

TBI Television Business International

FAST forward
Will distributors be the new broadcasters?
Page 18

Sales pitch
What's the talk of the town at London Screenings?
Page 12

3 times the reveals

3 times the talent

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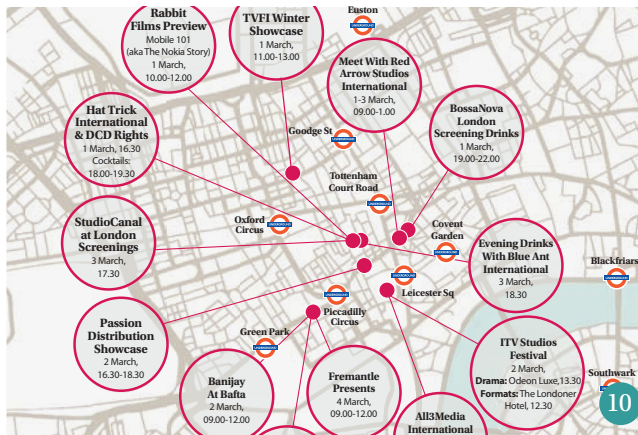
CAUGHT ON DASH CAM S3

10 x 60'

Motoring



Contents TBI February/March 2022



10



22



18



26

10. London Screenings map

Check out where and when everything is happening during London Screenings with our easy to use map

12. Sales Talk

TBI speaks to leading execs from the major distributors involved at London Screenings to find out what they are selling and which of their competitor's shows they're watching

18. New beginnings?

FAST channels are proliferating but what could their growth mean for broadcasters and distributors? Richard Middleton finds out

22. Scripted formats

Demand for local drama is fuelling a surge in scripted formats, but what does it mean for producers around the world?

26. In the zone

David Hasselhoff became a household name in Germany during the 1980s via *Baywatch* and *Knight Rider*. Mark Layton talks to the Hollywood star about returning to the country three decades on

28. Last Word

Banijay's James Townley makes his case for the return of the shiny floor gameshow

Plus: 2 Editor's Note • 6 Diversity • 8 Comment • 9 Tech & Analysis



Editor's note Richard Middleton

Getting ahead

As acronyms go, FAST is rather fitting. This time last year, Free Ad-supported Streaming Television (FAST) channels were on the periphery for many in the content business. Twelve months on, however, and the far-reaching potential of this rapidly emerging medium is beginning to be seen. And the consequences could be huge.

In this edition, we dive into just what FAST means for producers, broadcasters and distributors, exploring the channels launched to date and what's coming next in this rapidly changing part of the business. Find it on page 18.

For distributors especially, FAST seems to offer huge opportunities and it is noted by many as the key trend to watch this year in our Sales Talk feature on page 12, where we hear from an array of leading execs as they prepare for London Screenings and the rest of 2022 and beyond.

This jam-packed edition also contains the definitive map for anyone heading to the UK capital for London Screenings - kudos to TBI art director Matthew Humberstone - and we also have a deep dive on the business of scripted formats, exploring how this fascinating side of the business is growing and what the implications might be as locally produced content becomes ever more important.

On top of all that, we welcome back formats expert Siobhan Crawford and the Creative Diversity Network's Deborah Williams with their monthly columns, while TBI chats to David Hasselhoff about his return to screen in Germany (page 26). Check out Banijay's James Townley's Last Word too, as he explains why shiny floor formats are set to return to our screens in grand fashion.

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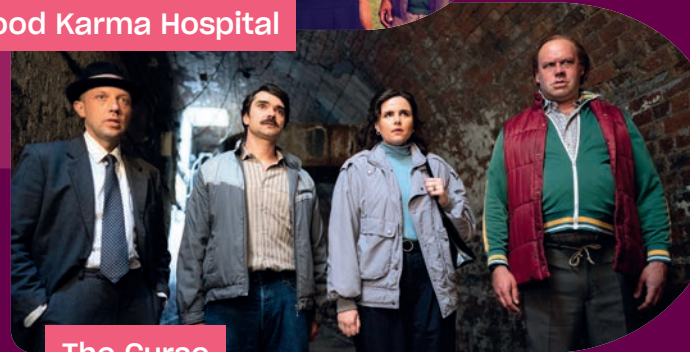
The Good Karma Hospital



Screw



The Curse





Rogue Heroes

Signora Volpe



Then You Run



Grantchester



Peaky Blinders

Storytelling for every audience



Diversity Deborah Williams

Changing of the guard

Deborah Williams questions whether the industry has really set out to tackle inclusivity and representation or is just making token gestures

They say that a year is a long time in politics. Welcome to my world! A year in diversity is like five years in politics. And everything happens at a glacial pace.

So here we are. Five years since *Diamond* – the world’s first online monitoring system for diversity demographics in broadcasting – delivered its first set of data in 2017.

Next month, the Creative Diversity Network is publishing *The Fifth Cut: Diamond @ 5*. It’s a summary of the last five years’ worth of data and conclusions on how effective the recommendations we have made, and the activities that we and our members have carried out, have been.

It’s an opportunity to celebrate the fact that *Diamond* is doing exactly what we said it would do. And that the industry can no longer say that they don’t have enough evidence about diversity. We all now have the data. Perhaps in some ways the industry always knew the facts, but just didn’t want to accept them.

But it’s a challenge to celebrate when the vast majority of people who are applauded for commissioning and producing content, who run production companies and broadcasters, are still from such a narrow range of backgrounds. Not just in their diversity but also the way they think, their understanding and view of the world.

This issue of TBI celebrates the London TV Screenings, with buyers and distributors gathering to view the best of British and international content. I’d like to think that diversity plays a part in these conversations. How does the programming represent the world it’s intended for, not just the faces on screen but the writers, the directors, the crews that are making it and most importantly – who is making the money out of it?

I’d like to think buyers look for content that doesn’t just fit neatly into the space that they’ve already created. In academia, the phrase ‘add women

and stir’ has been around for a while. Too much thinking in our industry is simply about adding black, lesbian or disabled people into a project and stirring, or shoehorning a poor white person into a show in place of a rich white person to increase diversity.

Well, I’m here to tell you that stirring doesn’t always work. It’s like plant-based milk – it changes very little. It just tastes a bit different. And is a bit different good enough?

Is your contribution making real change or making things just a bit different? And if it’s the latter, are you happy with that?

Will ‘a bit different’ maintain the UK’s position in the global marketplace? Will it increase inward investment, or the export of TV content to buyers around the world?

If it won’t, then we need to try something more profound.

We recently saw the passing of Beryl Vertue, a game-changing leader in our industry. She was just one of a number of women celebrated for bursting through the glass ceiling. But are these successes being replicated more widely?

The answer is no and it is because the space isn’t being made for them. Despite all the programmes created and designed and rolled out and championed, there is still a real lack of diversity at senior levels in decision-making positions.

I’d argue that is because proper knowledge, wealth and skills are not being valued. Most initiatives are designed for entry level – for teaching people how television works instead of utilising transferable skills.

