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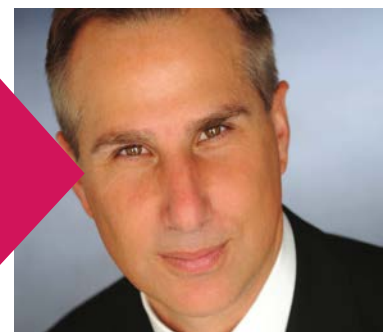
# ON THE MOVE

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

A clash over the future of Nordic World has led to the departure of **PATTY GENESTE** soon after the company bought her formats distribution firm, Absolutely Independent. Internal questions remain over how the companies can work together going forwards



Warner Bros International Television Production's director of local productions **Christian Asanger** is joining Sony Pictures Television Germany. At WBITVP, he also acted as a worldwide consultant on dating format *The Bachelor*



Changes are afoot at ITV Studios Global Entertainment, which has said goodbye to chairman **PAUL BUCCIERI** while making finance and ops boss Duncan Walker its COO. Buccieri, also chair of ITV Studios US Group, moves to A+E Networks to become president of the A+E and History channels in the States

**Henrik Pabst** has become the sole managing director of Red Arrow International after co-MD and scripted supremo Irina Ignatiew-Lemke left at the end of November



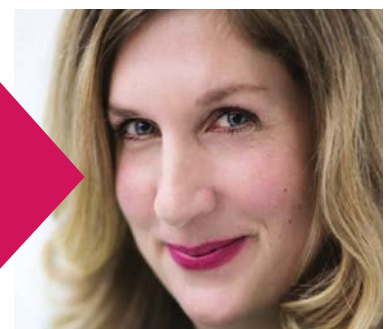
All3Media International's managing director, **LOUISE PEDERSEN**, will be joining Colin Callender's drama producer, Playground Entertainment. Pedersen follows All3 CEO Farah Ramzan Golant out of the door after Discovery Communications and Liberty Global teamed up to buy the UK giant last year for £550 million (US\$856 million)

ITV Studios Global Entertainment's VP of north-west EMEA, **David Wilcox**, has joined NBCUniversal. At the international TV sales arm of the US media giant he will be director, sales liaison for the Nordic and Benelux regions



**LEE RIERSON** is leaving his post as COO of *American Idol* producer FremantleMedia North America. The former Shine America exec has decided not to renew his contract and exits concurrently with David Luner, who has moved to Lionsgate as worldwide TV marketing boss

**Nadine Nohr** is the highest-profile exec exiting the Endemol Shine Group following announcement of the final members of its top team. Cathy Payne will instead run global sales, with Shine's Gary Carter and Endemol COO Martha Brass named co-international CEOs. They work under group CEO Sophie Turner Laing and president Tim Hincks



Entertainment One-owned Canadian prodco Force Four Entertainment has hired **VIBIKA BIANCHI** from Corus Entertainment's original programming arm to launch a new Toronto office. She will be senior VP at the Canadian firm, which makes shows such as *Village on a Diet* and *Murder She Solved*

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## US formats in the spotlight

American movies and studio drama series may rule the world, but when it comes to unscripted formats the world largely takes care of itself, reports John Hazelton

**W**hile formats from the UK, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and emerging TV powers like Israel are often the big sellers in the international marketplace – as well as in the US – formats originated in the US have recently been in shorter supply and have made less of an impact outside their home territory.

That has been a source of frustration for US reality production companies – from foreign- and corporate-owned operations like Shine America,

All3Media America and Leftfield Entertainment to independents like Relativity Television, Pilgrim Studios and Eyeworks USA – who are eager for the kind of growth achieved by European format powerhouses such as Endemol Shine Group, ITV Studios and Tinopolis.

No wonder, then, that many US reality producers are now pushing to get more involved in the international format business.

“A number of years ago, if something wasn’t created in the US then it couldn’t work here,” says Arthur Smith, CEO of Tinopolis-owned A.

Smith & Co Productions, whose *Divorce Hotel* has been an international format success. “Then we saw that completely flip around and international formats were more successful in the US than things developed here. Right now, I see it going in multiple directions. We have deals with a variety of international players and they have deals with us.”

Several factors have recently conspired to limit the flow of US formats onto the international market, or at least onto the open international market.

Trends in US reality programming have been one factor, with the broadcast networks favouring their own versions of international hits – this winter’s strongest performers have included *The Voice*, *Shark Tank* (aka *Dragon’s Den*), *Dancing With the Stars* (*Strictly Come*

Forman, CEO of Relativity Television, whose US MTV hit *Catfish* (pictured left) is currently being reversioned by MTV in the UK. “In some cases we hang onto those rights because we co-financed the show or because it’s a competitive situation and we make it a condition of closing

buyers looking at US producers in a really serious way for the first time in a long time.”

