

TBI

Television Business International

Formats

TBIvision.com

October/November 2015

chlo @chloecolquitt 5h
watched @e4singles 3 times already. I can't wait for next week!!

Bethany Helen Carter @bethanyhelenxoo 3h
Every boy needs to watch @e4singles I am crying

chlo @chloecolquitt 5h
@AJcutmuscle is definitely my favourite on @e4singles 🍷🍷

Young,
Free &
Single:live!

#YFS

Alex @AlexHowarth13 4h
That @e4singles program was jokes but soo cringy 🙄🙄

Victoria Mainwaring @Victoria979 19h
@e4singles great new show 😊x

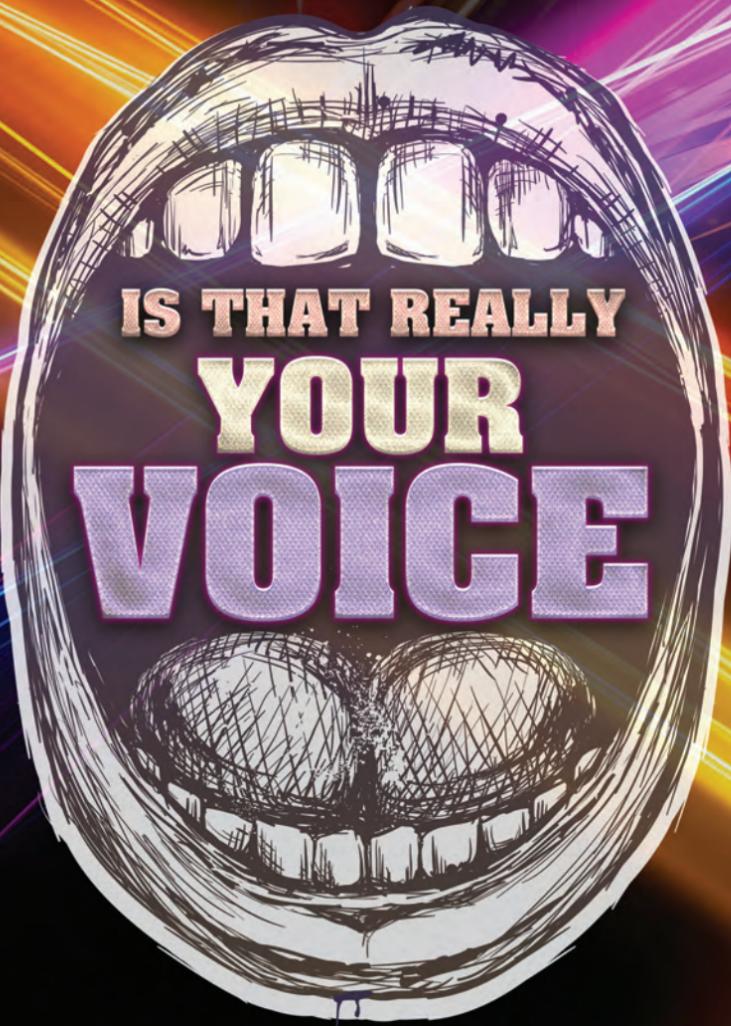
Alina Anderson @alina_anderson 19h
@e4singles Tonight show was amazing!! Love seeing awkward dates
lmao. #Live is always good 🍷

Rhianne-Louise @rhianne-louise3 19h
#e4singles has made my night 🍷 great show haha

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Published by Informa Telecoms & Media, Mortimer House,
37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH

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e-mail: tbi@informa.com **web:** www.tbivision.com

Printed in England by Wyndeham Grange Ltd, Southwick, West Sussex BN4 4EJ

Television Business International (USPS 003-807) is published bi-monthly (Jan, Mar, Apr, Jun, Aug and Oct) by Informa Telecoms Media, Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7AD, United Kingdom. The 2006 US Institutional subscription price is \$255. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by Agent named Air Business, C/O Priority Airfreight NY Ltd, 147-29 182nd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413. Periodical postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Television Business International, C/O Air Business Ltd / Priority Airfreight NY Ltd, 147-29 182nd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413. Subscription records are maintained at Informa Telecoms Media, Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7AD, United Kingdom. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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On the move

TBI takes a look at the latest comings and goings in the international television business and reports on who's moving where

ITV Studios has poached DAVID MOTT to run its Australian business as CEO, filling the gap Anita Jacoby vacated. He joins from free-to-air broadcaster Nine Network. Existing ITV Studios exec Augustus Dularo has been upped to COO of ITV Studios Australia and will be part of Mott's team



Jennifer O'Connell has landed the post of executive VP, alternative programming at Lionsgate Entertainment soon after she exited the reportedly debt-troubled Core Media Group, where she was head of US television

UK indie prodco Arrow Media has poached OLIVER WRIGHT from Endemol Shine UK for a new role, head of features. The Embarrassing Bodies and Supersize vs Superskinny producer will oversee the Channel 4-backed prodco's move into factual and factual entertainment feature content



Jon Rutherford has joined Toronto's Temple Street Productions to run a new international distribution division after leaving Tricon Films & Television. His former firm has restructured in the wake of his exit, with Karthiga Ratnasabapathy promoted to VP, worldwide sales and acquisitions

Turner Broadcasting System has poached Studio 100 Media's director of new business development, ALEXANDER GOETHEL, to become its programming director of entertainment for the central and eastern Europe region. The former Google executive replaces the outgoing Nadja Raoufi



Eli Holzman run as president of All3Media America has come to an end, with ICM Partners co-founder Greg Lipstone coming in as CEO. Lipstone is a well-known talent agent who has represented All3's US production company talent since 2012

Wales-based prodco Boomerang has hired Outline Productions executive SHONA BALDWIN as director of development. Baldwin has been with indie Outline for the past two years as head of factual and entertainment, and prior to that was format development chief at Studio Lambert



Natalia Sterlikova has joined FremantleMedia International from All3Media International as director, sales, CEE, Russia and CIS. Her hire came as a restructure at FMI saw Sam Harowitz and Hayley Dickson promoted, and followed the hire of Kanal D's Amaç Erol Us

PIERRE CHEUNG has been hired as senior VP and general manager of Viacom International Media Networks for Greater China, joining from BBC Worldwide. He will report to another former BBCWW executive, Mark Whitehead, who is executive VP and managing director of VIMN Asia





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The Formats Matrix

High Cost



GOGGLEBOX

UK broadcaster Channel 4 has commissioned a 1x60mins Christmas special of the Studio Lambert unscripted hit as well as version featuring kids

I LOVE LUCY The Latvian division of the Modern Times Group is making a local version of the classic US comedy



IS THAT REALLY YOUR VOICE a singing talent show in which contestants' voices can't be heard. It will debut at MIPCOM through creator and distributor Global Agency

Low Cost



MUM MADE ME A STAR

CBBC has ordered *Got What it Takes*, a British version of a musical talent format out of Romania



CASH MOB is a cost-effective game show from All3Media International, the distributor of format hit *Cash Cab*



DER VORST Talpa Global has inked a content deal with Peter van der Vorst's Dutch indie Vorst Media, which is behind various RTL entertainment formats



PRANK MY PET Novovision has taken the prank show into the animal kingdom with its new series. Several Asian networks have prebought it

Low Cost

TBI's at-a-glance guide to the biggest deals in international format television

Concept

Lagardère
STUDIOS

LAGARDÈRE STUDIOS French media giant Lagardère has rebranded its TV and Film division Lagardère Studios with one area of focus format development, production and distribution of formats

BRUCE CAMPBELL Comedy-horror legend Bruce Campbell is working with producers from the *American Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* on a horror-themed competition show, *Bruce Campbell's Horrified*



BABUSHKA France's TF1, Ryan Seacrest Productions and Turkey's Global Agency have hooked up on this new gameshow

