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Formats set for dramatic revival

Analysis of new programmes launched by genre round the world shows that the level of original entertainment, factual and fact-ent shows is on the rise. TBI digs into the stats with Eurodata

Of the 8,500 new programmes launched by channels last year, just over half were original creations.

Although the 2015 sample was wider (44 countries) than the previous year's, making a like-for-like comparison difficult, Estelle Chandèze, Médiamétrie/Eurodata TV Worldwide's international

ways to relay information, the Eurodata analyst says. While scripted remains a hot category of programming, last year also saw an increase in the volume of unscripted content.

"Drama is very important, but when we look at the evolution of programming trends in 2015 we can see entertainment was rising," Chandèze says.

Eurodata groups programmes in three

the entertainment and factual categories.

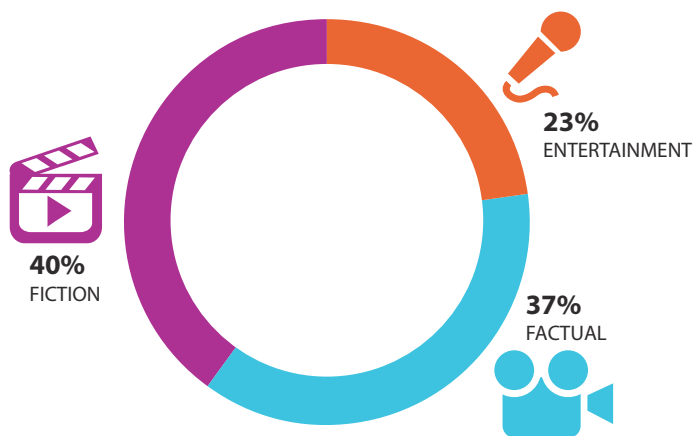
In drama, less than half the new shows launched last year were wholly new ideas, with perennial favourite scripted still getting first-time launches in numerous territories.

In entertainment, where ideas are generally cheaper to develop and produce than in drama, almost 23% of the new launches were wholly original. That total hits the 60% mark when the

2015: A CREATIVE YEAR



PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED SPLIT BY GENRE



research manager, says that the overall volume of new shows is about the same, but the proportion of original programmes in that mix is up year-on-year.

"Last year, what we saw was that in production and distribution everyone was more risk averse, which meant there were more adaptations [formats] of existing shows and imports," says Chandèze. "But 2015 was also a year when we saw more ideas and more creativity, inspired by the rise of new technology."

News and factual were key categories in terms of genres embracing new tech, and new

categories in its analysis: fiction; entertainment, which encompasses reality and gameshows; and factual, which comprises docs and other unscripted fare.

Of the new shows launched last year, fiction still led the way, accounting for 40% of the total. However, factual (37%), and entertainment (23%), each with a spread of shows that are formattable, accounted for a greater proportion when combined. Also, within those figures, most drama was acquired and/or imported, often from the US, with a higher degree of entirely new programme ideas coming from

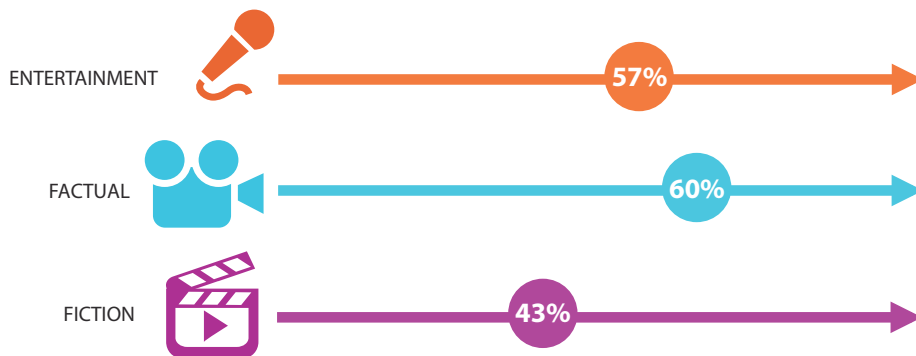
wider factual category is included.

The research clearly shows there is an uptick in investment in entertainment programming. "First of all this is explained by economics," says Chandèze. "It is difficult in some countries to produce fiction, because entertainment is generally much cheaper."

In a fragmented viewing environment, entertainment shows can also draw a broad audience and drive appointment viewing, especially those with live elements.

"Entertainment shows can be a way to make people come together around a screen,"

SHARE OF ORIGINAL CREATIONS BY GENRE



Chandèze says. “They can be a way to create [televisual] events, and reinforce the links between people.

“Factual and entertainment tend to be more local; people like to see people from their own country,” she adds. “Maybe the time of original fiction is over and being replaced by original docs, magazine shows, talkshows and entertainment.”

In terms of the provenance of new shows, Eurodata’s research shows the US, South

Korea and Japan were among the current entertainment hotspots.

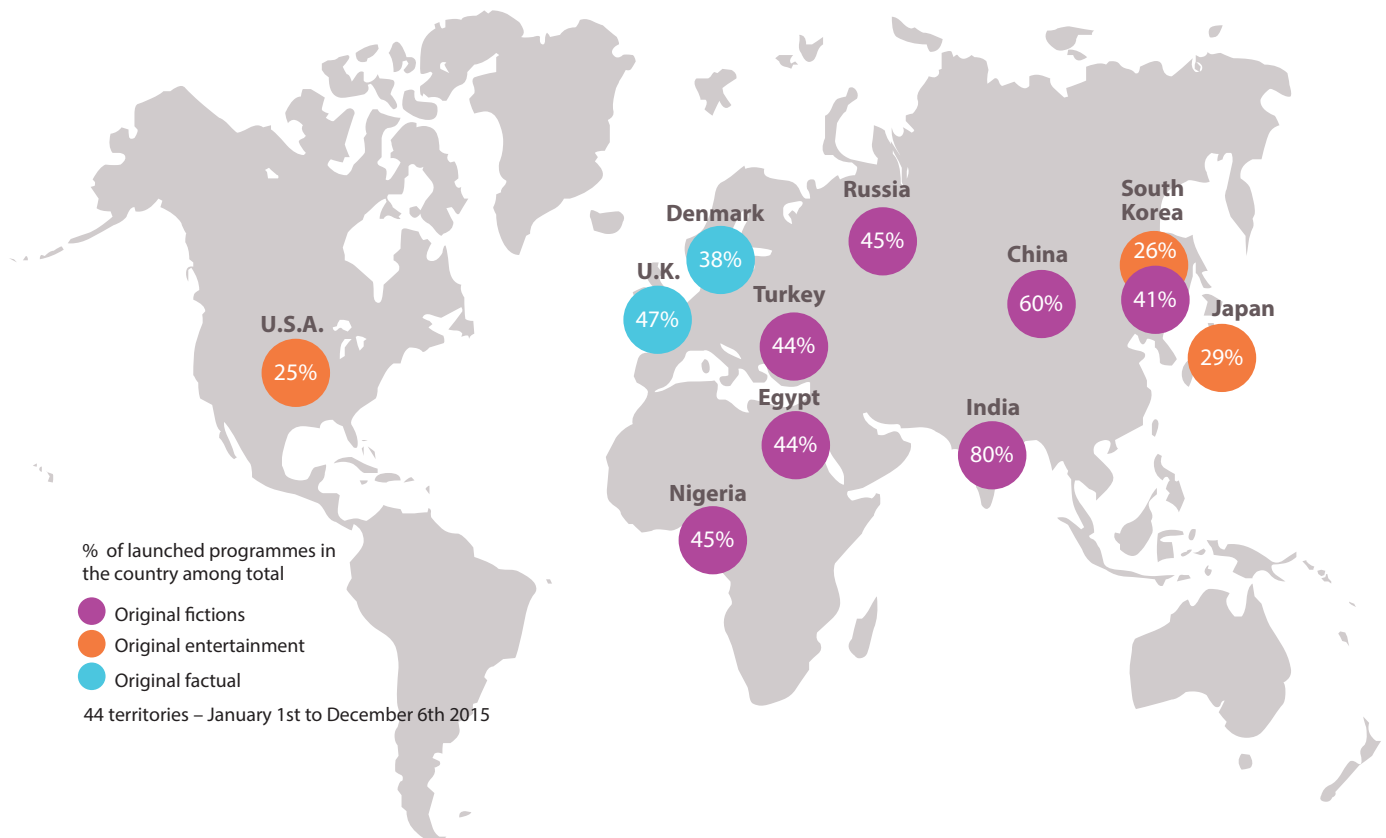
The UK and Denmark were notable in terms of original factual and fact-ent production, while in scripted, India and China was at the top of the list, both creating a large volume of original content for their huge domestic audiences.