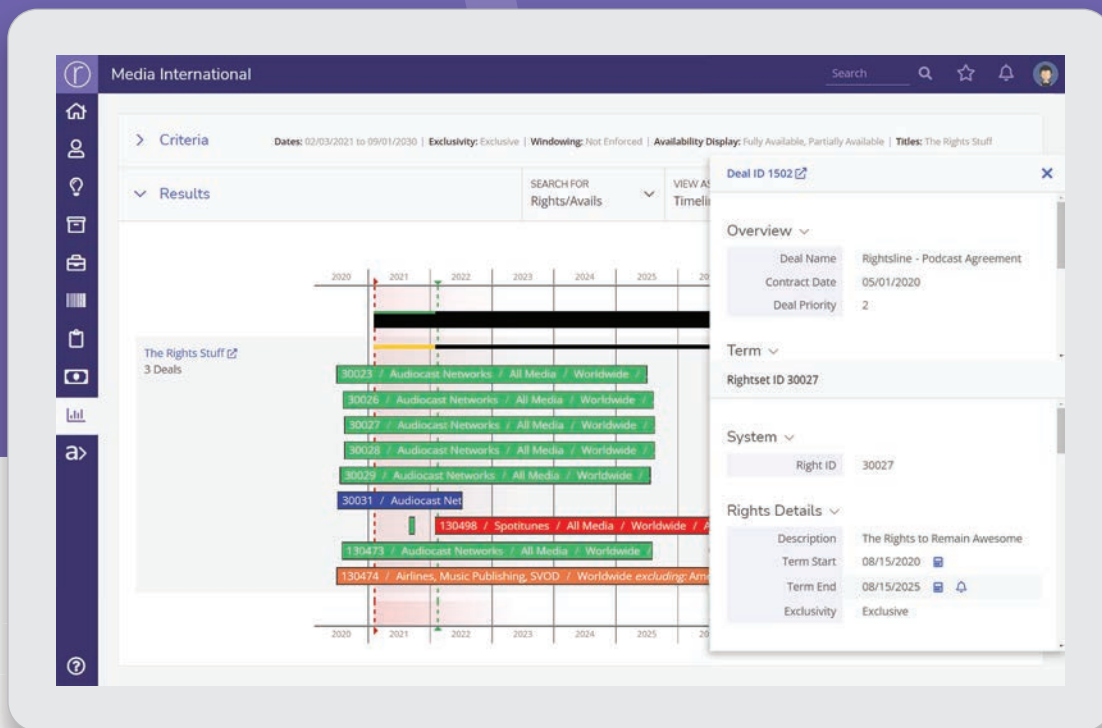
It’s not good enough. We need to think about a real changing of the guard at senior level. If that doesn’t happen, we won’t succeed and our industry will be in danger of being crushed by our own arrogance.

As we celebrate five years of *Diamond* and the evidence and knowledge it provides, I’m saying ‘the ball is in your court. Now you do know, what are you going to do about it?’ **TBI**

Deborah is executive director at the UK’s Creative Diversity Network and has worked in arts, culture and the creative industries for more than three decades

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Opinion Siobhan Crawford

Who cares about your content? Part 3

In the third instalment of her monthly column focused on the global format business, Siobhan Crawford explores producer relationships

Producers. I love them. I choose to work with prodcos over direct-to-broadcaster pitches any day. Why? Because they care – about acquiring the best content, perfecting that local pitch and making sure they get renewals, as it is in their interest too. So, should we stop right now and say these people care the most? Or, perhaps we should highlight some big considerations when choosing producers and explore producer behaviour.

Own content vs third party

This is the crux of the ‘caring argument’ for producers. Will they service your content if they have their own internal content? How will they prioritise it? Will they respect your material or get inspired? Will they end up burning the content in an effort to pitch fast? This is where strategy offers are more important than option offers. We all know that €3-5k options will not change our success rate, but ensuring you select a prodco whose DNA matches the content with some experience in the genre or just a really good strategy, they are your people. But let’s not forget, many of us also rely on returning business with the same partners because of trust. I said when choosing a distributor to remember the experience. It is vital here too and it will tell you if a prodco is acquiring for the right reason or because their central team have told them to pick up a format because it is hot.

Holding on tight to talent

The drive towards talent-led programming has seen a number of prodcos attach a talent management side to their business or retain a roster of exclusive talent. This means sometimes an international format is suited specifically to a talent in a territory and therefore you only have one producer to go to. This is the ‘own content versus third-party debate’ again but with the added factor of talent that is so important to today’s commissioning. So, you place your format with the prodco, you pray they work hard with it and don’t drop it nine months later because they

decide to focus on an internal idea with their talent. Production community – let’s make you aware now, if we recognise your USP then don’t just work with our content until you develop your own (hopefully uninspired), because this will reduce our trust in you. Let’s be frank, the majority of hits don’t come from inside a company. They come from acquisitions. So don’t bite the hand that feeds you.

Commitment issues

Formats can take up to two years to commission in some territories. It is a debate every company has – when to invest in their content. However, no one and I mean no one, can turn a format into a hit without willing and proactive format owners. If you want a hit, you cannot hand someone a format and wait for the cheques. You have to give us your time too, your commitment to continually update material and invest some of those cheques in the future evolution of that format! As a distributor, I do not want to take your content on if I will use my relationships to sell your format and then the client is disappointed because they have a 30-page bible cobbled together for their format fee and a production consultant that is too busy or non-existent.

Put your hands down

One problem I have seen is people being ‘paid’ to care – prodcos requiring incentives to work with content they did not create. We appreciate that you will never love anything as much as your own but the practice of backend shares and free options should end. The UK and the US are particularly bad at this. And let’s look at expectations – the idea that sales may increase after your commission is announced is optimistic. Distributors usually have many pans in the fire before broadcasters finally approve a press release and, Alter Ego, you can kill a format just as quickly. If a format exists and needs to be substantially changed or a spin-off is created, then those hard working, caring folks need rewards. But otherwise, just say no. **TBI**

Siobhan Crawford has worked in the format business for almost two decades at firms including DRG, Zodiak and Banijay. She is currently head of sales & acquisitions at Benelux-based format distributor Primitives

Boundary pushing

Kicking off a regular strand of articles providing analysis of the global content market, TBI hears from Matt Evenson, research analyst at Omdia, about Disney+ and its international strategy

It has been a tumultuous few months for those involved in the business of streaming, but the immediate outlook for one major player has helped to allay fears around the long-term viability of the sector.

Disney's latest quarterly results somewhat calmed the nerves of those on Wall Street, after market leader Netflix forecasted net subscriber additions of just 2.5 million for the first quarter of 2022. Omdia noted that Disney+'s 37% year-over-year growth in 2021 was the highest among some of its streaming rivals.

In Q4 2021 specifically, Disney+ added 11.8 million subscriptions, a much stronger number than the 2.1 million added in Q3 2021. This upturn in subscriber growth wouldn't have been a surprise to Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Chapek, who told the Goldman Sachs Communacopia conference back in September 2021 that Disney's direct-to-consumer business growth is "not linear". While not surprising, it was perhaps reassuring for Chapek to be able to report 4.1 million domestic Disney+ subscription additions in Q4 2021, which account for over 62% of the 6.6 million domestic additions in the 2021 calendar year.

Disney+ Hotstar (available in India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) also saw a return to subscription growth, after a decline in the previous quarter that Omdia attributed to significant subscriber churn in India in particular, with 2.6 million net subscription additions in Q4.

International improvements & Hulu content

It is, however, Disney+'s segment of other international territories that has experienced improving subscription growth through all quarters in 2021, with 5.1 million added in Q4 alone. It is also here that Disney+'s long-term future is beginning to take shape.

This set of results arrive one year since the introduction of the Star brand tile on the Disney+ platform in many international markets. This brand broadly houses more adult-oriented content that doesn't naturally fit within Disney's other core brands (Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar etc). After a slow start for the Star brand, Disney has recently changed the focus of its advertising in international territories to highlight the range of content that consumers may not readily associate with the company.

It has been able to do this because more new high profile Hulu shows are heading to Star on Disney+. Recent Omdia analysis highlighted which services have hosted recent Hulu original shows in key European territories and how this has changed in recent months.