Some predict that the networks will now turn to lower-risk gameshows, like NBC’s successful *Hollywood Game Night* and *500 Questions*, the gameshow recently ordered by ABC from Mark Burnett’s One Three Media and Warner Bros.

“Right now it’s all about low-risk programming,” says Toby Gorman, executive VP, alternative programming at FremantleMedia North America. “Game is back in a big way because it’s relatively low-risk, and we’re in discussions with some of the networks on game projects. It’s the safe stuff that’s working and that there’s a hunger for.”

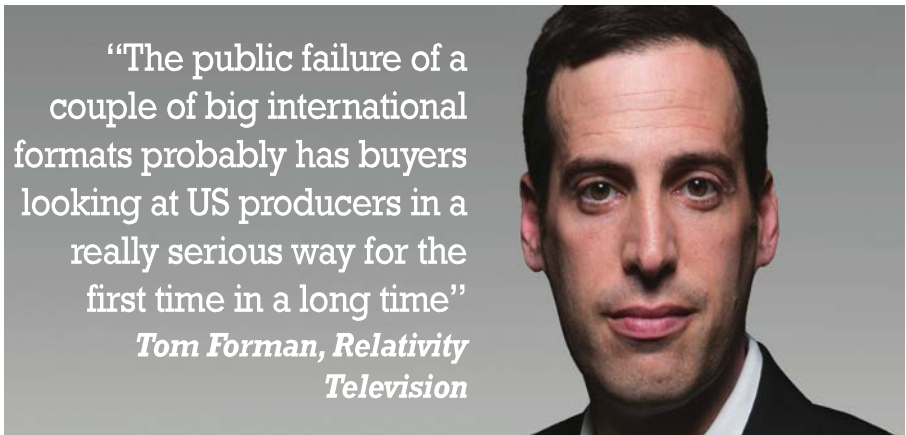
Cable networks, meanwhile, might finally be moving away from the docu-soaps such as *Duck Dynasty* that have dominated their schedules for the past few years.

Jenny Daly, president of fast-rising independent T Group Productions, producer of US and international success *Storage Hunters*, says she is getting most buyer interest in concepts “that are organic and have the stakes built in. Less like the docu-soaps that just follow a crazy family because they’re crazy. There really has to be more of a baked-in format, so there’s an end goal other than just characters.”

Forman says Relativity’s A+E pilot, *8 Minutes*, about teenage prostitution, illustrates a demand for genuinely unscripted documentary. “The pendulum in the US is swinging away from highly constructed docu-reality and heavily produced bullshit,” he says. “The stuff that seems to be working is rooted in real people, real situations and real emotion.”

While programming fashions change in their home market, US independents are also beginning to approach the international market more proactively.

Some are finding opportunity in helping the



“The public failure of a couple of big international formats probably has buyers looking at US producers in a really serious way for the first time in a long time”  
**Tom Forman, Relativity Television**

*Dancing*) and *MasterChef Junior*.

Cable networks are going for character-driven docu-soaps such as *Duck Dynasty* and the *Real Housewives* series. With their emphasis on character rather than format, docu-soaps have never been easy to reversion for other territories and as a result have never generated much in the way of international format sales.

The broadcast networks’ current preference for shows with proven track records has been another factor.

The networks, suggests Chris Grant, CEO of producer-distributor Electus, whose international format successes have included *Food Fighters* and *Bet on Your Baby*, “look to what’s working in other places before they make big decisions about investing their own money. They’re looking for great shows and it’s easier to see it if it’s on the screen than if it’s on a piece of paper. People are cautious right now because of the state of the industry”.

When US producers – who do not have standard terms-of-trade agreements akin to those in the UK – do manage to sell an original concept to a network it’s often impossible for them to hold on to the international rights, either to the finished shows or to the format. More likely is that a network will retain those rights and use them to feed its own international channels – either with the finished shows or with local versions based on the format – or to pad the slate of its own international distribution operation.