Nigeria, the centre of the Nollywood phenomena, and Turkey, which has emerged as a leading drama-creating nation, were also notable for creating a large volume of original drama.

“It is interesting because in fiction, you are seeing new territories emerge,” Chandèze says.

She adds that, globally, various parts of the world are notable for producing and developing programming in specific categories. “Different regions have different areas of expertise,” she says. “There is a new world map of content genres. In terms of entertainment, Asia is the fastest growing, while for fiction it is the Middle East, Africa and India. For factual [and fact-ent] it is still Europe.” **TBI**

TOP CREATORS OF ORIGINAL CONTENT IN 2015



VIEWPOINT



GARY WOOLF

Should we go through the window to the world?

At this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Reed Hastings took to the stage to announce the 'switching on' of Netflix in 130 territories. Amazon has moved into new markets and African service Naspers is looking to defy national borders in the coming months.

In short, the number of potentially global VOD platforms continue to grow.

So how do you licence globally in an industry that has traditionally worked on a market-by-market basis? How do you manage the inevitable disruption to how content is windowed (and indeed watched), and the constant changes to T&Cs as traditional TV customers evolve into a world of 'skinny bundles' and OTT opportunity?

Any good distributor monitors the market to understand the shifting sands of the industry, but the best companies work through insight, client conversations and sales discussions to really assess the opportunities and strike creative deals.

At All3Media International we've been working in the fast-evolving digital sales environment for several years – embracing opportunities as companies such as Netflix, Amazon and Hulu started writing their first

deals with companies outside of the US, while continuing to grow our linear TV business.

Digital media now accounts for about 25% of our turnover. We also believe that whether through the continued growth of 'digital-first' players, or through the evolution of our 'traditional TV' client base, digital revenues across the industry will continue to grow aggressively.

That's great, but managing and contracting is the challenge – how do you work with increasingly global platforms while retaining strong sales with regional clients? After all, if a platform is available in over 130 territories, who is going to write the deal? Who will work out the windows and find a way to align the deal across markets? Almost as important – who is going to be the point person responsible for delivering the level of customer service any decent distributor should be supplying?

The solution we have adopted is to have a 'Global Digital Sales' function, led by senior VP Paul Corney. It's a role that we are seeing is increasingly significant, as the world gets more complex – or conversely, it's getting much simpler for your licensing plan to fall over itself, or for opportunities to be missed because of a lack of pan-regional perspective.

Digital media accounts for about 25% of our turnover. We believe that whether through the continued growth of 'digital first' players, or through the evolution of our 'traditional TV' client base, digital revenues across the industry will continue to grow aggressively.

Our global digital sales unit works with the regional sales teams to understand the local market pressure on exclusivity and holdbacks. We are able to balance where the opportunities sit, and work out a windowing plan across key titles that we hope ensures our clients get a fair return on their investment.

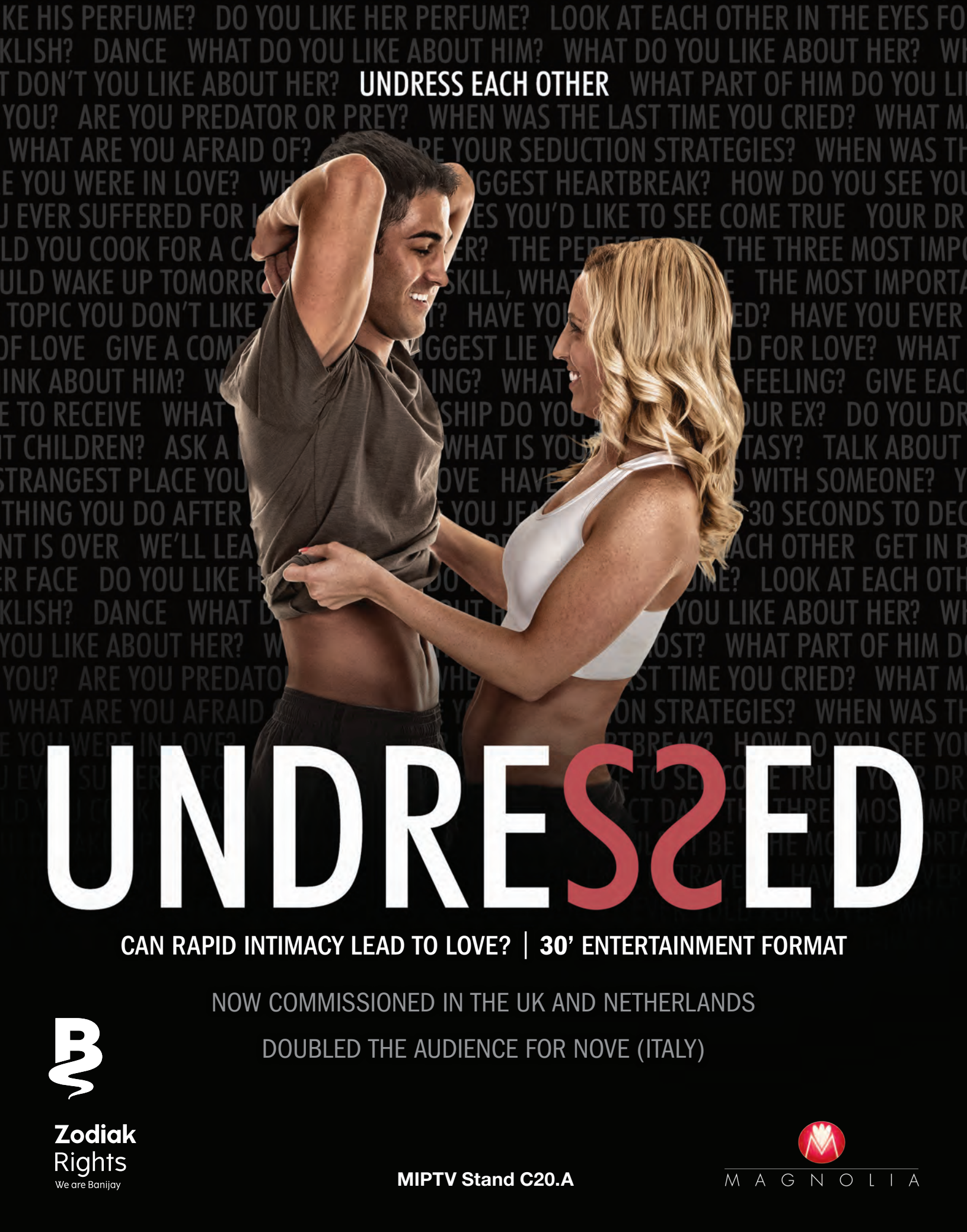
It is this mix that also allows us the time to speak with new businesses coming to market to understand the latest twist on what is ultimately still television. It gives us a sense of foresight in our decision-making.