But although more Hulu shows are now heading to Disney+ in



Pam & Tommy launched simultaneously on Hulu and Disney+, indicating moves to a more unified series release pattern

Europe, they aren't necessarily being released at the same time, which can be frustrating for consumers and can limit the show's ability to capture wide audience attention. The first episodes of opioid scandal drama *Dopesick* launched on Disney+ on 12 November, 2021 to coincide with 'Disney+ day', but this was a month after the episodes had begun to air on Hulu in the US.

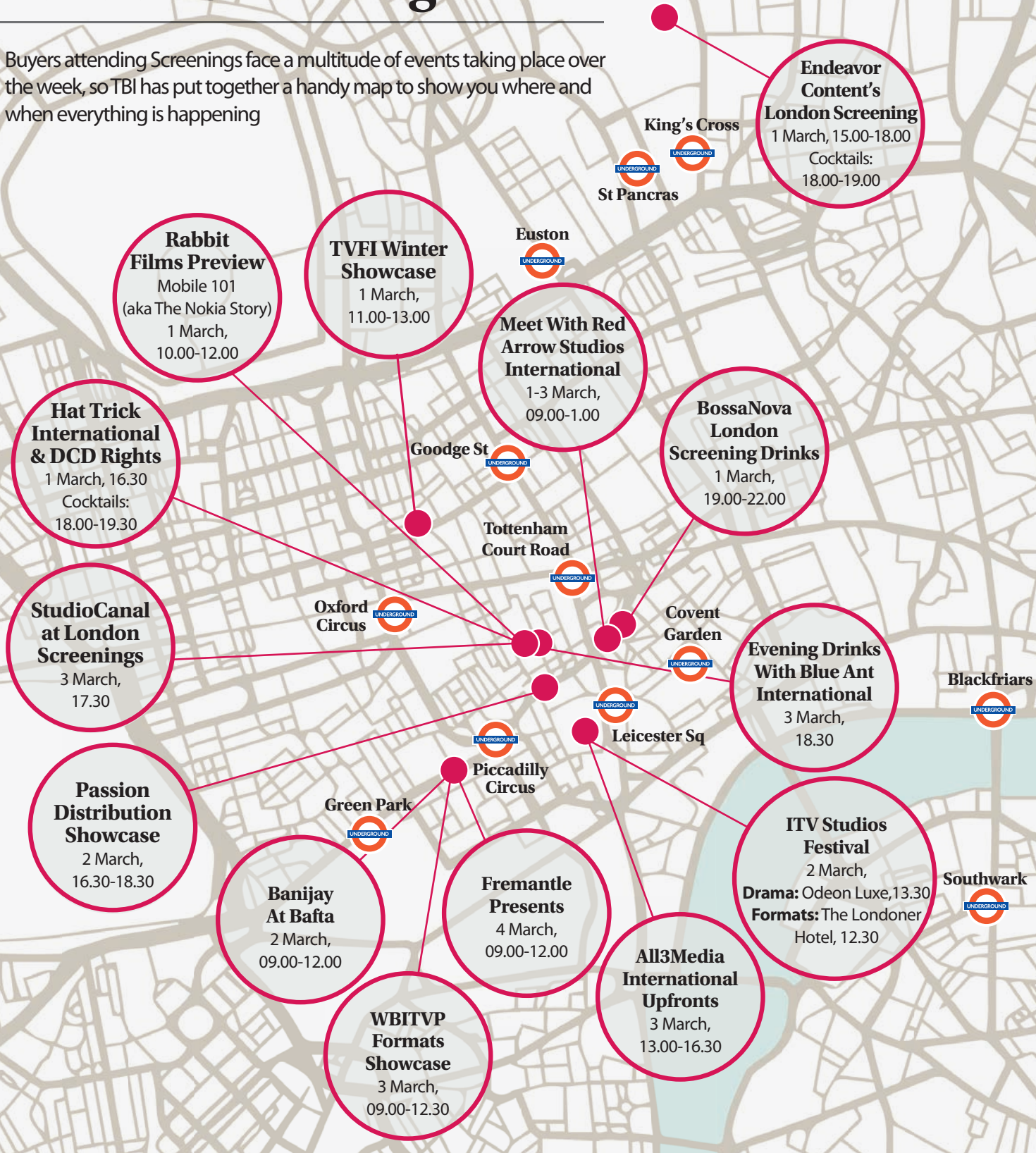
More recently, however, *Pam & Tommy* premiered with the same number of episodes on both Hulu and Disney+ on 2 February, 2022, suggesting that the release patterns of these Hulu/Star shows may soon align with the global release strategy of Disney+'s key franchise content, such as recent Star Wars series *The Book of Boba Fett*.

There is also a new advertising campaign, which comes ahead of Disney+'s expansion into Eastern Europe, the Middle East and parts of Africa in the summer of 2022. Here, its mix of major franchise content and general entertainment will ensure continued international subscriber growth, even as questions surrounding the long-term profitability of streaming continue to be asked. **TBI**

Matt Evenson is an analyst for media & entertainment at research powerhouse Omdia, which is part of TBI owner Informa. He covers the pay-TV and online video markets in Eastern Europe, and researches content strategies for global companies. Evenson previously worked at Broadcast Intelligence and on scripted TV productions in the UK.

London Screenings 2022

Buyers attending Screenings face a multitude of events taking place over the week, so TBI has put together a handy map to show you where and when everything is happening



Endeavor Content's London Screening
 1 March, 15.00-18.00
 Cocktails: 18.00-19.00

Rabbit Films Preview
 Mobile 101 (aka The Nokia Story)
 1 March, 10.00-12.00

TVFI Winter Showcase
 1 March, 11.00-13.00

Meet With Red Arrow Studios International
 1-3 March, 09.00-1.00

BossaNova London Screening Drinks
 1 March, 19.00-22.00

Hat Trick International & DCD Rights
 1 March, 16.30
 Cocktails: 18.00-19.30

StudioCanal at London Screenings
 3 March, 17.30

Evening Drinks With Blue Ant International
 3 March, 18.30

Passion Distribution Showcase
 2 March, 16.30-18.30

Banijay At Bafta
 2 March, 09.00-12.00

Fremantle Presents
 4 March, 09.00-12.00

WBITVP Formats Showcase
 3 March, 09.00-12.30

All3Media International Upfronts
 3 March, 13.00-16.30

ITV Studios Festival
 2 March, 13.30
Drama: Odeon Luxe, 13.30
Formats: The Londoner Hotel, 12.30

Day by day

BBC Studios Showcase

28 February – 2 March
Virtual only
Genre(s): Scripted, formats, factual
Invite only? Yes

eOne Preview 2022

Virtual only
Genre(s): Scripted, factual, entertainment
Invite only? Yes

Meet With Red Arrow Studios International

1 – 3 March, 09.00 – 18.00
The Covent Garden Hotel, 10 Monmouth Street, WC2H 9HB
Genre(s): Scripted, formats, factual entertainment
Invite only? Yes

Rabbit Films Preview *Mobile 101* (aka *The Nokia Story*)

1 March, 10.00 – 12.00
The Soho Hotel 4 Richmond Mews, W1D 3DH
Genre(s): Drama
Invite only? Yes

TVFI Winter Showcase

1 March, 11.00 – 13.00
NOHO Studios, 46 Great Titchfield St., W1W 7QA
Genre(s): Factual, factual entertainment
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Yes

Endeavor Content's London Screening

Screening: 1 March, 15.00 – 18.00, Cocktails: 18.00 – 19.00
Everyman Cinema Kings Cross, 14-18 Handyside St, N1C 4DN
Genre(s): Scripted, non-scripted
Invite only?: Yes