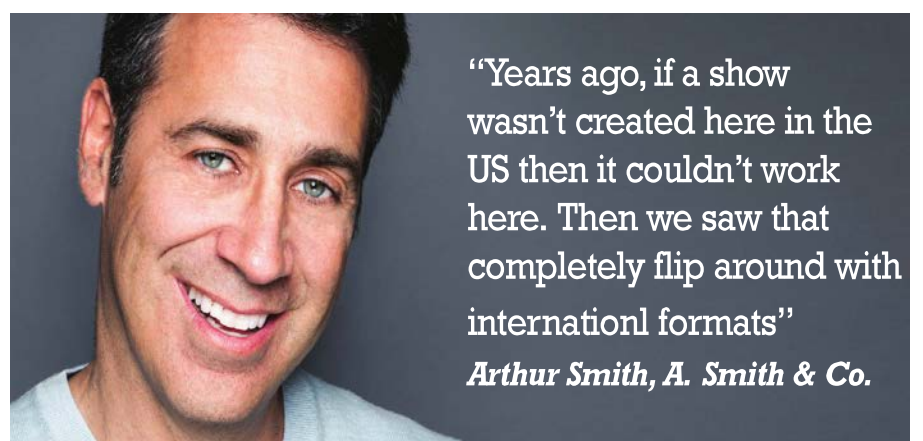
“Every negotiation is a gunfight,” says Tom

the deal, and sometimes we lose and the networks keep them and self-distribute.”

What some US producers are now hoping is that by rethinking their business models and taking advantage of shifting conditions in their home market they can become a more significant source of reality formats with real international potential.

Some changes in US reality TV trends might work to the producers’ advantage. For one thing, the failure last summer of the US versions of *Rising Star* and *Utopia*, both based on high-profile international formats, could lessen the broadcast networks’ reliance on shows with international track records.

“The good news, if that cloud has a silver lining, is that it’s reinvigorated the appetite for domestically produced formats,” says Relativity’s Forman. “The public failure of a couple of big international formats probably has



“Years ago, if a show wasn’t created here in the US then it couldn’t work here. Then we saw that completely flip around with international formats”  
**Arthur Smith, A. Smith & Co.**

US networks that buy their shows exploit the shows' formats in other territories.

Leftfield Entertainment, for example, the ITV-owned producer of *Pawn Stars* and *Love Prison* (pictured right), is, according to vice president of business development and international Ed Simpson, "working very closely with A+E and other networks to be the local producer in territories around the world. The network gets a partner who knows how to make the show and we get to produce it locally in those territories".

"That's an exciting way of doing business because it allows the network to retain ownership and feed their [international] network, which is important for their growth, but it also allows us to do what we do best, which is produce programming," he adds.

Daly's T Group, meanwhile, recently signed a deal to work with the UK office of reality producer Znak & Jones on pitching original and US formats to UK broadcasters. That was after UKTV's Dave commissioned a UK version of *Storage Hunters*, produced by All3Media-owned North One Television.

"It's an interest of mine to have a presence in the UK," says Daly. "Not just as a vehicle to drive shows to bring back here to the US, but because as a seller of content I don't want to be limited to selling to US outlets."

Up-and-coming New York-based reality producer MY Entertainment, best known for its *Ghost Adventures* series, has a similar arrangement with London-based distributor

into the States and hold onto the rights."

Retaining international rights to a bigger proportion of their own projects will be a key challenge for US reality producers hoping to make more of a mark on the international formats stage. Some producers see reasons for optimism on that front.

Grant says that on the one hand format distributors like Electus, which manages to retain distribution rights on most of its titles,

personally involved and end up making the buyer and the creator more money."

Relativity, which, when it does retain international rights, feeds them through third-party distributors including Electus, Tinopolis' Passion Distribution and FremantleMedia, is "having more of those conversations than ever before", Forman adds. "If you're coming in with pre-existing intellectual property or if you're willing to put your money where your mouth is



**"Ultimately, it's about how the rights can be most effectively monetised. We have proven that we can do that and it gives us a real leg-up"**  
**Chris Grant, Electus**

have shown that they know how to help a project fulfill its international potential.

"Ultimately," says Grant, "it's about how the rights can be monetised most effectively. We have proven to our partners that we can do that and that gives us a real leg-up in holding onto the rights."

And on the other hand, US networks,

because you believe in a format and co-finance the series, networks are more open than ever to getting creative about how to do a deal."

Consolidation among US production outfits and acquisition by foreign players could also enhance US producers' ability to retain rights.

Over the last few years many of the leading US reality production companies have been bought by European groups such as ITV (whose acquisitions have included Gurney Productions, High Noon and Thinkfactory as well as Leftfield), Tinopolis (which also owns Magical Elves), FremantleMedia (now parent to Original Productions and 495 Productions) and All3Media (which has US-based offices for Lion Television, Gordon Ramsey's One Potato Two Potato and Optomen).

The creation of the Endemol Shine Group has linked US reality production companies including Shine America, 19 Entertainment, Sharp Entertainment, Authentic Entertainment and True Entertainment.

The consolidation has given the companies affected a stronger position from which to negotiate with US broadcast and cable networks and therefore, according to executives, a better chance of retaining rights to their projects.

"It helps us enormously," says Eli Holzman, president of All3Media America, whose position



**"If we can produce a show locally around the world the network gets a partner that already knows how to produce the format"**  
**Ed Simpson, Leftfield Ents.**

TVF International.