As with all leading distributors, we have a territory sales team structured to really dive deep and super-serve their markets. However, those that have an additional global lens should find it offers the potential to fully understand and explore all options with multi-regional players.

They look at how to find a path through the rights positions in each market where clients are looking to take second window, while evaluating the implications with our territory-focused sales team.

And of course it isn't just about second windows any more – increasingly the conversation is about early presales, and understanding the impact of that on the overall investment model. That's why having a 'home' for these relationships in a distribution business has huge benefits for our producers and our customers.

But it's important not to just make these decisions based on pricing. It's also about doing the right thing for your brands, ensuring that audiences know where to find your content, and the right audience can find the right content at the right time. It's ensuring that customers feel compelled to promote your content, wherever they sit in the windowing chain, and that the business decisions you make also work for the consumer. **TBI**



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Motoring up

Petrolhead show *Top Gear* has been making headlines, with a new team in place and a relaunch set for soon after MIPTV. TBI gets to grips with the new show and takes a look under the bonnet at what is driving viewing in the motoring genre



Wheeler Dealers

Top Gear's success is such that it has spawned a host of companion shows. More broadly, motoring formats are in fashion, as the car becomes the star.

As terrestrial channels struggle to justify huge sums for sports rights, pseudo-sporting events, from ice-skating to diving, help satisfy the appetites of sport fans, and give them a free-to-air sports fix. Format distributors believe motoring formats can do the same job.

Where *Top Gear* moved specialist factual into the entertainment space, broadening the demo beyond petrolheads, ITV has put the emphasis squarely on entertainment with its new series *Drive*. "It's celebrity-based reality entertainment, and instead of putting celebs in the jungle, we are finding out how they survive on the race track," says Mike Beale, ITV Studios executive VP, global development and formats. In the show, which is for ITV in the UK and

is being distributed by ITV Studios Global Entertainment, celebs face off in races using a variety of vehicles, including banger racers, 4x4s and rally cars. There is a straight race and a more quirky challenge-based round, and the tone is tongue-in-cheek.

It is hosted by Vernon Kay (*Family Fortunes*), underlining its entertainment credentials, although double British Touring Car champion Jason Plato is also on hand to lend the show some motor-racing credibility.

The fact that most people, celebrities included, can drive, means *Drive* has a broad appeal and offers a relatable angle that isn't there with formats that put the talent in unusual situations (such as ski jumping). ITV is selling the show as a format, and the need for a suitable, local race track it is one issue. Beale notes there are many race tracks offer 'driving experience' days throughout the world, meaning ready-made venues to shoot territory-specific versions.

While not excluding revheads, the show is clearly targeting a wide, primetime demo. "Petrolheads will take away what they will, but this is about the entertainment and reality of watching the celebs, and viewers projecting themselves into their shows," Beale says.

Drive will line up against BBC One's *The Getaway Car* in the global formats space. BBC Worldwide will have a launch event for it at MIPTV, as it is one of the distributor's big launches for the market, despite a middling performance in the UK. There, host Dermot O'Leary (*X Factor*) described the show as 'Gogglebox meets *Total Wipeout*'; the format sees families testing their relationships over car-based challenges, including a giant automobile assault course.

A new car show with a more direct lineage to *Top Gear* is *Motorheads*. It was commissioned for BBC Worldwide channel BBC Brit, which was itself conceived as a network built around,

and encapsulating, the spirit of, *Top Gear*.

The other link is that it is presented by Tom Ford and Jonny Smith, who had previously been hosts of *Top Gear* companion piece *Mud, Sweat and Gears*, also for Brit. It is produced by UK indie October Films, which makes the YouTube clips show *Rude Tube* (and shares some DNA with that series in that it uses online clips as its jumping off point). While *Drive* and *The Getaway Car* are splashy entertainment shows, *Motorheads* is made for enthusiasts, says October executive chairman Denman Rooke. "It's real people doing real stuff with real cars; it's not some rich blokes messing around in supercars they have been given," Rooke says. "It reflects what real petrolheads are into, and what they are doing."

The clips are the basis for stunts and video segments for the studio-based team, but unlike the slick, shiny-floor element of *Top Gear*, this is designed to have an grittier look and feel.

"It has a look we call 'slovenly grunge,'" says Rooke. "It's the antithesis of the shiny-floor look on *Top Gear*; this is more down-at-home. It definitely has oil under its fingernails."

The international success of *Top Gear*, means the popularity the motoring genre is increasing around the world.

When French DTT channel RMC Découverte ordered a local version of *Top Gear* last year, it was the first time a motoring show had made it into primetime in the country. Pernel Media boss Samuel Kissous likens it to the French market opening up to contemporary cooking formats a decade ago. His French indie is now making a local version of Discovery Networks format *Wheeler Dealers* for RMC.

"Food was relegated to morning slots before shows like *Come Dine with Me*, and until recently car shows were very traditional," Kissous says. "The French version of *Top Gear* was the first time ever a car show went out in primetime, and *Wheeler Dealers* will be the second." *Wheeler Dealers* is produced by Attaboy TV for Discovery Channel and sees mechanic and car enthusiast rescue and restore old cars, and then attempt to make a profit by selling them.

RMC is a DTT channel, and, for producers, whether the terrestrial nets embrace motoring shows is a moot point. "Putting car shows in primetime relates to the fact there are new channels attempting to attract different types of viewer," says Kissous. "The big question is whether in the case of cars, it will translate to the mainstream broadcasters."



Drive

MAXIMUM VELOCITY

Velocity and its international cousin, Turbo, are Discovery Communications' channels dedicated to four wheels. In the US, Velocity launched in 2011. It is now in 66 million of the 100 million pay TV homes in the US, and will be in 70 million by the end of the year, says general manager Bob Scanlon. One sign that specialist content in this genre is quite settled in that 90% of the schedule comprises returning series. *Wheeler Dealers* is its key franchise, alongside shows including *Bitchin' Rides*, a reality series following Dave Kindig and the work at his Utah design shop.

Scanlon says the Clarkson-May-Hammond era of the BBC's *Top Gear* was "not about cars, [but] was personality-driven." Velocity also wants big, accessible personalities, but the channel chief says this has to be underpinned by expertise. "It's simple," he says. "We look at prospective hosts and talent and ask, 'would we sit down and have a beer with that person?' They also have to be authentic, respected and skilled. We don't manufacture any contrived issues you often see in reality TV. It's about authenticity, craftsmanship and skill."