Hat Trick International & DCD Rights

1 March, 16.30, Cocktails: 18.00 – 19.30
The Soho Hotel 4 Richmond Mews, W1D 3DH
Genre(s): Factual, formats, drama, comedy
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Yes (available after the event)

BossaNova London Screenings Drinks

1 March, 19.00 – 22.00
The Ivy Club (The Loft), 9 West St., WC2H 9NE
Genre(s): Factual, factual entertainment
Invite only? Yes (email office@bossanovamedia.com)

Banijay At Bafta

2 March, 09.00 – 12.00
Bafta, 195 Piccadilly, W1J 9LN
Genre(s): Scripted, non-scripted, formats
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Yes www.banijayrights.com

ITV Studios Festival

2 March (Drama & Formats)
Drama: 13.30, Odeon Luxe Leicester Square
Formats: 12.30pm, The Londoner Hotel
Genre(s): Drama, formats & non-scripted
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Non-scripted session to be held virtually on 9 March

Passion Distribution Showcase

2 March, 16.30 – 18.30
The Century Club, 61-63 Shaftesbury Ave., W1D 6LQ
Genre(s): Factual, factual entertainment, formats
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? No

WBITVP Formats Showcase

3 March, 09.00 – 12.30
Bafta, 195 Piccadilly, W1J 9LN
Genre: Formats
Invite only? Yes

All3Media International Upfronts

3 March, 13.00 – 16.30
Odeon Luxe Leicester Square, 24-26 Leicester Square, WC2H 7JY
Genre(s): Scripted, formats
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Virtual event will take place week of 7 March

Evening Drinks With Blue Ant International

3 March, 18.30
Soho House (Top Floor), 76 Dean Street, W1D 3SQ
Genre(s): Factual entertainment, specialist factual, documentary, kids & family, scripted
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? No

StudioCanal at London Screenings

3 March, 17.30
The Soho Hotel 4 Richmond Mews, W1D 3DH
Genre(s): TBC
Invite only?: Yes
Virtual element?: Hybrid

Fremantle Presents

4 March, 09.00 – 12.00
BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, W1J 9LN
Genre(s): Drama, documentaries, entertainment formats
Invite only? Yes
Virtual element? Yes

*Please check with organisers as some events may be strictly invitation only

Sales talk

As London Screenings and other events get 2022 into full swing, TBI checks in with execs from distributors of all sizes to explore their slates, the hottest upcoming trends and which of their competitors' shows they're watching



Louise McNab, director of content sales, BBC Studios



What's your standout show for Showcase and why?

We've got something for everyone across all the genres at BBC Studios Showcase, including: *Happy Valley S3*, *Frozen Planet S2*, *Dynasties S2*, *Chivalry* (above), *Louis Theroux's Forbidden America*, *Dino Pompeii*, *Bluey*, and *Spectacular Earth*.

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

The Crown, season 5.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

There will be an even more diverse mixture of top performing content. We will see new voices, new ideas, new technologies, new services – all driving the creatives to take risks they may have never

considered before to set new standards in must-watch content.

Three words to describe the global distribution industry right now are... Exciting. Energetic. Expensive.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

UK, of course! British creativity is the best it has ever been. Titles in development and in train will mark a pivotal moment in the UK content market for years to come. That will be either in original form or reversioning of incredible British content, (see *Ghosts*, *Luther*, *Doctor Foster*).

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do?

I would take some even bigger bets. The demand for quality has exploded and the appetite for something different is stronger than ever before. Happily, looking at our pipeline, we are well positioned for the future.



Stephen Driscoll, EVP of EMEA, All3Media International

What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

The Marriage, which showcases the talent of two major stars – Sean Bean, having established his reputation across Europe and the US for some years, and Nicola Walker, well established in the UK, is fast-building reputation globally as a versatile and thoroughly engaging talent.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

Increased competition for the best productions will continue around the world as the battle for audience/subscribers continues apace.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

South Korea – *Squid Game* was just one milestone in a very long line of creativity. Also, Italy – more movie crossover talent moving to TV. For example, Indigo's new show *Gymnasts* will be a must buy in the young adult space.

Paul Heaney, CEO, BossaNova

What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

The Ripper Speaks is a world exclusive – a chilling interview with the Yorkshire Ripper himself, unaware he was being recorded.



What show are you most looking forward to in 2022 (not including your own)?

I'm looking forward to watching *The Tinder Swindler* and shouting at the TV in frustration, not about the creative execution – possibly more about the protagonists.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

I have to say the UK as a sector is truly humming with activity right now so I expect that will bear fruit – content pipeline-wise – later this year.



Sarah Tong, director of sales, Hat Trick International

What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

DI Ray is a compelling crime drama for ITV, written and created by Maya Sondhi. Fresh, relevant and thought provoking, *DI Rachita Ray* is a police officer who takes on a case that forces her to confront a lifelong personal conflict between her British identity and her South Asian heritage.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?
VOD – whether it's AVOD, SVOD, FVOD or any other kind of VOD. This area continues to grow and dominate.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

We're all used to subtitles and a bigger variety of accents from the English-speaking world, so it could come from anywhere.

Cathy Payne, CEO, Banijay Rights



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

In terms of new scripted fare, we have *Rogue Heroes*, *Then You Run* and *Marie Antoinette*, while on the formats side we have new primetime titles *Limitless Win* and *Starstruck* (bottom).

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

I'd have to say *The Crown* on Netflix – a return that will be made more poignant in this special Platinum Jubilee year, plus special mentions go to *My Brilliant Friend* and the new season of *Billions*.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

The ongoing competition for eyeballs between the global OTT offerings versus the linear broadcasters and their bespoke VOD domestic services. But watch out for the rise of FAST channels on VOD platforms.

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do?

I would ensure I had the best rights management and content operations systems in place to support the evolving market – I am glad we did and still have those.



Jonathan Tuovinen, head of international, Rabbit Films



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Mobile 101, a drama series about the phenomenal rise of phone manufacturer Nokia.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

I think we'll continue to see an influx from South Korea. Both in terms of scripted drama tape as well as formats.

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do?

Set up my home office properly with an ergonomic chair, a big screen and a Zoom Pro account. Oh, and invest in Netflix stock!

TVF International, Lindsey Ayotte (director), Will Stapley (head of acquisitions) & Jules Chou-Lambert (acquisitions manager & Asia lead)



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Ayotte & Stapley: *Carbon: The Unauthorised Biography* from Genepool Productions and Handful of Films.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

Ayotte & Stapley: Interest in FAST rights and increased flexibility around VOD rights in general, especially with big streamers looking to do more co-productions and not retaining all rights in perpetuity!

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

Ayotte, Stapley & Chou-Lambert: Asia is one of the most exciting places for factual production. For reality programming, Australia and New Zealand are making inroads while America's grip on reality programming has come and gone.

Solange Attwood, EVP, Blue Ant International



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Our standouts include the third season of scripted live-action hit *Detention Adventure*, documentaries such as *Prince*

Charles' Green Grand Design and *The Ocean's Greatest Feast* and a new season of long running franchise *See No Evil*.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

Distribution partners that are deeply connected with global relationships and are at the forefront of discussions with all buyers should be able to define and execute strategic windowing strategies that maximise returns for owners of IP.

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do?

I'd have invested in more stories about unique people in unique worlds (we all still remember *Tiger King!*), comedy, travel documentaries, and just generally bought 10 times more from our great content partners!

Prentiss Fraser, EVP of TV distribution, Endeavor Content



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

I'm really excited for *Conversations With Friends* to come out as the casting is amazing and Element Pictures and Lenny Abrahamson have created another stellar piece of work from Sally Rooney's novel.