\$ High



REAL MEN The Red Arrow International format has started to sell well after its MIPTV launch. Buyers include Germany's Vox, the Netherlands' RTL and Sweden's TV4



DANCE, DANCE, DANCE RTL4's new format, which Talpa is taking to market, sees celebrities train friends and family to perform famous musical numbers. Reportedly, the most expensive format ever made in the Netherlands, the show has been rating well



UNDERCOVER BOSS Brazilian broadcaster Globo has ordered its own version of reality format, the first such deal for the show in Latin America

Concept

Reality gets real with self-filming

Industry executives have signaled an end to overly formatted factual and factual entertainment shows, and several new self-filmed formats are putting the real back into reality



At the turn of the year, Discovery Channel programming boss Rich Ross was lauded for calling time on 'faux factual'. Then in July, Discovery CEO and president David Zaslav reinforced that message, telling TBI: "We're about characters, adventure and exploration, but some of the content you were seeing – [for example] beards, and cows and pigs running through the kitchen – we've decided not to do any more, even if we give up some ratings points." Other senior factual execs including Rob Sharenow and Marjorie Kaplan have said similar, and broadcasters and producers are now reacting, with more real reality shows starting to come through.

One way to offer a stamp of authenticity is to have participants film themselves. In the UK, *The Island with Bear Grylls* is one example of this new breed, and features a group of contestants trying to survive on a desert island. While the titular survival expert opens and narrates the show, the action is largely filmed by a professional cameraman, who is also a contestant.

Produced by Shine TV and Bear Grylls Ventures, Endemol Shine International has shopped the format to a host of major free-to-air partners. NBC in the US, ProSieben in Germany, and M6 in France.

In the same category is History's *Alone*, which

takes the self-filming concept to another level by having a group of survivalists attempting, as the name suggests, to live by themselves in the wilderness. The participants film themselves in the show, where the last man standing is the victor.

The way it is shot gives the show an edge, says Ellen Lovejoy, vice president, content sales at A+E Networks. "It feels gritty and raw," she says. "That is a trend in reality, to have that authenticity and not have any gimmicks. Self-shot footage is one way to get that, and we are experimenting more in that area."

The audience responded, and *Alone* was number one across cable in its slot on launch. A second season has been ordered, this time with 20,000 applicants instead of the 200 from season one. A+E sells the show globally, and SBS in the Netherlands has already optioned the format.

Paradoxically, History is the sister net to A+E, which shows *Duck Dynasty*, the archetype of the show that many of those speaking about 'faux factual' had in their crosshairs. These types of format can, however, sit alongside the grittier and more real shows coming through, according to Lovejoy. "Different audiences enjoy different types of TV," she says. "*Duck Dynasty* is like a sitcom; it is light and fun and it is still number one on A+E."

Another show to use self-filming, in this case controversially, is *The Bully Project*. The format has bullied kids filming their experiences at the hands

of fellow pupils before all parties sit down in an attempt to resolve the issues caught on camera.

The show is a risky, if ultimately rewarding, pick-up for a broadcaster. Undercover filming in schools is fraught with difficulty and, ahead of transmission, when the positive nature of the show becomes clear, there is the potential for negative publicity. For this reason, there is often an effort to keep the show under wraps until close to its TX.

"It causes controversy when you say there is undercover filming in a school, and there can be a negative reaction before people realise the intention of the show is positive and that it is helping kids," says Julian Curtis, co-founder of Lineup Industries, which sells the show internationally. "Producers don't need that while they are in production."

Several deals are, however, public. In the US, *Cops* producer Langley has optioned the format, and a UK version has been filmed, with Jamie Oliver prodco Fresh One making it for the UK's ITV as a one-off. Elsewhere, there's a 3x60mins Keo Films-produced Australian series for the ABC and an Endemol Shine-produced version for Finnish pubcaster YLE.

What the self-filming offers over and above a straight doc about bullying is first-hand footage and a real perspective on a social issue. "It is a new and engaging way of looking at the subject," says Lineup's Curtis. "It is very immediate; you are walking in the shoes of the child, which shows what the experience is like. It is a very honest show."

Self-filming is not, however, a shortcut to a cheaper show. There is increased work in post as the good self-shot footage is sifted from the bad, and also an element of unpredictability. "You can't say this is how an episode will turn out because it is all undercover filming," says Curtis.

"We did train them, but some of the [participants in *Alone*] were better than others at filming, so you do what you can in the edit," says A+E's Lovejoy. "But the fact that the footage is not pristine adds to the reality of the show."

Self-filming is one technique, it appears, that factual producers and distributors are using to put the 'real' back into reality. **TBI**



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Doors open for French formats



France TV formats are finding growing success in the global market, in tandem with a rise in their profile. However, the French industry, its broadcasters included, still needs to push forward more original creations, as Pascale Paoli-Lebailly finds out

There has been a revival in French drama, with France taking its place as a top drama series provider. TV fiction exports up 49.3% to €38.9 million (US\$44.2 million), while television formats have seen continuous growth, though to a lesser extent. Sales, including those of gameshows, entertainment series and formats rose 3.5% in 2014 to €22.8 million, against €22.1 million in 2013.

Though largely unrecognised in France, a handful of French formats have become international successes.

Exports have tended to concentrated on a few gameshows such as *Countdown* (*Des Chiffres et des Lettres*, which France Télévisions Distribution owns), *Fort Boyard* (which comes from Zodiak Media's ALP) and *Intercities* (Mistral Productions).

More recently, however, the Gallic market, which has historically acquired and remade formats, is increasingly creating and exporting original formats of its own, with games and entertainment concepts fuelling the hits.

These are still relatively few, as broadcasters remain reluctant to take risks with pricey original creations. What has changed is that producers and distributors are making more of the few formats that are finding their way to the international market.

Produced by Simone Halberstadt Harari in indie prodco Effervescence and distributed by boutique company Can't Stop Media, *Slam* is one of the present blue-chip formats. Awarded the Export Format prize at TVFI's French showcase Rendez-Vous last month in Biarritz, the 30-minute access-primetime gameshow airs daily on France 3, along with a weekly version called *Grand Slam*.

Launched in 2009 with a 7% audience share, *Slam* now commands an average 16.6% share. It has been adapted on TRT Okul in Turkey and on RTV in Slovenija, and further remakes are

Our Dear Neighbours



Slam



Lets Play With Memory

said to be in the pipeline in Italy and Switzerland. The 2014 figures released this September by export association TVFI and content promotion body the CNC show that French formats mostly travel in western Europe, and are breaking previously uninterested territories such as the UK, Belgium, Spain and Italy.

Newen Distribution, which has recently been linked with a merger with ITV Studios France's distribution arm, is at the centre of some recent developments in those territories. The distributor's quiz show *Harry* has been licensed into Turkey, Spain, Italy and Germany, while *Run & Buzz* has sold into Turkey, Spain, Benelux and Russia.

The Export Format prize was launched last year to unveil outstanding concepts for international buyers, and mixes entertainment, doc and drama formats.

Last year, indie Satisfaction – The Television Agency won for its Friday night entertainment show *Anything Goes*, which Endemol Shine International sells. The format has broadcast on TF1 since 2001 and has been licensed into more than 20 countries, including in the US where it runs on Fox.

"France has creative talent and could be the next key format provider to watch on the international scene, and not only in the French-speaking territories," says Lagardère Studios's Charlotte Toledano Detaille. "The French formats market previously existed in a smaller way, but international success makes it more visible."

Toledano Detaille formerly worked with Endemol, Banijay Group and Newen, and joined Lagardère Studios (formerly Lagardère Entertainment) last July as director of format

acquisitions and content development. Besides buying foreign concepts, she will co-develop formats with in-house producers, Spanish affiliate Boomerang TV included.