Other on-screen talent for Velocity includes Wayne Carini, who fronts restoration series *Chasing Classic Cars*, and Mark Worman, a love-him-or-hate-him character, who hosts *Graveyard Carz*, in which classic Chrysler muscle cars are given a new lease to life. *Junkyard Empire* (pictured, right), meanwhile follows father and son Andy and Bobby Cohen, and the tension and scrapes of running junkyard and restoration businesses.



The Velocity demo is upscale men aged 25-to-54, though *Unique Rides with Will Castro*, in which the titular car designer turns out custom cars for well-off, cool, urban clients (often celebs) was a clear move to hit up younger viewers.

The channel is faring well with a 6am-9am morning block of shows focused on buying, selling and investing in cars, while the weekend mornings are more focused on how-to shows, heavy on practical takeaway. There is also lengthy live coverage of car auctions in association with Arizona-based classic car auction house Barrett Jackson, something that could soon be on the international Turbo channels.

The next push will see Discovery seek to roll Turbo out more widely internationally. "There is a big initiative to expand globally," Scanlon says. "Cars travel well. A beautiful car is a beautiful car in any culture. A performance car is universally a performance car."

Digital is another big area of focus, says Scanlon. "We believe this content is more applicable to digital than any other content in the [Discovery] portfolio," he adds.

Under the bonnet of the new *Top Gear*



TOP GEAR is officially the biggest factual TV show in the world, and as such one of the biggest earners for BBC Worldwide. So UK pubcaster the BBC and its commercial arm had good cause to be concerned when its star presenter Jeremy Clarkson hit one of the show's production team, starting a chain of events that saw him and his two co-presenters drive off in the direction of Amazon for big paydays.

The BBC was left with what could have been a write-off. However, Chris Evans was soon installed at the helm, and the BBC has now put together a seven-strong team that sees the British presenter and *Friends* star Matt LeBlanc as the main hosts. The producers and talent (Evans is both) now have the task of keeping fans on board, but also serving up something new.

"It will be familiar to fans but will also feel quite reinvigorated and different," says Adam Waddell, *Top Gear* veteran and director, entertainment brands, at BBC Worldwide. "So, you'll get the same mix of VTs, pre-recorded films, the studio and [race] track, but within that framework it'll feel quite different."

BBC Worldwide, the BBC's commercial arm, served several hundred international buyers a taster of the new series at its Showcase event in Liverpool, England, where cars were set on fire, supercars wheeled in, and a clip played from the new show. A five-strong presenting line-up (minus Eddie Jordan and numbering six if masked driver The Stig is counted), was also in attendance.

Of the new team, newcomer Rory Reid is a tech wizard, fellow unknown (in TV terms) Chris Harris a respected online reviewer, Sabine Schmitz a racing driver by trade and Eddie Jordan an F1 impresario.

Although *Top Gear* is a best-seller on iTunes, has over a billion views on YouTube, plus 1.9 million Twitter and 22 million Facebook followers (with 7 million alone for The Stig), there is still a sense that there is more to be done with the brand online. Harris is known for his YouTube car reviews, and he will spearhead an effort to make *Top Gear* a bigger online phenomenon. "It makes sense we continue this content though a longer tail and continue it on the web, where *Top Gear* has enormous reach through YouTube and Facebook, etcetera, and it is potentially very exciting," he says.

According to Worldwide, last year was the biggest ever for the *Top Gear* format, despite the furore around the Clarkson incident, with new versions getting away in France and Italy, and more to come in 2016.

As a finished show, it has sold into 212 countries around the world, earning an entry in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's most-watched factual show with 350 million viewers claimed globally. The new season of the show will take in trips to locations including Cuba, California, Italy, Kazakhstan, Italy and Morocco.

Evans says that although it is a British show, the addition of LeBlanc just adds to that international appeal. "When we announced Matt was on, we got so much comms from around the world," he says. "Matt had earned his money on day one because by signing him you get the message out there: here is someone who is an international superstar, and who has been for a long time."

Speaking months ahead of the season 23 launch, Waddell says the show needed reinventing, even if he'd rather the events prompting that change hadn't happened in such a glare of publicity.

"The time was right for *Top Gear* to change," he says. "It didn't necessarily come about in a planned way with the circumstances, but once you get over that it's fine." With viewers, reviewers and car fans in the UK and around the world desperate to see the new format, he acknowledges the launch will be huge news at home and beyond. "Show one will be a huge global moment for the wrong reasons or the right reasons," he says. "Everyone will tune in just to see how good or bad it is, and it is our job to make sure it is really bloody good." **TBI**





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A photograph showing a man and a woman in a yellow inflatable raft on the ocean. The raft is equipped with a blue and green canopy. The man is looking towards the camera, and the woman is looking towards him. The background shows a vast blue ocean under a clear sky.

Survival shows are nothing new, but the last few years have seen the genre go into overdrive, with titles like *Naked And Afraid*, *Alone*, *Running Wild*, *Hunted* and *The Island* proving real-life endurance tests are popular around the world, reports Andy Fry

Ask TV executives why survival shows are proliferating and they will tell you it is to do with the audience's curiosity about how they would get on in similar circumstances. "We have two popular formats in this genre – *The Island* and *Hunted*," says Endemol Shine Creative Networks managing director Lisa Perrin. "Both originated in the UK on Channel 4 and have been gaining traction, with *The Island* now sold to six countries and *Hunted* set to premiere

in the US. Both began as discussions our creatives were having in the pub. They asked universal questions that we have all wondered at one point or another. Could you live on a deserted island without any of the luxuries of everyday life [*The Island*]? Could you disappear in today's world [*Hunted*]? What about if a team of professionals were on your tail? If these ideas resonate with viewers, then the authenticity of the experiences on screen has captured the audiences' imagination."

The word "authentic" is one that comes up

repeatedly when talking about the new wave of survival shows. "*Survivor* is still a juggernaut of a format," says Perrin, "but there's been a huge push to give viewers authentic experiences as well. People genuinely want to experience life on the run, or on a deserted island, and we've been able to deliver that with an innovative shooting style that involves embedding crews. We really believe this gives viewers the experience of fighting for survival on an island, or in the case of *Hunted*, life on the run."

Others who use the 'A' word include Joel



The Raft

series of 2015 and has been rolled out across the channel internationally. As to its potential as a format, he says: "It's a complex production, which requires a lot of pre-planning and also a lot of editing expertise once the footage from the participants comes in, but we have secured options in some major territories. Our aim is for the format and original to have the same home."

Electus International's nearest equivalent to *Alone* is *The Raft*, which airs on National Geographic Channel in the US and in which two people have to survive for seven days on the open sea in a raft.

"It's relatable adventure," says Electus International president John Pollak. "Audiences [and buyers] are drawn to the fact that this is real people in the middle of the ocean with handheld cameras. It gets you asking – could I do that?"

Electus has three survival shows on its books, each of which is designed to trigger a different audience response. "What we're seeing is that the process of survival can be used to tell different kinds of stories," Pollak says. "We have another show called *Running Wild with Bear Grylls*, in which Bear and a small crew head off into the wilderness for 48 hours with a celebrity like Zac Efron, Kate Winslet or Barack Obama. You have all the survival elements people enjoy, but you also get the kind of deep insight into these stars you wouldn't get on a chat show."