MY president Michael Yudin says that the companies are currently finalising a deal to set up their *Bargain Brides* format in Ireland so that he can return to the US with the format's international rights already secured. "If that happens," Yudin says, "I can then sell it back

especially those that are younger and have limited international operations, are becoming more flexible.

"Networks are realising that they have fought to hang onto rights that they have then failed to monetise," says Forman, "and that producers can go out, shop those rights, be passionate and





has been strengthened even more by Discovery Communications and Liberty Global's recent acquisition of the All3Media UK parent.

"The more commerce you have the more leverage you have," Holzman adds. "If you're making one show for someone they'll treat you how they treat you; if you're making ten shows for them then they maybe can't afford to mess around on the eleventh. It's a challenge because I'm not sure that big is the right scale for every aspect of our business, but with respect to retaining rights, definitely scale is the thing."

The M&A activity has also linked many US production companies to well-established international distribution operations, and those links can help strengthen an independent's claim on international distribution rights.

"It's not only being part of the group," says Arthur Smith of his company's ties to Tinopolis and its Passion Distribution operation, "it's also the fact that we have a quality distributor. Everybody benefits when you have a quality distributor who's going to do a good job selling the show".

One other factor that could affect the fortunes

of US reality producers in significant but yet-to-be-determined ways is digital disruption.

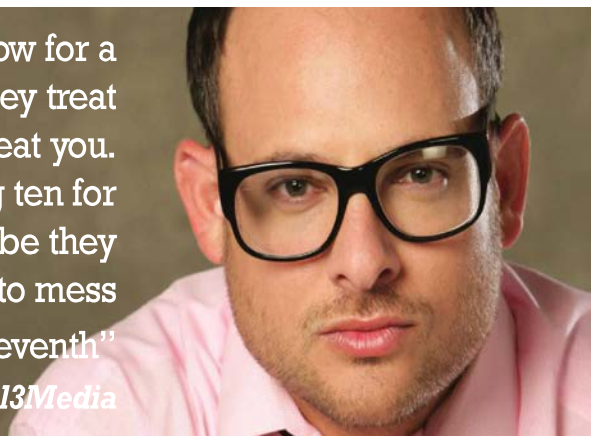
Some US reality players even argue that as digital platforms provide a myriad of new outlets for reality programming they could have

for and own the vast majority of content in the US that's having a really interesting ripple effect for all of us."

"As digital disruption washes over the distributors, some of them are going to flee to

"Make one show for a network and they treat you how they treat you. If you're making ten for them then maybe they can't afford to mess around on the eleventh"

*Eli Holzman, All3Media*



a more significant effect than consolidation has had up to now.

All3Media's Holzman says: "We're certainly seeing digital disruption impact the distribution side of our business, and since those distributors tend to be the ones who pay

quality and say, 'I've got to get better deals and be more flexible than I've ever been because it's going to be the hits that will make me relevant and valuable,'" he adds. "Others will say, 'I can't afford to give a nickel away ever again and I better hold on to everything I've got.'" **TBI**

# FORMATS HOT PICKS

TBI runs down the best formats awaiting buyers at NATPE



**THE SHOW:** *Escape Your Life*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Kinetic Content  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** Red Arrow International  
**THE BROADCASTERS:** TNT (US), ProSiebenSat.1 (Germany)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Couples are given six weeks to experiment with a new life

Coming off the back off one of 2014's best-selling and most controversial formats in *Married at First Sight*, Red Arrow International says its new format could be an even bigger seller. "We think this could be even broader than *Married at First Sight*," says Red Arrow International's managing director, Henrik Pabst, of *Escape Your Life*.

Where *Married...* played on the social experiment format by having scientifically-matched strangers wed on their first date, *Escape Your Life* takes more established couples and gives them the opportunity to

ditch their current lives in favour of a new start.

"Everyone of us has thought at least once in our life about what a total restart would be like," says Pabst. "Would it be a change for the good for my personal surroundings, or if put to the test would it be right? That's what we're trying to find out with this format."

Three couples are filmed over six weeks as they find new jobs, homes and friends. At the end of the process they can choose to return to their prior existence, or continue with the new beginning – and a cash boost provided by producers.

Developed at the Europe-based Red Arrow Group, the show is a good example of the benefits of an integrated international group. Red Arrow's Kinetic Content created the format, and then hooked cable channel TNT in for a series run. Red Arrow parent ProSiebenSat.1 then commissioned a local version.

"The question 'is the grass always greener?' is a great premise for a TV show," says Pabst. "As with all social experiments it's a bit trial and error, and we will need a little time to see what works and what doesn't, but with a little bit of time this will become a massive thing."