Lagardère Studios, which currently sells Ango Productions's short comedy format *Dear Neighbours*, wants to increase its formats creations so as to better compete with international groups.

In the French TV-formats industry, size matters. Though small independent companies can have international success with one or two formats, the bulk of new gameshows and light entertainment concepts come from biggest entities. Added to that, the trend is for consolidation.

"Seven or eight years ago, we could find ten interesting international formats to adapt on the market," says François de Brugada, CEO of Banijay France. "Now, formats are circulating weakly and there is a global lack of creation. This gives French formats a better chance to travel."

"However, if we are only making two sales with our France 2 cooking format *Hands Off Chef!* [in Norway and Finland], we can't yet talk about France as an international success. There is a slight upturn on the French format market, and French broadcasters are more likely to commission original domestic creations, but it takes time."

Banijay's French division produces around 1,551 hours of entertainment shows each year through its three local companies: Air Production, Banijay Productions France and H2O. Over the 2013-2014 season, it positioned ahead of Lagardère Studios (1,044 hours) and Fremantle Media (589 hours), according to figures collected by the Ecran Total trade weekly. Endemol ranked in fifth place with 500 hours, while indie groups Newen and Effervescence were respectively credited with 437 and 417 hours produced.

Though it launched Belgian concept *Sooner or Later* and UK-created *The Weakest Link* on D8, Banijay claims that for every adaptation, ten formats are originated in-house.

Banijay France's original titles include eleven-season reality TV franchise *Party Workers* (*Les Ch'tis*) for DTT channel W9 and its spin-off *Les Marseillais*. The company is also finding international success with hidden-camera format *My Parents Are Gonna Love You*, which runs on NRJ 12. This MIPCOM, Banijay International will launch new formats *Let's Play With My Memory*, which comes from Air

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A RACE TO THE TOP



60' ADVENTURE REALITY FORMAT

IN FOCUS RECAYTE READIES FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS FORMATS REVIVAL



France Télévisions is dedicated to French programme creation, and Laetitia Recayte is the group's latest ambassador in this space.

The former managing director of Newen Distribution, and still president of the TVFI export association, has approached her new role as director of France Télévisions' commercial development with gusto. This new division comprises three subsidiaries: production outfit MFP, the producer of France 2's new police series *Alex Hugo*; distribution unit France Télévisions Distribution; and ad agency France Télévisions Publicité.

Recayte was handed the role this summer by Delphine Ernotte-Cunci, the new president of France's public service broadcaster, to put into action a strategy aimed at generating new revenue streams, especially from TV programme sales. The group wants to build the value chain and further consolidate the French TV industry.

"There has been a fantastic renewal in French drama, animation remains a strong industry, and France is now less absent from the TV format market," she says.

"The French audience's taste is now very similar to that of international audiences, and this strengthens French creation. Now, France Télévisions wants to play a greater role in creating and monetising content, whether they are French series, coproductions or entertainment shows."

Recayte, who had a strong track record at Newen selling hit shows such as *Spiral* and *Witnesses* worldwide, wants to bolster MFP's TV drama and international coproduction activities. On the FTD side, she wants to boost the distribution of TV formats, be closer to in-house and external production teams and better contribute to a more dynamic market.

"France Télévisions has decided to position on the global market and play the role of better initiating, promoting and selling French-created programmes," she says, adding the commercial arm of UK cousin the BBC, BBC Worldwide, provides an inspirational model.

Productions and is for France 2; *May The Best Host Win* (from H2o and for D8); *Music Game Night* (another Air Prods effort, this time for France 2); and paper format *Try My House*. The latter allows a family to try out living in a house before choosing whether to buy it.

Towards the end of this year, when Banijay Group and Zodiak Media merge, Banijay Group France will enrich its format slate with one new genre, adventure game, and gain two new clients, TF1 and Canal+.

Zodiak's French division, which has been under pressure for several months and suffered many exits on the animation side, now focuses on drama and docs but is still active in formats. Subsidiary ALP produces adventure game *Fort Boyard* for France 2 and *Survivor* adaptation *Koh Lanta* for TF1.

Elsewhere, KM Productions produced Canal+'s top-rating and long-running daily talk show *Le Grand Journal* until this September, marking a significant revenue hit for Zodiak.

The revelation that Vivendi chairman Vincent Bolloré plans to buy a minority stake in

the future Banijay-Zodiak group opens another potential avenue of business.

The new content strategy Vivendi is building up is based both on increasing investment in programmes and making selected bolt-on acquisitions. At the same time, its subsidiary Canal+ is seeking to add original entertainment shows to its line-up and to feed stablemate DTT channels D8 and D17.

This is one of the reasons Vivendi also recently acquired independent distributor Can't Stop. The UK-based company, which ex-Zodiak executive Matthieu Porte created, has already helped Canal+'s DTT channels to source entertainment shows and formats like *Mum of The Week*.

Launched on D8, the format travelled to Poland, Finland, Turkey and could land on RTL2 soon, according to sources. "The strategy behind Vivendi's acquisition of Can't Stop is to use Canal+'s channels to launch exportable formats," says France national Porte, adding: "We will, of course, continue to distribute third-party contents like *Slam*."

To French TV producers association SPECT,

developing French formats and exporting them is a key business line and a growth driver for the whole domestic TV industry.

Last year, the association commissioned a study that showed entertainment formats and magazine shows generated annual revenue of €1.5 billion and represented 12,000 jobs. This was true even though French light-entertainment production has no quota guarantees and little to no funding from the CNC when compared with fiction, documentary and animation content.

Even so, light entertainment still has real weight. Formats and entertainment shows from within the genre account for one-third of channels' grid costs, and can drive huge audiences.

"They are often used by broadcasters as safe option – a '*variable d'ajustement*' – when budgets decrease or when programmes cuts are planned," says Vincent Gisbert, executive director of SPECT.

"While the worldwide market has fewer big international concepts to offer, the French industry keeps importing formats, and sales revenues remain low. However, French broadcasters need to feed their slots and there's an upbeat in favour in the local creation sector."

New DTT channels like D8, TMC, W9 and NRJ 12 have offered opportunities to French creators, while established broadcasters TF1, France 2 and M6, which favour overseas format-adaptations, are now considering domestic formats more. TF1 is looking for primetime entertainment shows, while France Télévisions has already showed it will invest in French creation, too.

"The French TV format market is emerging and it is necessary to help the creation of original productions developed by indies," SPECT's Gisbert adds, saying France Télévisions can take a leading role in this sector and contribute to pilot financing.

Incubator La Fabrique des Formats is also looking to spearhead change and help the development of French international TV formats. Formed by Philippe Chazal, formerly of Arte and France 4, the investment fund is dedicated to formats R&D, with plans to raise €10 million through bank Natixis and become operational in the coming months. Its goal is to finance around 15 projects of 'made-in-France' formats each year by its third year. **TBI**

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Pranks call



Pranks shows have wide appeal and travel well. Andy Fry goes behind the hidden cameras and gets the low down on an evergreen genre

Practical-joke or prank-based TV series are nothing new. In fact the most famous of them all, *Candid Camera*, actually predates TV. Created by Allen Funt, the show started life on US radio as *The Candid Microphone* in 1947 before migrating to ABC.

There's no question, however, that prank shows are in demand right now. Aside from *Candid Camera*, which was rebooted for the umpteenth time by TV Land in 2014 (and is now offered internationally as a format by Electus International), titles on the international market include *Impractical Jokers*, *Off Their Rockers* and Canadian juggernaut *Just For Laughs*. In addition to these there is an eclectic mix of challenger brands including *Fameless*, *Knock Out*, *Freak Out*, *The X Prank Show*, *Fonejacker* and *Meet The Parents*. There are even

kids prank shows, including *Just For Laughs* spin-off *Just Kidding* and *Prank Patrol*.

