turning point, and by the fall of 2008, the channel was averaging 600K views per month and she was focusing on uploading more

consistently.

The December 2008 holidays offered a perfect time to commit to regular uploads, and her viewership grew quickly. Michelle received a great response to the increase in uploads, so she released eight new videos in January 2009. The channel reached 1.5 million views that month. Her dedication to the platform continued to grow in 2009, making it a critical year for the channel.

Finding success with holiday-themed videos and trending topics

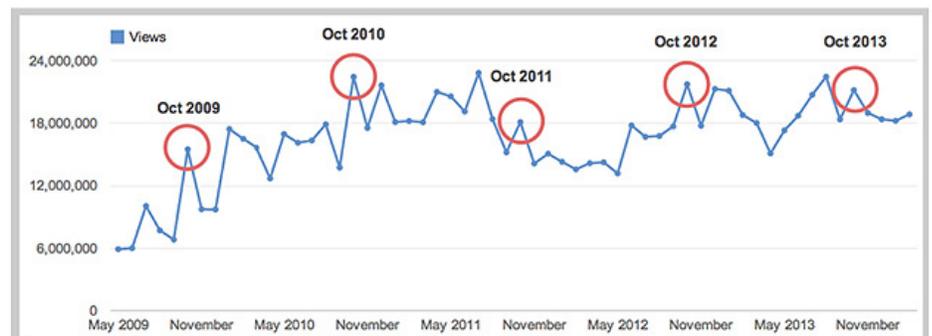
In 2009, Michelle saw her meteoric rise begin with a Valentine's Day-themed video titled "Romantic Valentine Look." After she uploaded the video, she shared it on several social media sites where she was building a community of fans for her tutorials. That month, her channel on YouTube reached 4.5 million views.



Michelle Phan Daily Views: December 26, 2008–June 28, 2009

In addition to programming her videos for the holidays, Michelle began producing makeup tutorials that related to trending topics such as new music videos or other search trends. In May 2009, Michelle released “Lady Gaga Poker Face Tutorial.” The video appeared on the YouTube homepage, gaining 1.6 million views in its first two weeks. It still stands as the second-most-watched video of all time for the channel.

One holiday in particular has helped Michelle’s success more than any other: Halloween. Michelle’s creative costume makeup tutorials have led to some of her most popular videos. In October 2009, Michelle released six different Halloween tutorials, including her most-watched video of all time, “Barbie Transformation Tutorial.” The video gained 1 million views in just four days. When “Seductive Vampire” was released a week later, the channel spiked to an all-time high in October 2009 with 1.3 million views in 24 hours.



Michelle Phan Monthly Views: May 2009–February 2014

October is still a strong month for the channel each year. Overall, Halloween-themed videos averaged 150% more views than other videos and drove 17% of all views on the channel in 2013. In addition, these Halloween-themed videos never get old and contribute new traffic every year.



Evolving creatively
Beginning in late summer 2011, when Michelle had been on the platform for over four years, she started to take more creative risks and evolve as a creator. She began writing and directing story-driven narratives that feature her tutorials as plot points woven into

the story. “Catch My Heart,” the first example of this, reached **1.2 million views** in its first week.

Since then, these story-driven videos have become fan favorites. In 2013 they generated the highest **average views per video at 1.8 million** and attracted **twice** as many views from subscribers as other videos.



Interacting with fans and driving engagement

In addition to strong content and frequent uploads, direct interaction with her fans has been a key factor in Michelle Phan's success. Michelle often releases vlog-style videos in which she answers questions from fans and provides updates on her makeup line and personal life. When she interacts with fans and asks for their questions or input, likes and comments increase **5–10x**.

Michelle's great relationship with her fans has also attracted viewers and improved engagement rates for the brands that Michelle partners with. A Dr. Pepper video Michelle hosted on her channel received 41x more views, 304x more likes and 294x more comments than the one on the brand's channel.²

Developing a new and easy-to-follow approach

Over the past seven years, Michelle Phan has become one of YouTube's most popular beauty influencers. She offers easy and inspirational makeup tutorials while simultaneously pushing the how-to format into new realms. Her early success motivated her to commit to the platform with regular uploads, and she quickly learned effective strategies to introduce her videos to the widest audience possible. The dedication, passion and attention she provides for her vast and growing audience is what keeps them coming back and supporting each new video (youtube.com/michellephan).

¹ As of May 2014

² Source: Tubular Labs. View and engagement data as of March 24, 2014.