**THE SHOW:** *The Raft*  
**THE PRODUCERS:** Electus, Catalina Entertainment  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** Electus  
**THE BROADCASTER:** National Geographic Channel (US)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Adventure format in which pairs of contestants are stranded at sea in a small raft

*The Raft* launches on National Geographic Channel early next year, and Electus, which created the series, will be shopping the format

and finished version at NATPE.

In each self-contained episode, two pairs of strangers are stranded in rafts and the winner is the pair that makes landfall or best survives the open-water experience.

The show is the next evolution of the adventure format, says John Pollak, president of Electus International, and differs from antecedents such as the long-running *Survivor*. "It is relatable adventure; it's not *The Amazing Race*, which is about experiences most people will never have."

The contestants film themselves using

handheld cameras, giving the show an edgy *Open Water*-esque feel. "It doesn't have the glossy feel of something like *Survivor*. It has a gritty feel, which is heightened with the black and white [night] footage," Pollak says.

*The Raft* works well as a format he adds. "There's not a big set to build, it's not an intricately detailed format and the fear of being stranded in open water is universal."

US producer Catalina Entertainment (*Ultimate Survival Alaska*) has been brought in to showrun the series, and Electus has all international rights.



**THE SHOW:** *Food Truck Face-Off*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Strix Television  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** Peace Point Rights  
**THE BROADCASTERS:** Food Network (Canada, US)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Business and cooking format in which couples compete to win a food truck

*Bachelor*). Discovery US Hispanic and Latin America prebought the finished 14x60mins version. At NATPE, Peace Point will be shopping that as well as the format.

Peace Point boss Les Tomlin says the show is more than just a food format. “*Food Truck Face-Off* is really about wish-fulfillment and entrepreneurs getting a business off the ground as well as being a food show, it has that *Shark Tank* feel. Food trucks are becoming a worldwide phenomenon.”

The entrepreneurial element comes at the top of the show as four would-be food truck entrepreneurs outline their business plans. Four are then reduced to two, with these couples then hitting the road in their truck and putting that plan into action with all of the real-world pressures and strains that involves. A reality element sees the backstories of the contestants fed into the show, with participants including struggling single parents and recovered drug addicts, to add a human element.

The couples then return to the studio, where it is revealed which has brought in the most cash from their mobile food business. The biggest earners then get to keep their truck for a year. The finished version took in Austin, Los Angeles, Miami and Toronto, where the studio elements were shot.

With street food in vogue, many of the world’s cities are seeing food trucks roll up, and in great numbers. *Food Truck Face Off* is a competition format in which couples put their business acumen and cooking skills to the test, with the goal of winning the food truck of their dreams.

The finished four-wheeled cook-off was

ordered by Food Network in Canada and Food Network in the US. Toronto-based Peace Point Entertainment produces the series and its distribution arm, Peace Point Rights, handles international sales.

The show is hosted by Jesse Palmer, the ex-NFL quarterback and the singleton on reality series *The Bachelor* (the first non-US

**THE SHOW:** *Stars Under Hypnosis*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Snowman  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** FremantleMedia International  
**THE BROADCASTER:** TF1 (France)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Celebrities are put in a trance by a star hypnotist

*Stars Under Hypnosis* is a rare beast in recent times – a primetime entertainment show that has been a hit straight out of the gate on an established free-to-air channel.

TF1 launched *Stars Sous Hypnose* as a two-hour special this summer and it won its slot, beat the average primetime share by 25% and was the commercial broadcaster’s top entertainment show in July.

The show was created by France’s Satisfaction – The Television Agency and its founder, Arthur Essebag, hosted the show. The success meant the format rights were hot property, and FremantleMedia beat out competition to take global distribution in a

deal inked and announced at MIPCOM.

“It’s hard to launch a show, but it worked really well in primetime on TF1, the biggest commercial broadcaster in France,” says Vasha Wallace, senior VP global acquisitions and development at FremantleMedia, “and we thought the chances are it would do well elsewhere, and felt it was very transferrable.”

In the TF1 special, French-Canadian hypnotist Messmer hypnotised eight well-known celebrities who then took on amusing tasks and took part in hypno-experiments while under his spell, both in and out of the studio. For example, one celeb was convinced that he was a gentlemen thief and proceeded to embark on a stealing spree, another was convinced they were naked. Others were ‘hypno-transported’ – hypnotised and then transported to an unknown location and an awkward situation.

After Messmr is finished, the stars watch the video of themselves under hypnosis for the first time.



Wallace says that hypnosis is a hot area in the formats world at the moment. “In the Ninties there were hypnosis shows, but not really since, until now. There is a real buzz in that space.”