Red Arrow International has had a lot of success with the prank genre, says managing director Henrik Pabst. One of the company's top shows is *Off Their Rockers*, a hidden-camera show in which senior citizens play outrageous pranks on young people. Based on the series *Benidorm Bastards*, the format has sold to over 25 territories including Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Italy, Spain, South Korea, Turkey, Sweden and Norway. The show has been a particularly strong performer in the UK, where it has run for four seasons on ITV, and the US, where comedian Betty White fronts series on NBC and Lifetime.

Prank shows like *Off Their Rockers* work well for various reasons, according to Pabst. "Firstly, a prank is something that is universally

appealing across every culture, and being rooted in physical comedy means you don't have the language barriers you get in other types of comedy," he says. "Secondly, they are economic, scalable to produce and hugely flexible to schedule because of their broad appeal content and tone. Finally, you get genuine reactions and real emotions from the comedy, something that viewers and broadcasters increasingly value."

Much of the above is endorsed by Sari Buksner, senior director, sales and development at Just For Laughs Distribution, the company that sells the long-running prank show of the same name. Produced out of Quebec, *Just For Laughs* has just celebrated its 15th anniversary and will be up to 289 episodes by the end of the next season," she says. "The show has been seen in 140 countries and is licensed to 100



airlines worldwide. It has also spawned kids spin-off *Just Kidding* and generated more than 1.5 billion hits on YouTube."

JFL's formula involves airing around 13-15 non-verbal gags in a half-hour episode. "We have a gag factory in Quebec creating around 200 new scripts a season," Buksner. "The fact that the show has no dialogue is a major reason why it travels so well. Broadcasters also like the show because it is a great fallback. It can air in almost any slot and will always deliver adequate-to-good ratings. An added bonus for us now is that we have so much volume, which is attractive to buyers."

JFL and *Candid Camera* are probably the purest prank-show formats on the market, but it's worth noting that most of the new wave of prank shows actually have some kind of narrative twist. "We're in an era when audiences have a lot of choice," says Electus International president John Pollak, "including the ability to watch pranks on the internet whenever they

want. So prank shows need to have some kind of added extra."

At MIPCOM, Electus will offer buyers the format of *Fameless*, a truTV show in which wannabe stars think they have been cast in a reality show, but are actually surrounded by actors. "The contestants think they are in something like a survival show or a home makeover show," says Pollak, "but the things they are asked to do become more extreme. It really works as a prank show because of the hilarious narrative."

This kind of role-play prank show comes in various forms. Hat Trick International's slate includes prank call show *Fonejacker* and prank chat show *Da Ali G Show*. "Ali G [played by Sacha Baron Cohen] was first seen as a character in 1998," says HTI sales chief Sarah Tong, "but we've recently repackaged a lot of his content as a 20x30mins series for FXX in the US".

All3Media International, meanwhile, has licensed Objective Productions' *Meet the Parents* format to nine territories. "In this format one half of a real-life couple invites their partner to meet their family for the first time," says Nick Smith, senior VP, international format production, "except it's a setup. It's not really their family, but actors playing characters ranging from a flirtatious mother and gangster father to a nerdy brother with very strange hygiene habits. If the partner endures and doesn't make excuses to leave early, they win a luxury holiday."

According to Smith, part of the success of the show has been its adaptability. "The recent Canadian series was broadcast before the watershed and therefore is family friendly," he

says, "but the original UK version is quite racy. There are also options with regard to the length of the show. The German adaptation for Sat 1 had a 60-minute runtime; in the UK season one was 30 minutes, but season two included a studio element and extended to 60 minutes."

Smith highlights the importance of authentic reactions in prank shows. "Reality TV has got us so used to 'wannabes' acting up for the camera that it's refreshing to see the reactions of people who genuinely have no idea what is going on," he says.

The pursuit of the perfect prank show has also seen some producers bring celebrities into the mix. Novovision of France, for example, created *The X-Prank Show: Urgent Landing*. In each episode of this show, a group of unsuspecting celebrities think they are on a plane that is going down because of some unexpected occurrence such as a fire or an injured pilot. The series sold to broadcasters across the Middle East, including Egypt's Al Hayat TV, Lebanon's MTV and Qatar's Al Araby channel. It also generated over 28 million views on YouTube.

Novovision is now bringing season two of *The X-Prank Show*, in which it will travel to countries in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East to prank local stars, to MIPCOM.

Banijay International also uses celebrities in *My Parents Are Gonna Love You*, a French show that has subsequently travelled to Belgium (VTM), Netherlands (Net 5), Romania (Antena 1), Russia (MUZTV), Slovakia (Markiza) and Turkey (ATV). Reminiscent of *Meet The Parents*, MPAGLY sees young people trick their parents by introducing them to a fake fiancé. The twist comes when that person is a famous celebrity,



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UNSTOPPABLE
CONTENT



who proceeds to display terrible behaviour. “Unlike many prank shows involving a celebrity, *MPAGLY* has the celebrity pranking everyday people instead of the prank being on them,” says Banijay International’s head of global sales, Michael Jackson. “With the celebrity acting out of character we see a rollercoaster of emotions, starting off with shock when they first meet, growing anger when the celebrity acts rudely to laughing and relief at the end reveal.”

Another variation on the narrative-based prank show is *Impractical Jokers*, in which four comedians egg each other on to perform pranks on unsuspecting members of the public. Here, the key to the show is the dynamic between the four comedians, who ostensibly ad-lib their way through each practical-joke scenario. In doing so, there is a kind of hybrid stand-up comedy feel to the show. A big hit for TruTV in the US, the original show and the format have been licensed to Comedy Central UK by Warner Bros International Television Production.

Another show where comedians take centre stage is 495 Productions’ *Jerks With Cameras*. Produced for MTV, this show sees quick-thinking comedians travelling the US pranking innocent people. They then return to the studio to share the pranks with the live audience and decide which are the best.

One factor that has underpinned the growth in prank shows is the increased versatility of camera technology, with hidden cameras no longer static and clunky devices. In Banijay’s *BFF*, for example, “a young guy tells three of his best friends that he is in big trouble and needs rescuing, sending them on a journey that becomes stranger and stranger,” says Jackson. “Unknown to them the whole situation has been set up by the production, and both their friend and the host are watching every move they make, live, via hidden cameras.”

This idea of friends and family being in on the gag is increasingly prevalent (presumably because it prevents the target from guessing quite so quickly). Red Arrow, for example, has ProSieben format *The Big Surprise*, in which “friends and family plot the worst day ever for a hapless contestant”. 495, meanwhile, has *Freak Out*, an ABC Family show in which the unsuspecting target’s “fears are brought to life through elaborate special effects, intricate makeup, actors and multiple cameras. The target’s friends and family assist in tailoring the stunt.”

Technology is also a theme in *Bad Robots*,



Meet the Parents



My Parents Are Gonna Love You

a show from Objective that aired on E4 in the UK. The show centres on a fleet of seemingly defective and mischievous machines, devices and robots, produced by the fictional company Tezcorp. “Unsuspecting members of the public

are filmed using these everyday machines and it is hilarious to see technology get its own back on humans that have taken it for granted,” All3Media’s Smith says. “It is already in production in Belgium, and we expect it to be



a big hit internationally.”

Another interesting trend is shows in which the audience go behind the scenes with the pranking process, says Red Arrow’s Pabst. “We have a new show for MIPCOM called *Prankenstein*, which aired on ProSieben in Germany. *Prankenstein* finds people who have the desire but not the expertise to prank their friends. A team of expert pranksters and mischief-makers step in to bring their twisted dreams to life using electronics, engineering, animatronics, prosthetics, remote control wizardry, CGI and so on. Whether it is making an elevator floor disappear, shocking your friends with a shark in a fishmongers, or blowing up a guest at a restaurant, *Prankenstein* can make it come true.”