The third show on Electus' slate is *Mission Survive*, another show involving Bear Grylls as the resident survival guru. Once again, there are celebrities, but in this case there is also an elimination process each episode. "This is the type of show that could work with or without celebrities," says Pollak, "I think the message is that there is room for both celebrity-based and non-celebrity-based survival shows in the international market."

Of course, one of the biggest celebrities in the survival genre is Bear Grylls – who, aside from *Running Wild* and *Mission Survive*, was also involved in the UK version of *The Hunted*. While Grylls' popularity has been helping with the tape sales of the above shows, what's the situation when buyers want to set up the format with local talent?

"That's achievable," says Pollak. "Bear is a unique talent, but we have territories, including France, making their own version of *Running Wild*. Because of the success of shows like *Survivor*, there are people all over the world who have become well-known and can front local versions of shows."

Denton, managing director, international content sales and partnerships at A+E Networks, who says History Channel's *Alone* has developed into a huge franchise. "In this show, ten people are dropped into the wilderness of Vancouver Island without any back up and in separate locations. Carrying only what they can fit in a backpack and a camera to film themselves, the aim is to survive as long as possible with the promise of a financial reward for the one who is last to leave the process. Season one was such a hit that we're now in production on series

two and are talking to broadcasters around the world about formats deals."

While the physical ordeal is part of *Alone*'s appeal, Denton believes that "the real beauty of it is the psychology of being isolated. "Our participants are trained survivalists, but after a while you start to see them unravel under the weight of isolation," he says.

"That's different to a lot of other survival shows that are about the way groups interact with each other throughout."

Alone was History's number one non-fiction

Because this is TV, a lot of survival shows have some kind of game element, whether it is the lure of cash prizes, time limits or eliminations. But some producers are keeping much more to a purist documentary tradition. “We’ve just made *Myigrations* for National Geographic,” says Matt Robins, creative director at indie October Films. “In this show, we follow a group of 20 elite men and women as they attempt to complete the wildebeest migration through the Serengeti to the Mara River in Africa.”

Robins says the 6x60mins series, which covers a 200-mile, six-week journey, is “very raw, very documentary. We thought hard about

what lessons we could take out of this gruelling expedition. One of the most interesting aspects was the way they had to come together as a pack to survive the journey”.

Meaningful take-outs are also part of the essence of another October production, *Trailblazers*, for Discovery Channel in the US. “This one is about elite survivalists leading teams of scientists to dangerous edges of the world in search of answers to mysteries,” says Robins. “This has all of the peril and hardships you’d associate with this genre, but with a valuable scientific result.”

Ronan Hand, head of factual and

entertainment acquisitions for ITV Studios Global Entertainment, agrees with Pollak and Robins that this survival-plus approach is what is making the programming category so vibrant. “The genre is in a really interesting place at the moment, as producers and networks are seeing that survival shows can shine a spotlight on wider issues, bring out the best in contributors and show another side to established talent,” he says.

As a global production business, ITV Studios has more than one iteration of this genre in production. “We have *Survival School*, which uses Bear Grylls’ position as the UK’s chief Scout and takes his expertise and introduces the survival/personal challenge format to a younger audience,” says Hand. “The Garden [an ITV prodco] recently produced a second series of *10,000 BC* for Channel 5 in the UK, which is a ‘social-experiment’ spin on survival. And not forgetting *I’m a Celebrity*, the first and last word in the entertainment gameshow spin on this genre, which is set for its 16th season later this year in the UK and has been produced in a further ten territories worldwide.”

Of the three, *Survival School* is the newest to come to market, and it has the same kind of zeitgeisty feel as Perrin’s shows. “It challenges a group of children to give up their much-loved technology to see if they can learn the skills needed in survival situations and hopefully gain an appreciation of the outdoors,” says Hand. “The format shows children how exciting testing yourself can be, and how working together and being part of a team can be such an important part of personal growth.”

Hand believes the show has solid format potential “given that it delivers incredible locations that showcase a nation’s natural beauty [the UK series was shot in Wales], and it has a central physical conceit that is attractive to potential contestants. However, some territories may wish to buy the finished show to see if it works for their audience. And Bear Grylls’ involvement gives the show immediate authenticity”.

It’s easy to pigeon-hole survival shows as men-only programming, but the message from the market is that there are interesting gender dynamics to these shows. With *Myigrations*, October Films’ Robins says: “We gained some really interesting insights into how men and women cope under pressure.”

Other shows where gender is playing a key role include Discovery’s *Naked and Afraid*



Myigrations



Hunted

DISCOVERY'S SURVIVAL TACTICS

Discovery Networks can claim to be the leader in the survival programming space. Aside from its work with Bear Grylls and the huge success of its *Naked and Afraid* franchise, it boasts titles including *Marooned with Ed Stafford*, *Dual Survival* and *Free Ride*. "It is a competitive genre," says Helen Hawken, VP, production and development, factual, at Discovery Networks International. "That is good, because it means we keep having to come up with fresh ideas and great new characters."

Hawken is a big fan of Ed Stafford, whose modus operandi is to go to remote places and see if he can survive without any outside support. "He's the real deal, which is important if you want the audience to believe this is an authentic experience," she says. "He self-shoots footage, so that there is no suggestion of a crew supporting him. And he's very honest about what's happening to him – even if things are going badly. I think that's part of why men and women relate to him."

It's a similar situation with green enthusiast Rob Greenfield, who is fronting new show *Free Ride*, about to air around the world on Discovery's channels. In this case, the goal is to travel across South America with no money, relying on the goodwill of locals and his personal skillset to



Marooned with Ed Stafford

survive. "We'd been pitched this idea before, but what was appealing for us about this iteration is that Rob lives off the grid anyway," says Hawken. "It is about testing his own philosophy. Travelling with him is filmmaker James Levelle, who is more sceptical about Rob's worldview, so it makes an interesting dynamic."

Most of Discovery's finished tape survival shows have global appeal, says Hawken. "But there is scope to do local versions where it makes sense. We did that with a US show called *Dual Survival* that was remade in Brazil for the Latin American market"

Echoing market trends, Discovery has also explored survival hybrids such as *Kings of the Wild*, in which a survivalist and a chef travel together – seeking to prove that you can eat like a king wherever you are. "I think there is an enduring appetite for survival shows, because the genre speaks to who we are as a species," says Hawken, "but we need to keep innovating to keep the talent interested and the audience satisfied."

franchise (see box) and *The Island*, which ran male and female colonies for season two in the original commissioning territory.

Other variants on the survival theme include a new Fox show called *Kicking and Screaming*, in which ten expert survivalists are hooked up with pampered partners and have to overcome dangerous animals, raging rivers, hunger and extreme weather, similar to the dynamic in shows like *Beauty and the Geek*.

In a comic variant on the genre, BBC Three's *Stupid Man*, *Smart Phone* sees comedian Russell Kane attempting to survive in harsh terrains such as the Arctic Circle and arid African plains with just a smartphone for help. Another interesting take is DRG's *Beyond Human Boundaries*, where Arman Alizad tries to survive in some of the poorest places on Earth, such as a landfill site in Cambodia and a gang-controlled favela of Brazil.

Of course, all this talk of authenticity does raise a key question: how do you keep people safe? The TV business has had its tragedies, including deaths during the production of *Survivor* and *Dropped*. Isn't there a possibility that more participants will suffer as shows push ever harder to excite the armchair audience? Bears, lions, dehydration, hunger, fever, mental breakdown, parasites, accidents and even stumbling into bandit country are just some of the downsides of such shows.