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

My fingers are crossed for another season of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

Premium content moving into the AVOD space as a first window opportunity is definitely a space to watch this year.

Three words to describe the global distribution industry right now are... Exciting, Evolving, Entrepreneurial.

Jens Richter, CEO of international, Fremantle



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

BBC One miniseries *Crossfire*, starring Keeley Hawes, which we hope will have a real impact in the global market.

Three words to describe the global distribution industry right now are... Competitive. Agile. Innovative.

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do?

Invest in digital first, given the speed at which the market has changed and continues to change from linear, to digital, to streaming 24/7 and most recently the growth of FAST channels.

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4-6 April 2022

Palais des festivals, Cannes

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**Emmanuelle Namiech,
CEO, Passion Distribution**

What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Killing In Paradise (below) is the gripping 'live' story of Jasmine Hartin – a prominent businesswoman accused of killing a high-ranking police officer in Belize last year.



What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

I can't wait for the next season of *The Marvelous Mrs Maisel* – that's my Friday evenings sorted for the next few weeks.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

The UK production community continues to offer a phenomenal supply of excellent programming and I have no doubt it will continue to flourish, despite increasing pressures on budgets.

**Ruth Berry, managing director,
global distribution, ITV
Studios**



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Litvinenko - not only is it a fascinating story of our time and current geo-political situation, it's incredibly told, powerfully acted and a truly fitting testament to the man himself.

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

This is Going to Hurt - I loved the book and its honesty, and I'm a Ben Whishaw fan.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

Streaming competition - especially on a local level as traditional domestic broadcasters further innovate into streaming services with their content, and global streamers focus on local acquisitions and production, be that in SVOD or AVOD.

Rewind to this time in 2018. You have the same knowledge as you do now - what would be the first thing you'd do? Build an office at home! And pivot content faster towards streaming platforms both locally and globally.



**Beatriz Campos, SVP global
sales & production financing,
Studiocanal**

What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

Infiniti, a very international production produced by Empreinte Digital for Canal+.

It's a visually striking thriller blending crime and sci-fi, with a thought-provoking plot.

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

I am looking forward to seeing the TV adaptation of Sally Rooney's novel *Conversations With Friends* after the success of *Normal People*.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

The power of multi-windowing, with the increase of digital platforms which need different sets of rights, along with a very competitive landscape, is allowing local markets to have content that co-exists across both linear and non-linear windows.

Which country's programming will boom this year & why?

From our European point of view, there are very good productions coming from Belgium.

**Rick Barker,
head of sales, DCD Rights**



What's your standout show for London Screenings and why?

We have a wonderful and varied selection of programming being showcased ranging from the return of popular dramas *My Life Is Murder* and *The Secrets She Keeps* to new factual series such as *Travelling Auctioneers* featuring Will Kirk, but for me personally, the love, loss and complexity of family relationships in *Love Me* is worthy of the accolade.

What show are you most looking forward to in 2022?

Being a golf and cricket fan, it could only be *This Could Go Anywhere* in which the first series followed former cricketers Phil Tufnell and Brendon McCullum, playing golf, sharing some great stories, eating and drinking the finest food and wine around New Zealand.

What single distribution trend will define the next 12 months?

The continual rise of FAST channels, which are starting to enter the media lexicon across the globe and will start to dominate the future television landscape. **TBI**



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New beginnings?

FAST channels allow rights holders to effectively become broadcasters in their own right. Richard Middleton explores just how deep the effects of this emerging tech might be felt

No one seems quite sure just when FAST channels first emerged, but their proliferation over the past year or two has been rapid.

First things first, though: the idea behind Free Ad-supported Streaming Television (FAST) is hardly new. In many ways, it's just a modern reincarnation of the lean back pre-streaming culture that existed when everyone simply flicked the TV on and picked a curated channel.

The difference with FAST, of course, is the tech being used and the route that the content is taking to get in front of audiences. Instead of having a broadcaster commissioning and acquiring shows, scheduling them and then sending them over the

Mas Antonio will be among an array of dramas scheduled on ITV Studios' new Storylands FAST channel in Europe

airwaves to viewers, FAST channels come direct from the rights holder. Distributors are becoming broadcasters and that, coupled with the relative ease of launching your own FAST channel, could change everything.

Going direct

Earlier this year, several of the major distributors decided to up their FAST game. ITV Studios (ITVS) revealed it was launching two channels in Europe with Samsung TV Plus, including one that the global distribution giant said will become the "home for the best European drama" produced by its own labels.

Storylands will be stocked with shows such

as *Masontonio*, from *Suburra* prodco Cattleya, Norwegian legal series *Aber Bergen*, and period drama *Un Village Français*.

ITVS is also launching another FAST channel dedicated to US cooking competition *Hell's Kitchen*. Both will initially launch in the UK before being rolled out to wider European markets, including Germany and Italy.

Ruth Berry, MD at ITVS Global Distribution, says FAST and AVOD is “a key strategic focus” for her company, allowing it to put more of its 90,000+ hours of content into a window.

“We have a really strong, broad and deep catalogue of drama content which is largely sold into most markets across different mediums,” she tells TBI. “Launching a FAST channel is another part of the complex ecosystem we operate in and enables us to find another window to reach viewers in. The shows in Storylands are driven by editorial fit, audience appeal and rights availability.”

Major distributors such as All3Media International and Banijay Rights are also expanding their activity. It's easy to see why: Banijay, for example, saw its three FAST channels in the US - Deal Or No Deal, Wipeout Xtra and Reel Truth Crime - double their hours of viewing (HOV) last year compared to 2020. And it's not insignificant numbers here - the three US channels snagged around 50 million hours of viewing across 2021.

The rate of growth suggest meaningful returns will soon be on offer and probably explain why many others are expanding their repertoire in the space. All3 already had experience of FAST with its channel focused on *The Only Way Is Essex*, plus reality-based US channel *So...Real*. It has more recently launched a *Midsomer Murders* service in North America, marking its first channel to be operated and directly distributed by the company, rather than a third party.

“We could see that single brand channels are very much in vogue in the FAST space,” says Gary Woolf, EVP of strategic development for All3Media International, in describing the rationale behind the channel's launch earlier this year.

The key to success, he tells TBI, is having a recognisable brand and volume of episodes. “The beauty of *Midsomer Murders* – still hugely popular globally with a stand-alone story structure - aside from having a well-established fanbase that find the show across so many opportunities to view, is the ability to watch the episodes in any order.

“So for casual viewers in the FAST space, it's possible to turn on, sit back and relax, without worrying about whether you've seen the previous

“Is 2022 the year of FAST? I think we might be seeing that”

Shaun Keeble,
Banijay



McLeod's Daughters is now available in the UK via Banijay's FAST channel on Samsung TV Plus

episode, or whether you've got time to watch the following episode.”

Brand building

For companies such as All3, Banijay and ITVS, tapping into their giant content libraries makes sense, but there is potential here for others too. Producers such as US-based Electric Entertainment have gone direct, with its own FAST channel allowing the company to “expose new viewers” to its output such as *Leverage*, *Almost Paradise* and *The Outpost* via Samsung TV Plus.

Germany's Quintus Studios has also recently launched its Radical Docs FAST Channel via Rakuten TV, with the factual distributor stocking the service with shows that explore stories on power and the world's banking systems, food globalisation and the world's most brutal penal institutions.

“We realised that what's popular in the VOD space is not much different to what is working on linear or AVOD,” Gerrit Kemming, MD at Quintus, tells TBI. The company already has numerous YouTube channels and the aim for Radical Docs is to allow “your average American to sit on a sofa in a safe environment and watch through a peep hole, exploring how people can live in a certain sort of way or in such an environment.”