New from Keshet International is *Knock Out*, “a prank show, but also a competition”, says Ran Telem, senior VP, content, Keshet Broadcasting. “One of the major differences between *Knock Out* and other shows on the market is that it doesn’t just require someone to pull off a prank, it requires them to do it in the most charismatic, believable and flamboyant way possible. The prankster is competing with a rival who is given the same task and the same means but may choose to go about executing the hoax in a very different way. *Knock Out* also features celebrities pranking other celebrities so audiences get to see a side of these stars they haven’t seen before.”

With the show attracting a 35% share on Channel 2 Israel on August 10, Telem says there is a difference between the way pranks work on TV and the internet. “If you are watching online you might only be prepared to watch for a short

time in between doing other things/consuming other content, so there’s a need to get to the heart of the prank faster,” he says. “On TV, the prank can be built up gradually – as is the case with *Knock Out* where the prank goes through three stages of escalation. That also lends itself to co-viewing, and co-laughing, which is more likely to take place when you are watching linear TV.”

While Pabst and Buksner make the point that pranks can travel internationally, Telem provides a caveat. “There is a market for prank shows on every continent – even more so now that people’s tastes are being moulded by short-form content online,” he says. “But different cultures have different comedic styles and some tactics can work better in some places than others. Looking at Asia, the culture is more conservative when it comes to pranks.”

Jackson agrees that content owners need to be culturally sensitive. “In some countries it is common to have pranks based around sexual innuendos and with flesh on show, but in other countries around the world this would not be tolerated,” he says. Also, in Asia, especially China, they often want celebrities to be treated as heroes and not to be subject of pranks that make them look stupid.”

He also makes another key point about a potential limitation of the genre. “It can be hard to get multiple series commissioned because once a show has been on air the prank secret is out,” he says.

Kids shows on the market include *Prank Patrol*. MarVista Entertainment’s executive VP, distribution, Vanessa Shapiro says: “*Prank Patrol* is a reality show that gives kids the opportunity

to plan, construct and execute the prank of a lifetime. Every week, the series features a new prankster on a mission to pull one over on friends, parents, teacher, etcetera. While kids can find pranks on the internet, *Prank Patrol* is particularly popular because of the engaging hosts, the involvement of the special effects teams, the overall high production value, and watching another kids pull off the prank of a lifetime.”

Created by Canada-based Apartment 11 Productions, the original *Prank Patrol* series has been a long-runner on YTV and Discovery Kids, with a total of 104 episodes. Subsequently, says Shapiro, “A version was produced by Baker Media and ran for three seasons on the BBC. An Australian version was also produced by activeTV and aired for three seasons on the ABC in Australia. The show has also aired on ZDF in Germany, Rai in Italy, TV2 Zebra in Norway, RTE in Ireland, Lusomundo in Portugal, Turner Broadcasting in India, SIC in Portugal and RTL Croatia.”

Notwithstanding its success, the fact that the audience is kids does raise the question of audience safety – and the risk that they might try to replicate things at home: “In *Prank Patrol*, high-production value pranks are pulled off with special materials and a special effects team that cannot be replicated at home,” says Shapiro. “So it’s important to stress to viewers, especially kids, that pranks can be fun but need to be safe.”

More generally, it’s noticeable with a lot of prank shows that producers try to push unsuspecting members of the public to the edge, either by irritating or frightening them. “Experience tells you how far you can go,” says JFL’s Buksner. “We’re always watching closely to see how people react to pranks. If they are upset, then we usually have the right people on hand to calm them down.” Possibly, this is another good argument for shows involving friends and family, because it’s a way of bringing victims back down to earth before they completely lose their tempers.

Perhaps the only thing that could bring the current prank boom to an end is if it experiences a high-profile tragedy, similar to the Australian radio prank call that led to the suicide of British nurse Jacintha Saldanha. To date, though, the television industry’s pranksters appear to have stayed on the right side of the ethical line. **TBI**

Formats Ireland



Ireland is emerging as a solid format creating hotspot, as its small local market forces producers to think internationally, TBI reports

Ask Irish producers what the most significant development in formats has been of recent years and the answer is almost invariably the same: RTE's Format Farm. The initiative launched in 2012 in order to better reach the international

market, linking producers with distributors on a personal level for the first time.

"When the RTE Format Farm kicked off it was great, because it encouraged Irish indie producers to look outside and engage with distributors," says Philip Kampff, founder of Dublin-based Vision Independent Productions.

"That was really beneficial."

VIP was among the first companies to properly profit from the initiative, after its singing competition series *The Hit* was picked up by Warner Bros. International Television Production and sold to Netherlands commercial broadcaster RTL5, Russia's Rossiya 1, Spain's La



Who's Holiday is it Anyway?

and Norway's NRK, among others.

"Format Farm encourages us to be a broadcaster that tests pilots and formats," says Janet Frawley, head of formats at RTÉ Global, the commercial arm of RTÉ. "It means we do take risks on new formats. We do that and we are cultivating new talent."

Others that have significantly benefitted included Toto Productions, whose show with Sony Pictures Television and Victory Television,



The Takeover, was commissioned in the UK by Channel 4, and Coco Television, which had *Whose Holiday is it Anyway?* picked up for international distribution by Modern Times Group-owned DRG Formats after piloting strongly on RTÉ One.

"It's clear we have a very strong talent pool here," says Frawley. "As a nation we are creative and naturally good storytellers, and we have always been a creative hub for ideas. If you go back as far as *Lyrics Board*, *Granny Bootcamp* and, more recently, *Genealogy Roadshow*, we have had success in formats, but we have not been shouting about it. Now we're beginning to actively invest in formats."

However, there is a feeling among producers that the Format Farm initiative is losing steam, despite RTÉ receiving a record 190 submissions for the most-recent pitch.

"The difficulty with most of these initiatives, which always have the best intentions, is that while there will be ten commissioned pilots, there will not be ten commissioned series, and that can lead to a lot of disappointment," says Kampff. "There has been a drop in excitement."

"Format Farm was initially a great thing, because it got the distributors to Ireland," says Bernadine Carraher, co-founder of indie Mind the Gap Films. "It has opened up to the general public this year, which is unfortunate for professional producers."

Carraher says, however, that indies have

begun cultivating those distributor relationships away from Format Farm. Mind the Gap recently sold its new cooking-meets-history series *Lords & Ladles* to FremantleMedia International.

"We have tight budgets in Ireland, and the distributors can take our projects and scale them up," says Carraher. "Often you'll see foreign formats come in and be scaled down as the budgets are lower."

Lifestyle show *Lords & Ladles*, for RTÉ's main channel, sees a trio of chefs enter grand manor houses and stately homes to recreate lavish feasts from history. In each episode lots are drawn to find a ladle, which gives one control of the kitchen, while another has to source the ingredients and the third dines with the gentry.

"The international market is essential," says Carraher. "You won't grow if you focus only on Ireland. We're hoping good things come from our association with FremantleMedia, and we're talking to them about other partnerships."

FremantleMedia also sells Big Mountain Productions-created *Genealogy Roadshow*, which played on RTÉ and PBS in the US.

Public broadcaster RTÉ has been the most-forward-thinking network in relation to the international market for some time. In recent months, it has partnered with Norwegian pubcaster cousin NRK to develop *#MissingYou*.

The format looks at personal relationships that are conducted entirely through web-calls service Skype, for example a father living away

from his children and prisoners talking to family members.

"We decided to develop it with NRK, and this took place in Oslo and Dublin," says Frawley. "RTÉ has commissioned a 6x30mins series and NRK is in the commissioning process right now."

New Format Farm shows at MIPCOM include quiz series *Fourheads*, *Farmer in Charge*, social media panel show *FML* and prank show *Scorchio*, while RTÉ Global is focusing on rebooting *Mother Knows Best*, *Black Sheep* and *Celebrity Wildchild*.