A&E's Denton says it would be disingenuous to insist that shows like *Alone* that go off the grid are 100% risk-free. "But safety is clearly paramount," he says. "*Alone*'s participants have satellite phones and GPS trackers, and there are rescue teams nearby. Doctors visit them each week and make judgements about whether they are physically and mentally fit to continue."

Robins, whose show promises "harsh elements and deadly predators", calls it "an educated risk. If you understand what you're doing, you can push the boundaries and connect with nature while also providing protection. National Geographic were a brilliant partner on *Myigrations* because they understand the logistics, how to respond to any emergency."

Audiences don't seem put off by what they've seen on screen, and are more anxious than ever to get involved. Denton talks of increased applications for *Alone*, while *The Island* saw applications rise from 80,000 for season two to 135,000 for season three. At this rate, there won't be anyone left at home to watch survival shows on TV. **TBI**

Formats Hot Picks

THE SHOW: *Robot Wars*
THE PRODUCERS: Mentorn Media Scotland, SJP Media
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Passion Distribution
THE BROADCASTER: BBC Two (UK)
THE CONCEPT: Return of popular 1990s robotic battle format

The return of *Robot Wars* to the market will be among the biggest stories at MIPTV this year. The eccentric robot-combat series, which first broadcast in the UK in 1998, has been brought back by original commissioner BBC Two, which is planning a new six-part run.

The move came after US broadcast network ABC decided to reboot *BattleBots*, an American series that shares the same roots of the *Robot Wars* tournaments of the mid-1990s. "Robot technology has become a zeitgeist topic again," says Elin Thomas, director of global sales at *Robot Wars* distributor Passion Distribution.

The basic *Robot Wars* format sees teams of battle-robot designers pitting their 'mechs' against each other in one-on-one contests at a specially built arena that is complete with obstacles and mean-machine 'house' robots

(think Matilda, Sir Killalot and Shunt). The object is to immobilise the competition, with judges scoring the three-minute skirmishes. A commentator ramps up the energy during the fights, while a host and a pit reporter are behind the scenes.

Details of the new show are emerging as TBI goes to press, but Nick Rees, managing director of Passion, says many of the popular house robots will return, albeit with "makeovers". Comedian and science buff Dara Ó Briain replaces Craig Charles as host, and Jonathan Pearce returns to commentate.

"A lot of details are still under wraps, but it's really going to build on the previous format," says Thomas. "It will be returning with the latest technological advances, but with the format beats of the original"

Thomas says the modern show will have reality and magazine-format elements with

expert input, and she expects the format to work for male-skewed networks around the world. A key selling point for acquisitions executives concerned with cost is Passion can provide channels with access to the purpose-built arena in Glasgow, Scotland, that was created for the new BBC Two effort.

"The international hub in Glasgow has amazing cameras and looks fantastic," says Thomas. "We want our international buyers to produce there, and we can make it available for them."

Rees also points to the licensing and merchandising potential (*Robot Wars'* television successes have always been accompanied by L&M success), and says that extra footage shot by the plethora of stadium cameras in Glasgow means broadcasters can create plenty of multiplatform video around the core linear show.



THE SHOW: *Touch*
THE PRODUCERS: Keshet Broadcasting, Ido Rosenblum
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Keshet International
THE BROADCASTER: Keshet (Israel)
THE CONCEPT: Fully interactive gameshow based on the premise of spotting mistakes

THE SHOW: *Radio Face*
THE PRODUCER: Third Street Studios
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Red Arrow International
THE BROADCASTER: BBC One (Northern Ireland)
THE CONCEPT: Fixed-rig reality series in which radio call-in regulars comment on current affairs

Keshet International's latest format effort is based on one simple question, 'What is wrong with this picture?', and includes what Keshet Media's head of interactive Ziv Rabinovich, calls a "very simple, very addictive" digital game.

The format is three rounds of image-based questions, which challenge a pair of competing contestants to identify what is wrong.

For example, Barcelona football star Lionel Messi might be pictured with an incorrect number on his back, or could be playing with a basketball.

The questions are on topics such as films, current affairs, sport and history, and all have some kind of story behind them, which contain clues for the contestants.

The 30-minute, studio-based series debuted in Israel this year on Keshet, with the triumphant contestant in each episode getting the chance to win a car. Viewers at home could also win prizes by playing along through the dedicated app, which Rabinovich describes as working "completely organically" with the core television format.

The app and format were developed alongside each other, with international versions of both now ready.

Buyers in Cannes will get the chance to try out the game and see episodes from the Israeli show at the Keshet International stand.

"In the creative process of creating the TV product, we already had the digital product side completely solved," says Assaf Blecher, VP of development and content at Keshet Broadcasting. "That's unlike a lot of TV products that try to build digital products around them."

Blecher says the show works as a standalone TV proposition, too. "Firstly, we are creating a great TV show that is entertaining, but with the Keshet product there's also the added value. You're getting a 360-degree experience: you can play from home and be part of the show, but you can also just watch from home if you want"

He adds that the format can work in a number of slots; primetime, access prime or daytime. In Israel, Keshet played it several times an evening to encourage viewers to play along at home.

Touch comes from Ido Rozenblum, the Israeli producer-actor behind *Boom!*, the Keshet International format that sold to Fox in the US and various other territories around the world.

According to Blecher, the format plays for all age groups. "It is a genuine family format that works for 9s-to-99s," he says.

Red Arrow International's major format launch at MIPTV is *Radio Face*, a project coming out of an increasingly creative format territory, Northern Ireland. The concept was developed by BBC Radio 5 Live presenter Stephen Nolan, who has been branching out into formats.

Nolan had toyed with how to incorporate the loud, extrovert characters who would call in to his radio show into a TV programme. He decided to film them, at home, at the gym or in their cars, for example, to record their opinions on key popular topics as they went about their daily lives. Nolan then hosted the action from a studio.

Harry Gamsu, VP of format acquisitions and sales at Red Arrow Entertainment's distribution arm, says the show will stand out in a crowded fixed-rig-formats market. "The big USP over the other fixed-rig formats with colourful characters is that this can be about anything, and there is no issue getting rights or clips clearance," he says.

Topics cover everything from politics to comedy. "Crucially, everything is a topical issue from the week that was," says Gamsu.

Pre-market interest is understood to have been strong in key territories, with Red Arrow keen to place the format with producers and broadcasters that have interests in both television and radio. Some may link the format to a podcast, says Gamsu.

In Northern Ireland, the show has been a ratings success, outperforming the slot average.





THE SHOW: *Football Nightmares*
THE PRODUCER: FremantleMedia Italia
THE DISTRIBUTOR: FremantleMedia
THE BROADCASTER: TV8 (Italy)
THE CONCEPT: Legendary footballers attempt to turn around ailing clubs in a week

From the early 1980s to his retirement at the end of the 21st century, Gianluca Vialli had a glittering career as a striker for European football clubs Sampdoria, Juventus and Chelsea, as well as the Italian national team. He then won trophies as a manager in the UK before becoming a pundit for Sky Sports Italia.

Those experiences, he says, stand him in good stead to front a reality-meets-sports entertainment format in which he attempts to change the fortunes of failing grass-roots teams.