ITVS's approach with Storylands is similar, in so much as it offers different shows, although the company's *Hell's Kitchen*-focused offer reflects Woolf's comments about the popularity of single brand channels. Banijay has also gone down this route, using the in-built marketing appeal of brands such as *Deal*





Or No Deal, *Wipeout Xtra* and *Reel Truth Crime* to fuel its US channels.

The company has also launched a *Deal Or No Deal* channel in the UK, along with a *McLeod's Daughters* service, available via Samsung TV Plus, and a similar approach has been taken by All3 for its *Midsomer Murders* offer. It provides “a social media fan base and a raft of marketing support that can really benefit a FAST channel in standing out,” Woolf says.

But just what are these new channels looking to stand out from? If the competition is other FAST channels, then it is easy to assume that incumbent linear broadcasters that hold rights to the shows now appearing on FAST will pay little attention. But will that change if FAST growth continues and the appeal of the medium becomes more widespread?

‘Clear blue water’

On this point, Woolf is clear that a differentiated approach is currently in play. “*Midsomer Murders* has always been in demand across a range of partners, so windowing and a degree of exclusivity is important in managing this. There is clear blue water between how up to date our FAST channel will go compared to a premium SVOD window partner; there are places we wouldn’t put our FAST channel to avoid cannibalising other opportunities.”

He adds that there is a “joined-up approach” to content licensing, something Berry agrees with. “FAST channels are a digital linear offering much like ‘old linear tv,’” she says. “They are designed to fit alongside the rights we are licensing to others.”

Shaun Keeble, VP of digital at Banijay Rights, agrees and tells TBI that the “non-exclusive basis” of FAST channels means they can fit into the current

Midsomer Murders’ existing fan base is one attribute that should help the new FAST channel stand out

ecosystem, simply providing another window for viewer and distributor alike.

“We see FAST as an incremental opportunity outside of linear sales and it’s also worth noting that when we look at FAST channels it’s normally on a back catalogue perspective,” he says. “On FAST we need volume and IP, and the commercial models currently don’t warrant premiere runs, so it’s about second or third window opportunities.”

Models, money & future

Just how much money is currently being made via FAST is unclear, but most of it comes from sharing ad revenue or inventory. It’s also worth noting that FAST remains somewhat in its infancy outside of the US.

Kemming describes the Stateside market as “way more developed than Europe” and adds that “on a per title basis” revenue can be comparable to what can a licence deal might generate. “There isn’t huge money to be made just yet, but there may well be.”

Clearly, the market is developing quickly. Woolf points to “a range of things happening in the FAST space”, including the platforms becoming “increasingly alert” to ‘content redundancy’, essentially shows appearing on multiple networks.

“Platforms are really keen to ensure that as you scroll down their EPG, you aren’t just seeing the same shows over and over again through a series of non-exclusive licenses,” Woolf says. “We’re also seeing platforms launching their own channels rather than simply carrying third party channels – the model is evolving, and as part of that there will almost certainly be a need for some exclusivity or windowing content between services.”

And the market is growing too. Berry says ITVS is “certainly” planning more channels, while Keeble at Banijay is similarly effusive in the growth potential. Woolf says he is looking at single brands and “concept-based channels” while Kemming is also planning to grow his FAST repertoire. The key though, according to the Quintus boss, will be whether one or more of the channel providers – be it a Samsung TV or a Rakuten or a Roku – is able to “get the awareness” with viewers, as opposed to existing channel brands.

If they can, then it seems the incumbents may well have something to be wary of. “Broadcasters will suddenly see competition coming from a direction that they haven’t had any competition from before and probably couldn’t even see,” adds Kemming. And it could be coming sooner than expected. “Is 2022 the year of FAST?” asks Banijay’s Keeble. “I think we might be seeing that.” **TBI**



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HELD MOSTLY OUTDOORS

Better, stronger, faster

Scripted formats are travelling further than ever before, particularly female-led and family-focused dramas. Mark Layton finds out what's behind this growing demand and where it's all leading

For those in the scripted format business, the past few years have been rather exciting. In what is now a familiar story, the global pandemic and subsequent global streaming boom have accelerated trends that were already steadily maturing.

With homebound audiences desperate for fresh drama and escapism, and new, globally expanding platforms opening untapped avenues of distribution, scripted formats were well placed to meet the increased demand for content.

Oven-ready scripts and bibles meant that local adaptations of tried, tested and recognisable shows were ready to hit the ground running, skipping a few years of development time to quickly plug the gaps for content-hungry streamers and broadcasters alike.

But even with this pandemic-prompted proliferation, quality scripted formats were already becoming an increasingly sought-after commodity.

Rising to meet a changing market

"There was definitely more demand for it, regardless of the pandemic, so we have seen a huge spike," reveals Ana Langenberg, SVP of format sales and production at NBCUniversal Formats, which recently announced both a MENA adaptation of US legal drama *Suits* and a Spanish version of NBC comedy *Superstore*, titled *Supertitlan*. The US firm has also launched a new unit dedicated to selling Wolf Entertainment formats such as *Law & Order*.

"We've produced shows in the past like *House* in Russia and *Suits* in Korea and Japan, but it was always like one or two deals a year. In the last couple of years – we haven't announced everything yet – but there is a hell of a lot."

Now that much of the world is opening up again, it's not viewers stuck indoors acting as the driving factor, but the already much-discussed increasing demand for localised content – as well as brand recognition, of course.



"The streamers have been changing the marketplace and that means demand for locally produced content, as we all know," says Langenberg. "I think that has made streamers think about local scripted, as well as the FTA channels, which need to compete with streamers and who have thought they also need to do more in that space."

"We haven't seen a decline since things have opened up, if anything we've seen an increase," agrees Andre Renaud, SVP of global format sales at the UK-based BBC Studios. "A really good example of that is in Turkey, where we have just had the first international version of *Happy Valley*. *Doctor Foster* is also in Turkey, as is *The Split* – we've seen a huge growth of storytelling coming from format adaptations."

Renaud adds that the *Doctor Foster* format has also seen massive success in South Korea, with a domino effect leading to further adaptations in Asia, such as in the Philippines.



Local shows for local people

Israel is something of a powerhouse when it comes to producing scripted dramas that either travel widely or are remade for international audiences, with hit shows such as *Euphoria*, *Homeland* and *Your Honor* all based on domestic formats.

Karni Ziv, head of drama for Keshet Broadcasting, has personally commissioned a slew of series that have been remade internationally, including *Yellow Peppers* (which went global as *The A Word*), *The Baker And The Beauty* and *False Flag*, which will soon launch its third season, while its first international remake recently debuted on Apple TV+ as *Suspicion*.

Ziv highlights the clear interest in both remakes and original versions of a series travelling, as they each offer something different to the viewer. “When you show an Israeli show, like ours or *Fauda* or *Shtisel*, the audience has the opportunity to peek into Israeli life and culture.

The UK’s *Happy Valley* (above left) recently received its first international adaptation as *Son Nefesime Kadar* (above right) in Turkey, while Israel’s *Yellow Peppers* (right) has sold globally as *The A Word*

“The other effect is to take a very good story, that was very Israeli, embedded in our culture and personalities, and you find the universal heartbeat. Then you embed them in something that is very close to the audience that will see it overseas – and then it becomes their story.”

Langenberg agrees that while original versions will always remain popular, demand for localisation is booming: “To see those stories adapted to those cultures, those cultural values – I think that’s what audiences want. There’s always going to be a place for originals from the US or the UK or wherever they may be from, but what audiences really want to see is localised stories.”