Meanwhile, commercial broadcaster TV3 has made a significant strategic switch in recent years to focus more on international development and formats. This shift began when Ben Frow came in as programming chief and continued when Jeff Ford took over. With Frow now at Channel 5 and Ford leaving earlier this year to become managing director of Fox International Channels UK, Lynda McQuaid is now director of content.

"From the time of Ben Frow and then Jeff Ford, and now Lynda McQuaid, there was a motivation to create more fresh Irish content across formats," says Andrew Byrne, TV3's group head of formats. "There was a real recognition that content is the new currency."

The broadcaster has a big advantage in quiz and gameshow formats thanks to its 5,000 square-foot TV3 Sony HD Studio Dublin, which the largest purpose-built television studio of its kind in Ireland.

"We're looking at Europe using the Sony studio, hopefully creating a media hub," says Byrne. "There's real recognition that this could work as a

cost-effective model; it's not difficult to fly people over if it reduces costs on the other side."

Indeed, S4C's Welsh version of TV3-

"As a nation we are creative and naturally good storytellers, and we have always been a creative hub for ideas"
Janet Frawley,
RTÉ Global

Coronation Street and *Emmerdale* to rival UTV in November 2013. (*Coronation Street* creator ITV is now reportedly buying UTV.)



coproduced format *The Lie* films at the studio. Developed with Scotland's STV Productions and GroupM Entertainment and distributed by Red Arrow International, the show sees two contestants attempt to survive increasingly tense rounds, risking an increasing amount of cash on their ability to spot a lie.

Another new format, *Algorithm*, has attracted US interest, Byrne says, while *Sitting on a Fortune* is a coproduction with RDF Television and is sold internationally by Zodiak Rights.

"These pieces were created with our new international ambition in mind, where we were pulling back from UK acquisitions," says Byrne. "We have got a well-positioned channel and an intelligent audience that's critical and is English-language. Our mantra is to bring people to Ireland, which is a small, but creative territory."

Format development will remain vital to TV3 going forwards. The channel, recently sold to European cable giant Liberty Global, lost soaps

To this end, TV3 entered into a distribution pact with Sky-owned Sky Vision earlier this year, comprising an initial 200 hours, with a further 150 coming through to 2017.

VIP, meanwhile, renewed its distribution deal with Warner Bros. in September 2013. While its popular *Super Star Ding Dong* goes out through Banijay International, new doppelganger multiplatform format *Twin Strangers* is being developed by Warner Horizon in the US, while Channel 4 co-developed the idea and is planning to launch it in the UK.

The format was born out of a project to find people's lookalikes around the world. An online site that allows people to sign up quickly took off and accompanying YouTube channel videos went viral, and there are now citizens from 120 countries involved.

"*Twin Strangers* set out to find the doppelgangers of three people, but it actually found a huge appetite from people who wanted the same thing," says Philip Kampff. "On top of that, it becomes a huge casting tool for a television show, and we've had global brands wanting to get involved. We can do these deals before the television show and begin generating revenues."

Mind the Gap, meanwhile, has long looked to the US as a source for business. Having launched in 2001, the prodco has worked extensively with PBS on music shows such as *Hallelujah Broadway*, *Happy Birthday Oscar Wilde* and *The Irish Tenors*. It also creates series for Gaelic-language broadcaster TG4, which one source says "will take in formats as long as they have not been on an English channel".

Ireland may be a country of about 4.5 million, but its impact on the international formats business is growing all the time. **TBI**





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Formats Hot picks

THE SHOW: *Can't Touch This*

THE PRODUCER: Stellify

THE DISTRIBUTOR: Sony Pictures Television

THE BROADCASTER: BBC One (UK)

THE CONCEPT: Contestants win prizes by touching items placed around an assault course

Can't Touch This represents the debut format from Northern Irish production company Stellify, which is a joint venture between producers Kieran Doherty and Matt Worthy and the international television arm of Hollywood studio Sony Pictures.

UK broadcaster BBC One, for so long unsuccessful in its search of a new Saturday night entertainment hit, has high hopes for the show. A ten-part series will air on Saturday evenings in 2016, marking what Doherty claims will be "the biggest entertainment commission to come out of our part of the world".

Northern Ireland Screen has added to the budget as part of its strategy to invest in "the best companies working in the country", noting in press materials Stellify's "breadth of vision

and committed work ethic".

"Fun and comedy play a massive part in this format," says Jane Dockery, senior VP of formats, international distribution, Sony Pictures Television, "and it's designed to bring the family together."

The premise is very simple: whatever contestants can touch, they can take home. Twenty contestants tackle a huge assault course, which offers rewards placed in difficult positions, in a time trial. As the rounds progress, competitors are whittled down, with viewers shown montages of 'epic fails'.

Each episode culminates with one participant making a huge leap of faith in an effort to touch a car suspended in the air. As the rule goes, touch it and keep it.

"The key isn't overcoming the obstacles," says Dockery. "There's a lot of comedy, but also with the added level of winning prizes."

SPT last month took some selected clients to filming in Belfast following demands to see the show in action. "We're looking to have key partners in place in time for MIPCOM," says Dockery.

Local formats will likely to be shot in a centralised hub, which is more economical than other approaches, according to Dockery. SPT employs the strategy for the local versions of *Raid the Cage* for Argentina's Telefe and Mexico's Azteca.

SPT will target free TV broadcasters looking for big, broad entertainment pieces for their schedules, as is the case with BBC One.



THE SHOW: *Chef and My Fridge*
THE DISTRIBUTOR: NBCUniversal International Television Production
THE PRODUCER: JTBC (South Korea)
THE BROADCASTER: JTBC (South Korea)
THE CONCEPT: Cooking-variety-talkshow format in which chefs battle to make the best dish from the contents of celebrities' fridges

THE SHOW: *Is That Really Your Voice?*
THE PRODUCER: Global Agency, China Online Video Research Center
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Global Agency
THE BROADCASTER: iQiyi (China)
THE CONCEPT: Variety show in which guest judges have to guess which soundless performer is the real thing

If the hype is to be believed and Korea is the new Israel (or 'the next big international formats territory'), NBCUniversal International TV Production is hoping it has a hot property on its hands in the shape of *Chef and My Fridge*. The format blends cooking competition, celebrity chat and variety elements in a 'Ready Steady Cook meets *Through the Keyhole*' format that is hard to pigeonhole.

In each episode, celebs' refrigerators are transported to the studio where some of the country's best chefs compete to make the best dish from its contents. As well as giving viewers a glimpse of what is inside the fridges of the famous, there are cooking tips and chat from a panel in the studio.

The series is faring incredibly well on the JTBC cable channel in South Korea, beating the free-to-air big boys SBS and KBS and winning its Monday 9.40pm slot.

NBCUITVP's Singapore-based director of formats sales, Linfield Ng, noticed the show and NBCU duly picked up international rights for Europe, the CIS region, India and Africa.

Yvonne Pilkington, NBCUITVP's senior VP, format sales and production, says *Chef and My Fridge* is one of a wave of domestic entertainment shows breaking through locally and then making it to the international market. "In Asia there are certain shows that resonate profoundly, and these days they are often the ones developed locally," she says. "*Chef and My Fridge* has taken off very quickly, in four weeks, and given that variety is huge in South Korea, it is badged as a cooking-variety-celeb series."

Pilkington says it could work in different parts of buyers' grids. "In Korea it is primetime and could be a weekly primetime show [internationally], but it is something that could also be stripped," she says. "It could run with a lower budget as an access show, as people at home are getting ready for dinner, but I don't think it is daytime."

JTBC, meanwhile, is prepping a *Chef and My Fridge* recipe book with recipes from the chefs featured in the show. NBCUITVP will launch the show at MIPCOM and is hoping to cook up deals at the market.