Football Nightmares sees Vialli and another ex-Italian international, Lorenzo Amoruso,

working together to fix problems at a different club in each episode. The show went out on TV8 (fka MTV8) in Italy as a six-part first season.

"It's a brand new TV format featuring two former footballers sharing their know-how and experience to turn around football teams that are performing poorly," says Vialli, who created the format. "Our reputation is on the line. We can't perform miracles in a week, but we want to sow the seeds of recuperation."

Episodes one and two launched back-to-back at the end of February in a primetime slot and outperformed the TV8 slot average across

key male demos, including a 238% bump in men aged 25-34 and a 72% increase in 15-44s.

FremantleMedia Italia's production team identified clubs throughout Italy that Vialli and Amoruso would visit. They looked at teams that, for example, had poor facilities or failing management.

Interesting characters are important for the reality elements, Vialli says. "Football can transcend international and cultural barriers," he adds. "This is genuine and real; the cameras are there, but they are just guests. These are genuine reactions and it is not acting."

Vialli, who managed Chelsea and Watford in England, takes a management and analysis approach to his role. "I am the Mr. Wolf," he says, referencing Marvey Keitel's fixer character in *Pulp Fiction*, while Amoruso takes over the team on the training ground.

Each episode begins with a summary of the team and the key issues it faces. The week's events then follow, before a weekend match represents the culmination of the programme. The result is important, but Vialli says helping the team in the longer term is the main point.

Vialli will be in Cannes promoting the format. "I want to share why I think this is a show that could work locally," he says. "It would be interesting to see who would lead it elsewhere. In the UK, I'd choose David Beckham and Vinnie Jones, but that's a bit of a budget issue."

THE SHOW: *This is Not a Hotel*
THE PRODUCER: Talpa Media
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Talpa Global
THE BROADCASTER: RTL4 (Netherlands)
THE CONCEPT: Problem children operate a hotel alone after being tricked into appearing on a reality TV show

Shows such as *The World's Strictest Parents* have looked into the awkward dynamic of problem children and the older generation, while plenty of others have tackled troubled teens and novel correction methods. Talpa Global's latest addition to the canon, *This is Not a Hotel*, takes a new approach, says the distributor's head of global sales, Gepke Nederlof.

"There are a couple of shows that take problem children and help them change, but this is different," she says. "We cast kids living at home with their parents. The kids think they are going

away to learn to live by themselves, as life with mum and dad feels like a hotel.

"That's the way into the interesting twist to the format, after three episodes of living alone the house becomes a hotel that they have to run, and there's no-one there to help them. The revelation adds a whole new layer of reality and hilarious moments."

A six-episode series was commissioned by Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL4, and played in a Monday 9.30pm primetime slot. "We're focusing on 20-49s, but it will work for broad audiences," says Nederlof.

With the show still on air and shooting as TBI goes to press, Nederlof says the pay-off remains under wraps, though it will involve a retrospective, where the audience sees the angry, hot-headed teenagers of the first episode develop into their new selves. "It's a very big experience for them, and in some cases is life-changing," says Nederlof. "These are kids who've never ironed a shirt before, so it's very entertaining to watch that change."

Talpa, now part of ITV Studios following its sale last year, plans to target developed territories where idleness among youth is perhaps more commonplace than in less developed countries where "there is a less of trend of kids living a luxury lifestyle," says Nederlof.



THE SHOW: *Come Dine: Champion of Champions*
THE PRODUCER: Shiver
THE DISTRIBUTOR: ITV Studios Global Entertainment
THE BROADCASTER: Channel 4 (UK)
THE CONCEPT: Former *Come Dine With Me* contestants go up against each other in a series of cooking challenges

The main challenge with an evergreen format like *Come Dine With Me* (37 versions worldwide) is keeping it fresh, says ITV's executive VP of global development and formats, Mike Beale. In the past, this has meant celebrity specials, dating episodes and digest clip shows, but *Come Dine: Champion of Champions* marks the first time the format has been entirely reworked.

"What else can you do with it?" asks Beale. "We think turning it into a competition might be the next step."

Champion of Champions sees former *CDWM* winners cooking against each other in a series of special challenges. Though the familiar peer-marking system of the original remains, special guest judges (including Michelin star chefs) bring an ultra-critical edge to each episode.



Beale says that though some contestants take the cooking seriously, the presence of *CDWM*'s narrator, Dave Lamb (in front of the camera for the first time, and pictured above middle), keeps the familiar light, cheeky tone. "It's the antithesis of *Masterchef*," Beale says.

In the UK, a 20-episode first season is airing on Channel 4 in access primetime. "This is in the familiar slot; it's comfortable television,"

says Beale. "You know what you're going to get as you know the brand."

ITV Studios Global Entertainment plans to shop the format primarily to channels that have previously aired, or still air, the original.

"It could switch channels in territories where it is off air, and it really depends on the local history," says Beale. "Each story is going to be slightly different."



THE SHOW: *Masterpiece*
THE PRODUCER: Spun Gold
THE DISTRIBUTOR: DRG
THE BROADCASTER: ITV (UK)
THE CONCEPT: Daytime gameshow that sees teams of antique fans compete for prizes

DRG's VP of factual acquisitions, Katy Cundall, says new ITV series *Masterpiece* fits nicely into the canon of specialist factual titles on the market. "It's a lovely little format, which takes an entertainment approach to antiques," she says.

The British daytime format sees Alan Titchmarsh, known for gardening series such as *Ground Force*, and arts expert Rachel Houston-Holland presenting episodes in which teams of contestants are shown objects and asked to

identify the masterpieces among them. They also face challenges such as guessing the age of classic cars. The team with the most points wins a prize. "From a broadcaster's point of view it has daytime playability, which is crucial, and there is a demand for ratings-reliable shows – this is that," says Cundall. "Plus, you can scale the budget."

ITV has run *Masterpiece* for an initial four weeks, comprising 20 hours, in a daytime slot, though DRG can see it operating in other parts of the schedule, too. "It's a really broad format in terms of who it appeals to," says Cundall. "It can be upscaled, with celebrities for example, or have other elements changed to make it more primetime."

The filming for the UK series took place in three British stately homes: Parham House in West Sussex, Kentwell Hall in Suffolk and Firl Place in East Sussex. Presenter Titchmarsh is also the show's creator, and his involvement may interest buyers in English-speaking territories where his brand is well-known.

With *Super Combat Teams*, Small World IFT is hoping to emulate the result it got after bringing South Korean format *Grandpas Over Flowers* to the international market.

The show had previously been available through producer and broadcaster Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation, but, as is often the case, Asian formats need a Western-based distributor to open the idea up to Western broadcasters, as Small World proved when it placed *Grandpas* with NBC in the US.