“The feedback we’re getting from our producers and their broadcasters is that they want shows that will work for big channels and for a wide, family audience,” she adds. “There has been a lot of interest in this and we think it will resonate everywhere.”

**THE SHOW:** *Love Prison*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Leftfield Pictures  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** A+E Networks  
**THE BROADCASTER:** A+E (US)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Social experiment dating format that puts online relationships to the test in a real-world setting

*Love Prison* tests how online relationships will fare in the real world, albeit in a heightened reality. The couples are not actually sent to prison, but, having only met online, are despatched to a lone cabin on a remote island. A fixed-rig captures the action as the social experiment unfolds over seven days, culminating in the couple deciding on whether they should stay together. Each episode is the self-contained story of one couple.

"It comes from trying to capture the zeitgeist of how people are dating," says

Ellen Lovejoy, vice president, international content sales, A+E Networks. "It has a universal appeal, we are all looking for love, and this is a social experiment that looks at whether a virtual relationship can become a lasting relationship."

The show came from ITV Studios-owned Leftfield and ITV Studios has optioned it in the UK where a pilot has been ordered. It was on A+E's A+E channel in the US, starting in September. It traditionally skews quite old, but the average age for a *Love Prison* viewer was 44, five years below the average. It had a 60-40 female/male split.

Lovejoy says that format buyers could easily age down the show to suit their audiences. She adds that it has been optioned in Denmark, France and Germany and could also play on A+E's own channels internationally. Lovejoy notes a shared location for several versions is one possibility it is examining.



**THE SHOW:** *1000 Heartbeats*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Hungry Bear Media  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** Sky Vision  
**THE BROADCASTER:** ITV (UK)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Gameshow in which contestants attempt to win a cash prize by completing various challenges while having their heart-rate monitored. If it hits 1,000 they lose

Keeping calm under pressure is the name of the game in *1000 Heartbeats*. The new quiz format has contestants completing challenges not against the clock, but the rhythms of their own body, namely their heartbeats.

The participants compete over seven rounds inside the studio, completing challenges while a heart monitor measures the number of heartbeats expired. After each successful round they must choose whether to continue or leave with their current winnings. If the total number of heartbeats reaches 1,000 they are expelled.

The show comes out of the UK where Helen Warner, ITV's director of daytime, commissioned it for free-to-air television. Indie prodco Hungry Bear is making the 30x60mins UK version, which will be fronted by well-known British presenter Vernon Kaye (*Family Fortunes*). Sky Vision has distribution rights and will launch the format internationally at NATPE.

Sky is pitching it as an access- and primetime format that can be scaled up or down to suit local production budgets. "*1000 Heartbeats* is a game show with in-built mass appeal, wrapped around deceptively simple idea," says Barnaby Shingleton, director of factual and entertainment at Sky Vision.



**THE SHOW:** *Game of Homes*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Great Pacific Media  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** Beyond Distribution  
**THE BROADCASTER:** W Network (Canada)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Couples compete over four weeks to renovate a dilapidated house

*Game of Homes* is an event home-makeover series that Beyond International will be selling as both a finished show and a format. In the show, four couples compete over four weeks to renovate four dilapidated residences and turn them into dream homes. They live in the homes they are making over, with cameras filming them 24-7, reality TV style. The pair that perform the best job win the new-look dwelling and the land it is on.

The host of the show, Cameron Mathison (a star of ABC soap *All My Children*) in the Canadian version, gives the couples weekly challenges with tight deadlines. Rooms are renovated one at a time and the winner selected by members of the public following a tour.

Great Pacific Media makes the original 8x60mins show for specialty channel W Network. Blair Reekie, president of the Canadian indie, says it is a new twist on an established genre.

"*Game of Homes* fuses the home-reno genre with the shiny-floor gameshow genre by moving four dilapidated houses to a single set," he says.

The series launches on female-skewed W Network next March. Great Pacific and Beyond are hoping that the reality elements give it an audience beyond home renovation fans.

Munia Kanna-Konsek, head of sales at Beyond, says it will sell in both finished and format form.

**THE SHOW:** *Undercover Cupid*  
**THE PRODUCER:** Nickelodeon  
**THE BROADCASTER:** NickMom (US)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Hidden-camera show in which teens set up a parent on a date

In each installment of *Undercover Cupid* a teen and the show's host – in the US version *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*'s Nyima Funk – selects three prospective partners for their parent. The teenager and parent, who is not in on the plan, then head out for the day before meets the selected partners in random scenarios set up by the host. After meeting all three, the set-up is revealed to the parent who then chooses which one to take on a real date.