One only has to look at the upcoming South Korean remake of the international mega-hit *Money Heist* (aka *La Casa De Papel*) to see how appealing local adaptations can be, even when the original series is already incredibly popular.

A second chance to shine

International remakes also give new producers the chance not just to localise, but also improve upon the originating show. “As the head of drama, I will always see where we could have done better – they can watch the full series, they can look at things to do better. They have the opportunity to make an even better story than we did,” says Ziv.

But does that create the risk that a popular remake of a scripted format could go on to sell more successfully than the original, and impact upon those sales?

“A good example of that would be the title *Woman – My Life for My Children–*,” says Sayako Aoki, sales & licensing manager, international business development at Nippon TV in Japan. “The Turkish version has been sold to almost 50 countries as a finished tape,” she explains, but there is little concern that those sales might have affected the Japanese show’s sales because “the peak” of the original programme’s distribution had been “more than five years prior to the format deal with Turkey.”

However, Aoki adds that this is something that Nippon is bearing in mind. “In future deals, there would be more cases where we would have to find a balance or priority in our sales strategy, especially in those involving global platforms.”

This goes the same for a company selling a format into a territory where finished tape of its own original series might show. Langenberg comments: “We work very closely with both our global distribution teams and our local distribution teams to make sure that we’re not getting in the way of sales of the original.

“Whenever there is interest in a format in a territory, the first thing that we do is contact the finished programme distribution teams and say, ‘how is it going with that title, have you sold it, who did you sell it

“There is always going to be a place for originals, but what audiences really want to see is localised stories”

Ana Langenberg,
NBCUniversal Formats



Call My Agent: Bollywood is an Indian remake of a French format, offering a chance to retell a familiar story in “a completely different way”

to?’ You want to give the broadcaster that bought the original the chance to be the first one to commission a local version, because it makes sense to keep it in the same platform, so they can window it themselves.”

Focus on female-led drama

Ask a hundred execs what makes a great scripted format with the legs to travel internationally and the odds are a hundred of them would suggest some variation on strong writing, a relatable plot and globally relevant themes. However, Renaud suggests that there are some shows in greater demand than others – particularly those with strong female leads.

“The trends and themes we’ve seen that resonate with people when they look at a scripted format boil down to strong, bold characters, particularly strong women. You can see that in *Doctor Foster*, you can see that in *Happy Valley*, you can see that in *The Split*.”

Sarah Wills, senior content development manager at Banijay, meanwhile, highlights *Penzoza*, another series that happens to have a strong female lead at its heart, as a format that has travelled well for the company.

“*Penzoza* is very much a live, active format from Endemol Shine Netherlands’ NL Film, that’s been on in Sweden and it’s just been on air for a second season in India,” Wills says. The Indian adaptation, *Aarya*, was nominated for an International Emmy last year and has previously been remade in the US as *Red Widow*.

Banijay’s global network of producers reflects how the group model works well with scripted formats. “Another example is our Mexican production company, Endemol Shine Boomdog, redeveloping an Australian format, *A Beautiful Lie* (originally produced by Endemol Shine Australia), and that’s based on the book, *Anna Karenina*,” adds Willis.

One of Banijay’s most widely travelled scripted formats is Scandi-noir crime series *The Bridge*, which has been remade in five countries and, once again, has a strong female character at the heart of the show.

Lars Blomgren, the company’s head of scripted, comments: “It’s interesting with *The Bridge*, because that’s between two territories, that kind of came out of necessity back in the day. If you had two broadcasters attached then at least you’d get funding,” he says of the show’s co-production model. “But nowadays that’s kind of out of fashion, it’s more the really local, superlocal stories,” he points out, echoing Ziv and Langenberg’s points.

“Lots of older formats are being remade in India now and that’s a big opportunity to tell stories in a completely different way,” adds Blomgren, pointing to *Call My Agent: Bollywood*, Banijay Asia’s remake of the French series, which debuted on Netflix last year.



Aoki, meanwhile, says that *Mother* is Nippon's most exported scripted format out of Asia. "It has been licensed to eight countries so far with the expectation of a few more versions to follow in 2022."

"*Mother* is an emotional story featuring universal themes of family and motherhood, but the story evolves with other intriguing elements such as mystery and crime. This powerful combination helps increase viewer engagement and makes it travel across regions."

Mother has travelled to eight countries so far, with further deals expected later this year

show's authentic portrayal of a young widow and her determination to provide for her children. This is a heart gripping story about a mother's unconditional love for her children and it was bound to resonate."

This season, Fox is airing a remake of another BBC Studios format, *The Split*, titled locally as *All About Marriage*. The show has got off to "a great start" and is already "generating interest in other markets," says Belbuken, explaining that the remake "dives deeper



Getting a head start

Fox in Turkey has also expanded its scripted format commissions. Yadigar Belbuken, VP & head of channels, says that local adaptations have been among top performers for the broadcaster in recent years.

He sees the "key advantage" of a remake as being "the ability to plan the show, knowing where the story will take you in season two and beyond. This gives you a head start on creative planning and a chance to avoid overage costs."

Belbuken reveals that Fox has been experimenting with remakes from the US, the UK and Asia in an effort to broaden its content offering, with its latest adaptation, *Hidden Truth*, which is based on the South Korean show *The Innocent Defender*, "quickly becoming" one of its highest rated scripted shows.

Fox was also behind the aforementioned remake of Nippon TV's *Woman – My Life for My Children*– and struck a deal with BBC Studios for *Happy Valley*, with the local version to be known as *Son Nefesime Kadar*.

"We tend to look for multi-faceted shows which appeal to wide-ranging audiences," says Belbuken of their remake strategy. "The one main theme our audiences always respond to is family. A nuanced, emotional family drama will draw in loyal audiences. This is why we recently partnered on *Happy Valley*."

Of Fox's 2017 version of *Woman – My Life for My Children*–, Belbuken adds: "We were struck by the

into the family drama element," than the original, a strategy that seems to be paying off in ratings for the broadcaster.

Comedy & consensus

While the shows highlighted here point to scripted formats with strong female characters and relatable family drama as leading the charge, there are signs of new genres gaining attention.

Renaud suggests that scripted comedy is about to come to the fore, noting the accepted position that "comedy doesn't translate" is no longer holding, while citing a noticeable rising demand and recent deals such as for *The Office* in Poland and *Uncle* in South Korea.

As for the wider future, the consensus here is that scripted format demand will only grow as platforms and audiences become more comfortable with them, and the ongoing hunger for content ensures that this trend will have negligible impact upon the number of truly new productions making their way to screens.

As Langenberg puts it: "There is so much demand for content right now, I doubt very much that it is one or the other that can thrive. There is always going to be demand for new original ideas and there is a place for formats as well."

If the past few years have been exciting for those in scripted formats, it seems as though the next few are poised to be just as exhilarating. **TBI**

Into the zone

With RTL+ comedy-thriller *Ze Network* launching later this year, Mark Layton talks to Hollywood icon David Hasselhoff and Syrreal's Christian Alvar and Sigi Kamml about what to expect from this genre-bending series



The line between fact and fiction will grow a little blurry later this year, as David Hasselhoff-led dark comedy thriller *Ze Network* lands on German SVOD platform RTL+ in the fall.

The Hollywood star of hit shows such as *Knight Rider* and *Baywatch* - both hugely popular in

Ze Network is the first series to result from Syrreal and CBS Studios' first-look deal and will make its debut on RTL+ later this year

Germany - is attached to play a version of himself, which, while fictional, plays around with what is and isn't known about the actor and where he is right now in his career and his life.