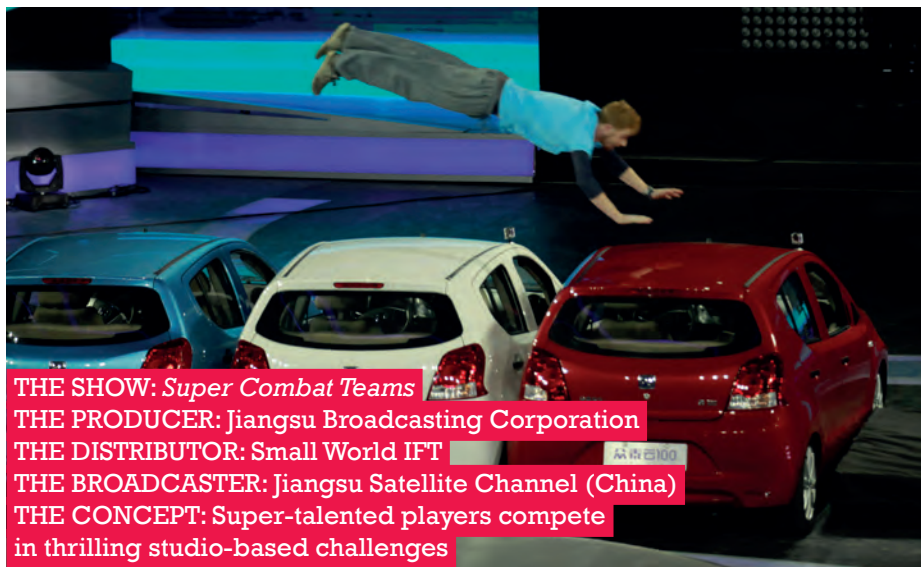
“It is about getting buyers to understand the property,” says Small World co-founder Tim Crescenti.

“Even *Grandpas* had been at market for a while before we proved the format elements worked,” Crescenti says. “*Super Combat Teams* works because it is emotional.”

The format, which Small World says is in the ‘stunt-battle’ genre, pits players with amazing physical abilities against each other in a total of 70 challenges, five per episode.

Audience participation is vital, there are no judges or mentors, and winners are picked through real-time voting that gives players a chance to win a prize.

In China, where the Jiangsu Satellite



THE SHOW: *Super Combat Teams*
THE PRODUCER: Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation
THE DISTRIBUTOR: Small World IFT
THE BROADCASTER: Jiangsu Satellite Channel (China)
THE CONCEPT: Super-talented players compete in thrilling studio-based challenges

Channel’s 12x90mins show won the Best General Entertainment Programme at the Asian Television Awards last year, data suggests there were 15 million playing along at home on average.

“The format means the audience has to watch the show live, which makes it a bit PVR-proof,” says Crescenti.

As a format, Small World will be pushing for channels to consider using Jiangsu’s huge

studio to film versions of the format, as this is cost-effective and means Chinese athletes and competitors can be provided.

Crescenti adds that *Super Combat Teams* would likely run as a 60-minute format on most international broadcasters, and that certain elements – such as the outdoor challenges – can be dropped to keep the structure simple. Small World has rights except in Germany and Scandinavia.



THE SHOW: *Street Cops*
THE PRODUCER: Filmpool
THE DISTRIBUTOR: All3Media International
THE BROADCASTER: RTL2 (Germany)
THE CONCEPT: Constructed-reality format in which inner city police react to scripted crimes

German prodco Filmpool is the world’s leading proponent of the scripted-reality genre with series such as soap *Berlin – Day and Night* and long-running whodunnit series *Cases of Doubt*, both for RTL2. Its latest effort for the broadcaster is *Street Cops*, which Filmpool’s business

development director Felix Wessler says is “even more authentic than anything we have done before”. It has been going out in Germany as a daytime format, initially in a 15-episode first season at 5pm, and later this year a 40-ep second series at 4pm. Each ep sees a team of police

officers thrown into carefully scripted situations in which young actors play potential criminals.

Wessler says the hour-long pace is “very fast and action-orientated” to allow daytime audiences to dip in and out. Most episodes have two stories running through featuring two police teams, who are filmed dealing with crime both in and out of uniform.

“This is the first time police officers have been in situations that are scripted,” says Wessler. “They know something is happening, but they don’t know what. That makes the whole thing closer to factual entertainment.”

He says ratings in Germany have been “consistently excellent and above the RTL2 average for its timeslot”. The format runs to a commercial hour, and Wessler describes it as “less female-skewed” than *Cases of Doubt*.

Many of Filmpool’s constructed-reality formats have sold into eastern Europe and become long-running local franchises, and Wessler says he expects traction in the region for *Street Cops*. All3Media International, part of Filmpool parent All3Media, is targeting younger-skewed commercial channels and the 18-30 demo. **TBI**



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LAST WORD



KATE BEAL

Drinking tea with gangsters

Over the years I've filmed with hundreds of 'real' people including doctors, vicars, vets, firefighters and criminals. Often you couldn't tell one from another. Other times the apprehension inside can make it patently obvious, especially when you're a few months' pregnant, alone and about to head into the home of one of Britain's most notorious gangsters for a cuppa.

Don't worry, I did tell my office exactly where I was going and at exactly what time I was due back, just in case.

Viewers have a voracious appetite for true crime documentaries. The stories are gripping, real enough to be terrifying, but most of the crimes are resolved with the perpetrators getting their comeuppance.

However, the producers of these documentaries meet the characters up close. Mostly we interview people associated with the victims, police officers or experts on the cases, but we also work with the criminals themselves.

Over the years I've produced many docs featuring multiple crimes. Four of those films have been specifically about the

famous London gangsters of the Sixties: the Krays, the Richardsons, Frankie Fraser and their associates. My ability to make these documentaries has relied entirely on my relationship with 'former' gangsters – or 'illegal entrepreneurs' as they are sometimes known.

You need to establish trust from the first contact. They need to know that when you say you are going to do something you will follow through. This isn't dissimilar to any other production, but sometimes the conversations can be more blunt. If there's an issue, you will know about it.

From my experience, the former criminals I've filmed place a heavy emphasis on keeping your word, as they have a code of conduct and they need to know you are not making false promises.

Above all, never underpay expenses, no matter how tight the budget is. Money is the one thing that can turn an ordinary-looking grandad into his former villainous self. Misunderstandings or simply paranoia about the subject have resulted in the worst moments for me over the years. Someone once said to me that the 'p' in 'prison' stands for 'paranoia', and this often remains true on

the outside. They've lived in a world where they expect to be screwed out of what they are owed. No matter how close you have become, if money gets in the way, it turns nasty.

On a purely practical note, people who have been in prison are really great at chatting and are natural storytellers. It does mean that interviews can sometimes last hours, much to my crew's dismay. It's worth it, though. The moment Freddie Foreman became emotional on camera about Reggie Kray's death is one of the most gripping parts of our latest gangster doc, *The Krays: The Prison Years* for Discovery Channel UK.

I've never felt the need for security to accompany the crew while filming [gangsters]. I have, though, on other docs, but it's always on a case-by-case basis. We filmed in the estates of Peckham, London, for a documentary about murderer schoolboy Damilola Taylor with presenter Rav Wilding. It was an emotive subject and likely to cause a response from locals. Yet only a mile or so down the road, I filmed with the Sixties gangster Charlie Richardson with no need for any protection. In fact, the only issue was the number of locals coming up and shaking the hand of the former South London gang leader.

During the edit process I always try to remember that, no matter how great the story, this is not fiction. There are real victims, real families and real perpetrators. No matter how close you have become to the criminals during the shooting, you cannot in any way glorify them. They must understand that your message can only be 'crime doesn't pay', and the storytelling must remain resolutely neutral.

I would say the most nerve-racking element of these kinds of productions are when the criminals view the end product that we show out of courtesy. Then it is either a case of another cup of tea, or something stronger. **TBI**

“Never underpay expenses, no matter how tight the budget is. Money is the one thing that can turn an ordinary-looking grandad into his former villainous self”

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