"Unlike traditional dating shows, which focus purely on the task of matchmaking, rooted at the heart of this unique format are teenagers celebrating their parents, thanking them for years of love and support," says Adeline Ferro, vice president, international sales, Viacom International Media Networks. "The audience not only gets to enjoy the process of seeing the parent matched with a

suitable partner, it gets to see the bond between the child and the parent. "

Ferro says older kids and parents will enjoy the show, which originally went out on NickMom, the block for young parents that goes out between 10pm and 2am on Nickelodeon in the US.

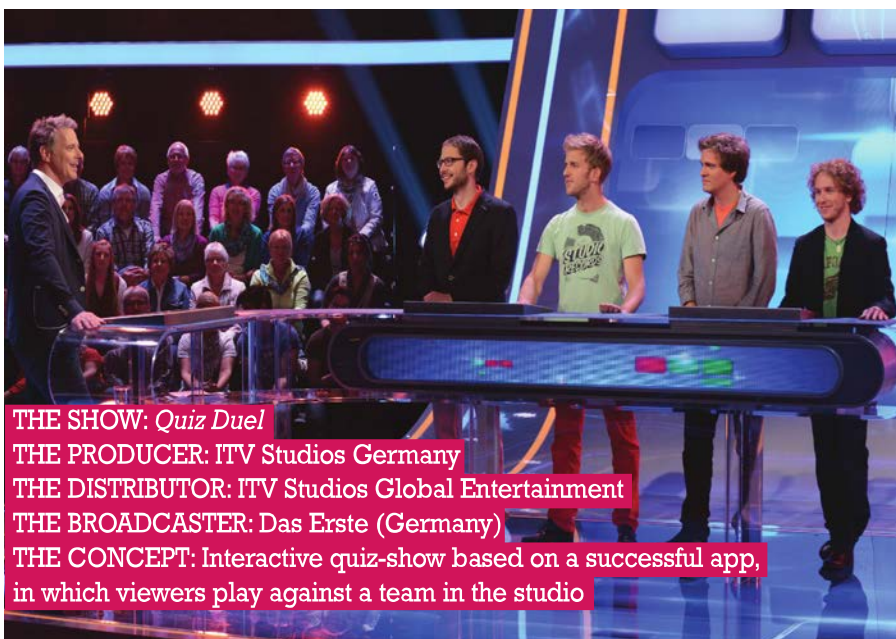
The 7x30mins series debuted in August on the block in a 10pm slot. It was the third-ranked show on the block in its launch month, behind *Instant Mom* and *Take Me to Your Mother*.

VIMN will be shopping it as a finished show and format at NATPE. Ferro says that the core themes are universal and the hidden-camera format is easily adaptable, and notes: "The self-contained-episode structure of the format allows flexibility in episode count and scheduling."

"Dating and hidden-camera formats have traditionally fared well in markets like the UK, France, and other European territories, and indeed in Latin America where broadcasters such as Televisa have both licensed-in and developed their own hidden camera formats," adds Ferro.



As VIMN heads into NATPE with the show, the expectation is that Latin broadcasters wanting a local version of *Undercover Cupid* will likely extend the format to a full hour, by adding more teens or more making the hidden-camera segments more elaborate.



**THE SHOW:** *Quiz Duel*  
**THE PRODUCER:** ITV Studios Germany  
**THE DISTRIBUTOR:** ITV Studios Global Entertainment  
**THE BROADCASTER:** Das Erste (Germany)  
**THE CONCEPT:** Interactive quiz-show based on a successful app, in which viewers play against a team in the studio

Launching a big, new entertainment show has become increasingly tough for producers and broadcasters in recent years, meaning any IP with an existing userbase or name recognition gets pushed to the head of the queue. *Quiz Clash* is an interactive social quiz app that was starting to take off in Europe before ITV Studios reworked it as an

interactive TV format, *Quiz Duel*. ITV Studios Germany made a 14-part quiz show, *Quizduell*, for ARD's free-to-air German channel Das Erste.

Mike Beale, ITV Studios' director of international formats, says that ITVSGE is now getting behind the format internationally, having waited to ensure all of the tech

worked flawlessly. "A lot of interactive shows make big claims, but then don't deliver because the tech falls down. With *Quiz Duel* we wanted to get it right and make sure it worked before launching it internationally."

One challenge the producers of the German version encountered was coping with the huge amount of data and traffic that the 400,000 play-along users generated.

The app has players compete head-to-head over six rounds of three questions. The TV show has a team of talented quizzers taking on the rest of the country – i.e. anyone who has downloaded the app and wants to take them on. The answers from the play-at-home users are collated and the most popular becomes their official response. Should they triumph over the team in the studio, ten playalong users are selected at random to share the cash prize fund.