The show tracks Hasselhoff as he sets off in pursuit of career redemption with a new lead role in a theater play in Germany. It is there that he meets Henry

Hübchen, the German actor best known for his award-winning performance in *Go For Zucker*, also playing himself, who is to star as the second lead in the play.

However, when the alleged large theater turns out to be a rather modest venue in the very east of Berlin, and the role plunges him into the center of an international conspiracy of former cold war assassins, Hasselhoff fears he is losing his mind as the very fabric of reality seems to break down around him.

Hasselhoff, who also serves as executive producer on the series, describes *Ze Network* as “offbeat” and “left field”, likening it to the tone of the Quentin Tarantino film *Inglourious Basterds* and telling TBI: “You almost feel guilty about laughing at a scene when a woman explodes in David Hasselhoff’s arms – it’s funny, though the fact that it happened is not.

“You’ll enjoy watching this show, because you’ll enjoy watching us tell you it’s funny when it’s not supposed to be.”

Striking a tone

The eight-part genre-bending series hails from showrunner, creator and director Christian Alvar and producer Sigi Kamml’s Berlin-based firm Syrreal Entertainment, which is behind the Netflix shows *Sloborn* and *Dogs Of Berlin*, and US-based CBS Studios.

It is the first project from their first-look agreement and ViacomCBS Global Distribution Group is handling sales outside of German speaking territories. It is also another statement of intent for RTL+, which has been rapidly expanding its original output.

Syrreal founder and co-CEO Alvar reveals that while *Ze Network* marks the first collaboration with CBS Studios, it is not specifically representative of what their partner is looking for. Rather, they are wide open to shows that can travel globally.

“The next show we’re doing is a very serious and very dark crime show that they bought. There’s not a single funny thing in it, they’re very open-minded as long as they think the central conflict and the central characters resonate with audiences.”

Of this project, Alvar says that striking the right tone was the most challenging part of creating the series because it was “so unique.”

“It’s very dark, sometimes it’s cynical and other times it’s very raw and heartfelt,” Alvar explains. “Sometimes tonal shifts can be a problem, but when we were writing this pitch we all felt that it came together nicely. Sometimes tense, sometimes funny. It’s a very wild, unique ride. I’ve not done something like this before.”



David Hasselhoff (above) and Henry Hübchen play fictional versions of themselves

It’s a very wild, unique ride. I’ve not done something like this before ”

Christian Alvar,
Syrreal Entertainment



Fellow co-CEO Kamml elaborates: “What Christian really did very well is to take all the characters seriously all the time.

“It’s not that we are hunting punchlines, it’s not that we are creating caricatures, but they have serious issues and problems and goals to achieve, and by doing this, there is situational comedy arising out of that,” Kamml explains.

It is at this point in the interview that Hasselhoff interjects: “We found comedy in a woman exploding into my face – and I was covered in blood for three days – and everyone’s laughing about this... expect for me.”

Hasselhoff adds that from the reaction to a rough cut: “A lot of people remarked that they couldn’t wait to see the series. I wasn’t one of them, because I was washing the blood off my face,” he laughs.

In the zone

Hasselhoff says that he tackled playing himself just the same as any other role. “They put lemons in front of you, you make lemonade - you do what’s in front of you and make it the best you can.”

He does add, however, that he is “really proud” of his work on the show.

“The highlight of this whole shoot for me was coming home and telling my wife that I was in the zone. I haven’t been in the zone for a long time.

“The zone is kind of like, I can be having a conversation and they say ‘action’ and I just go right into it – and then go back to the conversation. That was amazing for me.” **TBI**



Last Word James Townley

Why ‘shiny-floor’ formats are bouncing back

“When done well, entertainment can drive market share, generating huge audiences for broadcasters - and streamers are getting in on the act too”

Entertainment formats have always been a prominent feature of the global television landscape – we saw the likes of *X Factor* and *Idol* dominate screens around the world in the early 2000s. Yet in recent years it feels like there has been more caution around commissioning these types of formats, especially the bold, shiny-floor shows.

Arguably, Covid-19 exacerbated this decline as broadcasters became more risk-averse, and shiny-floor entertainment was amongst some of the most difficult to produce during the pandemic, given the studio audiences, contestants, talent and large crews involved. However, two years on, with protocols firmly in place, and a real demand for some upbeat entertainment, the genre looks poised for a very welcome resurgence.

Evolving for modern audiences

When done well, entertainment can drive market share, generating huge audiences for broadcasters, and streamers are getting in on the act too. We are seeing heavy investment from them in non-scripted shows such as *Floor is Lava* (Netflix) and *LOL: Last One Laughing* (Amazon Prime Video). And they are adding more entertainment to their catalogues – the recent deal between Hulu and Fox Entertainment will see the likes of *I Can See Your Face* and *The Masked Singer* streaming on the Disney-owned platform.

Entertainment stalwarts such as *The Voice*, *Wipeout* and *Dancing With The Stars* are still phenomenally popular with audiences all around the world. These are co-viewing, appointment to view TV shows, which are fantastic at attracting and retaining young audiences. However, even these classic formats have had to evolve for modern audiences. Take *Strictly Come Dancing*’s 2021 final, which was the most diverse in the show’s history. From a deaf contestant to a same-sex pairing – the success and enjoyment of the series demonstrates how increasingly important representation, inclusion and diversity are for audiences.

The use of advanced technology is an interesting trend surfacing in new entertainment formats, from *Alter Ego*’s avatars to *Family Piggy Bank*’s CGI. New tech opportunities are emerging fast – whether it’s TV

you can taste or blurring lines with the metaverse, the opportunities feel limitless. I’m sure we are not the only ones with innovative, tech driven formats in the pipeline.

Talent on both sides of the camera

Banijay has strong credentials in entertainment, having rolled out global hits such as *Don’t Forget the Lyrics*, *Your Face Sounds Familiar* and *All Together Now*. There is a skill to producing big entertainment hits and we’re always keen to leverage our expertise globally.

In the UK, Remarkable TV has done a fantastic job creating our latest entertainment format *Starstruck*, which launched on ITV this month. The team has gone big and bold, for a fun Saturday night show that is an uplifting celebration of people and music. Taking ordinary members of the public and transforming them into music legends from Tina Turner to Freddie Mercury, contestants compete as a trio, connected only by their love of their idol. Ramping up the scale and energy of the shiny-floor genre, we had a team of 50 people creating the show-stopping costumes and make-up, with contestants performing on a spectacular, large-scale, original set. The looks are iconic, the music is feel-good and the tone is warm. This is all about celebrating great music and great characters in an original way.

Talent is key in helping deliver the fun and upbeat tone of an entertainment show. Strong on-screen names help boost broadcaster confidence in a new show, they can deliver big audiences, and are essential to creating a local feel for global formats. We’re delighted with the energy that the *Starstruck* talent bring, with Olly Murs at the helm and judges Sheridan Smith, Beverly Knight, Jason Manford and Adam Lambert.

Investment in off-screen talent is also hugely important, and at Banijay we endeavour to attract and retain the best talent globally. Entertainment is a key area of focus for us, and by supporting and investing in our creatives, we are lucky enough to be able to supercharge our pipeline with new, innovative formats that complement an already strong catalogue.

It feels like we are on the cusp of a new wave of uplifting entertainment formats and the future is starting to look rather shiny for entertainment. **TBI**

James Townley is global head of content development at Banijay, overseeing the development and creation of original non-scripted IP and format acquisition

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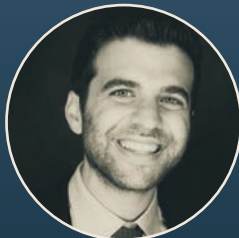
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