China's on-demand platforms are increasingly becoming the new test beds for paper formats as broadcasters seek to avert risk by acquiring programmes with proven track records. It is this notion that led to the commission of *Is That Really Your Voice?*, says the format's creator, Global Agency CEO Izzet Pinto.

"I created the format a year ago and made a short trailer, but TV executives are so scared of trying new things that they passed on it," he says. "I just needed one client to prove the potential, and China is very entrepreneurial. It was brought there, the executives there loved it and thought they should buy it."

International formats are normally packaged in China before being placed with a broadcaster. However, with new restrictions on satellite channels reducing the amount of overseas programming allowed, the decision was made to hand the show to iQiyi, the leading on-demand service. Launching on August 5, it has been a huge success, generating 234.9 million views across five episodes at the time of writing, a record for Chinese on-demand viewing.

Pinto says the show is "a new type of format: the comedy variety genre based on music". The show sees a guest judge guessing who the best singer from a group of performers is, judging purely on their physical appearance and performance as their voices are muted.





THE SHOW: *La Banda*
THE PRODUCER: Syco Entertainment, FremantleMedia Latin America, Saban Brands
THE DISTRIBUTOR: FremantleMedia, Syco TV
THE BROADCASTER: Univision (US)
THE CONCEPT: Simon Cowell's latest foray into talent competition space, this time a search to find a Latin American boy band

With the runaway momentum of *The X Factor* of the mid-2000s slowing, Simon Cowell has gone back to the creative drawing board to develop *La Banda*, which he and distributor FremantleMedia hope will first draw in US Hispanic audiences before attracting viewers in other demos and other parts of the world.

Leading Hispanic American broadcast channel Univision has commissioned two seasons off the bat, with Cowell's Syco TV attached to produce and Saban a co-developer. FremantleMedia has international formats rights, in a deal set-up akin to *X Factor*.

Though Cowell hopes to find the Latin American One Direction, that is largely where the comparisons between the two shows end, according to FremantleMedia's director of

global entertainment, Rob Clarke.

"Simon has been fascinated by Latin America for some time and believes a Latin boy band would be amazing," says Clarke.

Whereas *The X Factor* and *Pop Idol* are straight talent shows that hand their judges most of the power to vote singers through or out, *La Banda* places much more authority with the audience, which comprises 500 girls who vote on performances.

"There are outdoor auditions, so it's more concert-like" than *X Factor*, says Clarke, whose firm will begin selling the format internationally at MIPCOM. The celebrity judges include Latin American heart-throb Ricky Martin.

Getting 75% approval from the audience puts the singer, who may hail from any part of Latin American, through to the next round.

There is also a random bands round, where the teenagers are placed together and asked to deliver gold-standard performances, and a music video round, with the poorest performers voted off along the way.

The winning performers form a band that has a contract with Sony Music, following the same model of Cowell's prior format hits.

Univision's show was shot in Miami in iconic art deco locations near the beach, and debuted last month to 4.2 million viewers. International versions will similarly film in famous places.

"The format cuts right through what the formats business is about," says Clarke. "If you look at the content of the show it's got very broad appeal. Our major buyers of big talent shows are going to be interested."



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THE SHOW: *Spelling Star*
THE PRODUCER: Endemol Shine Australia
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Endemol Shine International
THE BROADCASTER: Network Ten (Australia)
THE CONCEPT: Spelling bee competition reworked into a modern talent show format

"*Spelling Star* is a supercharged family event that combines the traditional art of spelling with the drama, jeopardy and entertainment value of *The Voice*, which we make here in Australia," says Mark Fennessy, co-CEO of Endemol Shine Australia and the creator of the show. "It's far more talent-based than gameshow. We created both group and individual challenges, which tested speed as well as written and visual spelling, but the ultimate challenge was always the oral spelling of difficult words whilst under a spotlight and in front of an audience."

As a modern talent series, it features interviews with the contestants, allowing their personalities to come out. It also has the three familiar talent show phases: qualifying, heats and the final.

The series pitches more than 50 bright eight to 13-year olds into (age-based) competition over word-related rounds and challenges. The initial range of contestants is whittled down to 26, then six and then four, with that quartet going head-to-head in a traditional-style spelling bee to win the crown.

Fennessy says local versions are in

discussion in various markets with different cultures and languages. "It would be easy to only talk about its potential in English-speaking territories, but it's far greater than that," he says. "We believe that the universality of spelling, when combined with the drama of a child slowly building a complex word, letter by letter, has the makings of a format that translates in multiple territories."

What the series has delivered for free-to-air broadcaster Ten Network, and will offer buyers at MIPCOM, is the prized family audience. "That's not so easy to achieve in today's competitive environment and changing landscape," says Fennessy.

Ten has ordered a second season of *Great Australian Spelling Bee*, as it was known locally, after a decent first-season performance. The show out-rated established formats including *I'm a Celebrity...* and *Gogglebox* and the launch episode was the most talked about show on Twitter in its time-slot.

With the built-in play-along nature of spelling games, there will be an app for the second run, allowing the audience to play certain challenges in the show in real time.

In a formats world crying out for an international hit, Fennessy says one of *Spelling Star's* main attributes is its uncomplicated nature: "Sometimes the best are the simplest – and the simplest ideas are the most exciting"



THE SHOW: *What the...*
THE PRODUCER: David & Co
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Lineup Industries
THE BROADCASTER: NPO 1 (Netherlands)
THE CONCEPT: Hidden camera show in which members of the public surprise family members with outrageous stunts and newly-learned skills

The original version of *What the...* is performing strongly in the Netherlands on public broadcast channel NPO 1 and, as TBI goes to press, is narrowly behind the country's most-expensive-ever format *Dance, Dance,*

Dance in terms of audience share, delivering between 1.1 and 1.2 million viewers for a fraction of the price of its expensive rival.

Known locally as *What the Frans?!*, where it is hosted by Frans Bauer, a local

schlager [traditional] music star, the format is being launched at MIPCOM by Lineup Industries, the Netherlands-based distributor set up by former Endemol and Sony execs Ed Louwerse and Julian Curtis.

The show is the first from David & Co, the recently established prodco run by David Lipschitz, who has worked with Endemol Shine Group and others, and is well known for his hidden-camera work.

In each episode participants set out to surprise or impress family members or friends with unexpected talents. Examples include a busy dad who trains as a ballet dancer and leaps on stage and performs at his daughter's ballet recital, or a grandmother who starts to ride a motocross bike at speed in front of her shocked family.

Hidden cameras capture the action and Frans, from his OB truck, watches, commentates and, in some cases, gives the participants playing out the prank live advice.

The market is not short of dating formats. What there hasn't been, however, is a live dating show, which is where *Young, Free and Single: Live* comes in.

A group of young singletons live together and go out on dates before heading back to a shared house to watch their most recent meet-ups with the others, with their reactions captured live. As for the immediate housemate feedback, viewers can give live opinions via social media. The audience can also offer advice or criticism, or try and get a date with one of the people in the house.

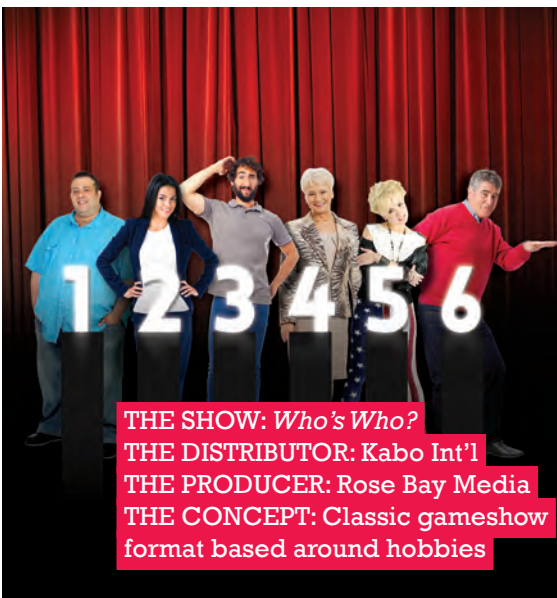
The show is produced by All3Media-owned UK prodco Lime Pictures and sold internationally by All3Media International.