Beale says the prize fund, studio and running-time can be tweaked according to various broadcaster's needs in different territories. "My gut instinct is that in the UK it could go daily and if successful bounce to primetime, or in the US it could be a primetime stripped event."

# LAST WORD



SAMUEL KISSOUS

## Do old saucepans cook the best shows?

France is no stranger to adapting foreign shows of a certain age for Gallic audiences. Over the past 10 years, I've been lucky enough to work on international formats such as *Wife Swap* and *Come Dine with Me* with great success. *CDWM* originally aired on M6 and is now making a comeback on its sister channel W9. Many formats that have enjoyed a very successful first run in France are now being revived on another channel, often competing with their original network.

For instance, UK format *Supernanny* aired on M6 and is now returning on TF1's DTT channel NT1. Gameshows *Deal or No Deal* and *The Weakest Link* were big hits on TF1 and are now revived on Canal+'s D8. All these shows have one thing in common – an efficient format associated with a brand name already established in the territory. These established brands allow smaller channels to benefit from instant name recognition by the viewers, creating quick ratings rewards in the short run, but perhaps creating also a bit of confusion in terms of channel's brand identities.

It was recently announced that *Saturday Night Take Away* would be remade by ITV Studios France for M6. Like in many countries, talent shows are a staple here. Our version of *Strictly Come Dancing* (*Danse avec les Stars*) has just finished its fifth run on TF1 Saturday primetime and *France's Got Talent* (*Incroyable Talent*) is starting its ninth season on M6.

Every channel will say it wants a fresh, new primetime entertainment format, but in reality a proven show regardless of age and where it comes from will always get attention in the marketplace. Format buyers aren't worried that a show was created ten years ago – they are looking for shows that *feel* fresh and exciting.

That's not to say taking hit shows from different countries and re-working them for

French viewers is always straightforward – far from it. One particular hurdle when adapting a format for the French market is that we generally have to make our shows longer. A commercial hour in the UK, for example, lasts around 45 minutes. Primetime shows in France can range from 70-100 minutes due to the way the channel schedules are structured. Take *Danse avec les Stars* – each episode is 100 'real' minutes plus a companion show. It means French producers have to be particularly creative when extending existing shorter formats for French primetime.

There are also some cultural hurdles. Ice-skating has not really arrived here; *Dancing on Ice* is a big hit in some territories, but has not become a staple on French TV. Neither have entrepreneurial business formats celebrating the corporate world: we don't have *The Apprentice* or *Dragons' Den*. However, *Kitchen Nightmares* works because it is mostly a makeover show focusing on smaller companies – turning them around and helping them survive. Making a lot of cash, and discussing it on TV, is not well-accepted culturally in France as elsewhere. Transactional TV hasn't arrived yet either, with the exception of *Cash in the Attic*.

And despite what people think about French cuisine around the world, it did come as a big surprise when cooking formats took off here. When I was a commissioner at M6 in 2004, the biggest shows were music-related. So as cooking formats were becoming very big in the UK, it wasn't obvious that the genre would work here. Food is a very serious matter in France, it wasn't considered entertainment. The consensus was that you could hear music and songs and feel the emotion from home. In contrast, you could not smell or taste the food through the TV screen so it would be impossible to feel any connection with the show.

Historically, broadcasters would only air classic daytime food shows with characters like Maïté, who was known more for the brutal way

she cut meat and her frank manner of speaking than for the food she served up. Once we launched *Come Dine with Me* and a French version of the UK's *Jamie's Kitchen*, *Oui Chef!*, a big trend of food entertainment shows kicked off. Everybody started saying "obviously food shows work in France, it's the country of food!". I guess it also had to do with these very clever formats conveying emotions to the viewers through passionate people and their stories, whether it was docu-soaps or competition formats.

A decade later, a version of *The Great British Bake Off* is a real success in France. At Pernel Media we're making *Great British Menu* for TF1 and most French channels here now have a food-related show. At the same time, France is going through a gastronomic revival, lots of new restaurants are opening and cooking lessons are booming.

In terms of French producers creating original formats for the international market, this has always been a real challenge because French networks have always preferred internationally proven formats, thus giving indies fewer chances to produce and test their own formats.

At Pernel, we've been able to create and produce formats for smaller French channels, but creating a format here remains a challenge, so we've started to build relationships directly with international channels and had some recent successes.

However, the future is looking brighter for French producers. Factual entertainment will remain a big driver in the French market as it can deliver big ratings with smaller budgets. The rise of the DTT channels and Canal+'s acquisition of free-to-air channel D8 has created heated competition between broadcasters, and time slots that used to be filled with foreign acquisitions are now opening up for local shows. International formats are still filling these slots and they are likely to still play a dominant part in the future, but in the longer run there will be more space for French originated formats. **TBI**

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