It has done well on Channel 4's youth-skewing E4 channel in the UK, with ratings 15% above slot average. Given the social media credentials of the show and the demo it is reaching out to, it was also important that it worked on other platforms, which it did: it had 1.5 million Twitter impressions for the first episode and 1.5 million views of linked shortform videos.

The show has already been optioned by Zodiak Media in Norway and Sweden, and All3Media starts the sales effort at MIPCOM.



THE SHOW: *Young, Free and Single: Live*
THE PRODUCER: Lime Pictures
THE DISTRIBUTOR: All3Media International
THE BROADCASTER: E4 (UK)
THE CONCEPT: Live and interactive take on the dating format



THE SHOW: *Who's Who?*
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Kabo Int'l
THE PRODUCER: Rose Bay Media
THE CONCEPT: Classic gameshow format based around hobbies

In a risk-averse formats world, *Who's Who?* has a good chance of jumping the queue in the battle for buyers' attention thanks to solid ratings from various international territories, and on-air success as an access and a primetime show.

The format sees three contestants race to find

out the occupations or hobbies of six guests. They can ask the guests questions or make them perform challenges as they seek to work out who has which job or interest.

Created by now-defunct UK indie Rose Bay Media, the format has been picked up by Kabo International, the distribution arm of France-based production group Kabo. With its *Pick 'n' Mix* comedy-sketch formats selling well, it was looking for a gameshow format in a wider attempt to broaden its formats offering.

"We were strong in scripted, but want to offer buyers all of the formats food groups; we want to have gameshow, entertainment, factual and drama formats," says Kabo International boss Arabelle Pouliot-Di Crescenzo. "You can't have a formats distribution company without a great gameshow format."

Who's Who? is Kabo's gameshow offering and will launch at MIPCOM. Strictly speaking, it is a relaunch, as the show has been on air across Europe. It ran for six years on France 2, initially as an access primetime series and then as a celebrity-based primetime special.

"It is a game we all play every day, trying to

work out what people we see on the street or in everyday life do," says Pouliot-Di Crescenzo.

It has also gone out on NRK in Norway, SVT in Sweden and TV2 in Denmark, among other broadcasters. In Sweden at 8pm, it peaked with a 45% share. In France it averaged a 22% share, and in Norway, also in primetime, it had a peak share of 78%.

"Our strategy is focused on the many countries that have not yet done it, as well as others that may want to bring it back," says Pouliot-Di Crescenzo. "This can be access or primetime, with more spectacular challenges and performances. Some formats can't be adapted for different slots, but this has worked in both and has gone out as a one-hour, two-hour and 30-minute show."

The show performed well in several territories, de-risking it for buyers, the Kabo boss says. "Why do people acquire a format? The concept has to be good, but a track record is a great selling point. With *Who's Who?* you get that and a solid gameshow format. From a budget point of view it is reasonable to make, the casting is very important, but the set itself isn't elaborate." **TBI**

LAST WORD

PHILIP BOURCHIER O'FERRALL, SVP, VIMN



How TV is upping its social game

The symbiotic nature of the relationship between TV and social media is now well-established and widely recognised. Where once TV viewers talked the morning after about what they'd watched the night before, now they tweet and post about their favourite TV shows before, during and long after viewing. Even the office water-cooler, it seems, has gone digital.

The correlation between TV ratings and social media buzz is not yet conclusively proven, although TV measurement companies worldwide are working hard to demonstrate the link; an early study by Nielsen in the US indicated that an increase in the region of 10% in social media conversation around a TV show can equate to a 1% uplift in its live TV ratings.

Most broadcasters aren't waiting for that particular jury to deliver its verdict. Instead they are trusting the findings of their own research and the weight of anecdotal evidence suggesting second screening via social media increases viewers' engagement with TV content and vice versa. For example, Viacom's most recent study, TV: ReDefined, reveals a greater appetite than ever for social engagement amongst young TV viewers, with as many as six in ten viewers actively following their favourite shows via social media and sharing content and conversations with fellow fans.

The value of the deeper engagement with TV content that social media enables is obvious; anything that encourages more easily monetised live and shared viewing experiences in a world where TV viewing is becoming increasingly solitary, on-demand and on-the-go, delivers significant benefits to broadcasters.

It's unsurprising then that many broadcasters and producers are already integrating social media deeply into their promotional strategies. It is rare for a new TV show to launch without a Facebook or a Twitter account – and a clever hashtag or two – to support it. Many shows and channel brands targeting younger demographics are going much further, adopting a 'social

first' approach to marketing and targeting the majority of their PR and advertising budgets and human resources towards supporting free- and paid-for activity on social media.

The content producers and distributors making most effective use of social media have moved beyond seeing the likes of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat as primarily promotional platforms. Instead they are using these platforms as one amongst many means of distributing content; they regard social media as a second screen to actively programme with bespoke creative content to support but also enhance the linear viewing experience.

Take AMC's hit series *The Walking Dead*. Fans can actively discuss the show with cast and crew in real time on *Talking Dead*, a live talk show that airs after every episode, by connecting via Twitter and Facebook. HBO has also managed to ride the wave of fans' organic social interaction around all five seasons of *Game of Thrones* by stoking the fire during and between series. Its season four #RoastJoffery campaign – whereby fans, celebrities and cast sent in taunts and jokes on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Vine – generated more than 60,000 original contributions from fans, one million interactions, and 850 million page impressions in just 48 hours.

The most cutting-edge TV producers are beginning to design long-form TV content to optimise its 'shareability' via social media. Viacom's latest global smash hit, *Lip Sync Battle*, is a great example of a TV show with 'viral' in its DNA – as a format that can easily be broken down into short-form clips that work as content in their own right. The series evolved from a segment on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* on NBC, and was picked up by Spike TV in the US, as much on the basis of its popularity on social and digital media as its success on TV. The first season of *Lip Sync Battle* reached more than 50 million viewers via Spike in the US, but has also generated more than 200 million views across various online platforms, with Anne

Hathaway's performance of 'Wrecking Ball' viewed more than 15 million times on YouTube.

The format rights to *Lip Sync Battle* have been licensed extensively since its launch in Cannes at MIPTV, and it is in production around the globe from China and Chile to Channel 5 in the UK. It is Viacom's hottest hit format to date, underlining how social media now complements and amplifies TV viewing.

Viacom-owned MTV is widely recognised as one of the world's most social TV brands with more than 300 million fans and followers worldwide. The global youth brand now aims to be literally 'Always On' – feeding out a constant stream of clips, gifs, memes, micro-blogs and a dedicated Snapchat Discover channel about the latest global pop culture news 24/7 via social media with the aim of driving young audiences back to interact with the brand on air and online. The strategy is delivering record levels of online engagement for MTV in markets like the US, the UK and Australia.

MTV internationally is now taking the integration of TV and social media to the logical next level, having refreshed its on-air identity to incorporate many of the shortform elements that define the user experience in social media, notably user-generated content.

MTV Bump allows users around the world to submit a video via Instagram or a Vine via Twitter to MTV using the hashtag #mtvbump and see it transmit on air on their local MTV channel in as little as two hours.

Socially media has fundamentally and irreversibly altered the way that viewers engage with and consume media, particularly television. To succeed in this hyper-connected world, content producers and distributors must recognise that viewers are no longer satisfied with an hour-long, once a week encounter with their favourite TV shows and characters. Instead, they expect to be able to engage constantly in the same way they interact with their peer group via social media, checking in on and updating their feeds multiple times each day. **TBI**



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