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So how do I get my idea in front of the right people while sitting at home?

We have now been in our new world for over half a year and there continues to be no real end in sight. Although pitches have continued and productions are returning, how easy is it to get your format in front of international distributors and buyers?

Technology has achieved so much over this period and we have all quickly adapted. But does the pitch work as

However, most markets are offering online 1:1 sessions, so do look at these opportunities — but ensure the people

well? Can you read the person on screen as you might in a room? All the markets that buyers normally attend have moved online and, while the offerings of panels, masterclasses and sessions are all good, it is much harder to bump into a buyer in the bar while online — and definitely weirder buying them a drink!

If you can get through the gate, you can usually get more time with a buyer than you would at a market and, possibly, more senior buyers as well. But you still need to ensure your pitch is succinct and to the point. Sizzles become more important than ever to bring an idea to life, but you need to ensure you can stream them effectively over the chosen video conferencing platform. You could perhaps pre-send the sizzle — but, if you do, will it get watched and dismissed before you can give it context? However, from my point of view, being able to view is better than that uncomfortable meeting where nothing works!

Try and take some simple precautions, like making sure you have a secure wifi connection — if you can, politely ask how good the buyer's wifi connection is. It sounds obvious, but do make sure you know how to share your screen and have everything ready to roll. I have been in a number of pitches where it takes five minutes to pull up the pitch and you can lose your audience in that time.

I've spoken to a few people who are always on the lookout for new content and formats and asked them how things were working for them and what they are doing. Geraldine Easter, who scours the world for new ideas on behalf of Nine Australia and the RTL Group (among others), feels they have not stopped in their search for ideas and are keen to hear from all producers. However, she says it is hard to capture the same "passion" as you would in person and that relationships, which are incredibly important, are harder to build in the digital environment.

Vasha Wallace, senior vice-president of global acquisitions and development at Fremantle, says her company has a well-established track record of working with

you are connecting with are relevant to your idea and the support you are seeking. There is nothing worse than an executive leaving a meeting frustrated that time has been wasted.

Tim Crescenti, founder of Small World International, reminds us all that, with ideas, it is "a marathon and not a sprint" and that getting your idea off the ground may take slightly longer.

However, if the idea is a good one it, it will find a home if you persevere. He also believes relationships are key in this new environment: look after the ones you have and look to build new ones where you can.

Tim is more than happy to see new formats and provide feedback and advice. But as a smaller distributor, Small World looks to formats that have been produced.

producers and creators of all shapes and sizes around the world, covering all genres from entertainment, talent and game shows through to dating, reality and factual formats. Fremantle's process hasn't changed in these times and it is always happy to hear from producers. The best way is to send Vasha a brief description of your idea/format and she can tell you quickly if it sounds like the right fit for Fremantle.

In conclusion, business is continuing, maybe more slowly, and there is an appetite for new ideas. Use the opportunities to connect when they arise as people do not mind hearing from you. As a FRAPA member, the board is also happy to help and support you with advice and introductions. Any enquiries to connect with a board member should be sent to Bianca Rootsart (rootsaert@frapa.org).

Mike Beale, who joined FRAPA's management board earlier this year, is managing director of ITV Studios' Global Creative Network

TIME TO HELP

Many would agree that technology has been the hero of the covid-19 pandemic. The tech platforms have kept us informed, entertained and connected, enabling us to remain safe and functional in a dysfunctional world.

But while technology has saved the day, it's a fact that online trading works better for established companies and executives than it does for start-ups and young creatives. And the general view is that many businesses will continue to operate virtually beyond the pandemic. They may have pivoted to digital homeworking out of necessity, but many will stay with it by choice having tasted the practical and financial benefits.

This is a concern for all of us involved in the entertainment industry — even the old hands among us who have years of contacts and experience to draw on. Why? Because without fresh voices and new ideas, the creative industries will wither and die. It's always been hard to break into this business, but the end of face-to-face meetings and industry gatherings has made it a whole lot tougher. In an increasingly virtual marketplace, how will new faces make friends and impress people? How will they get a

When it comes to the formats industry, the answer is FRAPA, which is calling on its members to help and encourage up-and-coming talent in whatever way they can. As FRAPA co-chair Phil Gurin puts it: "It's becoming increasingly clear that those of us with established networks need to call on the generosity of our friends, contacts and colleagues to help shepherd in the next generation of creatives." Gurin points to a recent *New York Times* article on how to network from home, which observed that "the easiest and best way to meet

foot through the door? Who will send down the ladder?

somebody is [still] for a mutual connection to give you a warm introduction and highlight what you have in common”.

Christopher Sanders and Gabriella Lafor are the winners of the inaugural David Lyle Foundation scholarships, designed to help young executives to build successful careers in the international television business. The scholarships pay for two fledgling professionals to travel to key markets and festivals to gain hands-on knowledge of the global market. Thanks to covid-19, Sanders and Lafor have had their year-long networking experience frozen since January.

Both Sanders and Lafor agree that, while nothing beats the power of face-to-face networking, webinars, virtual events and video meetings are helping to fill the gap. “At NATPE Miami and Realscreen Summit, I met so many people and very much look forward to having the opportunity to do so again,” Sanders says. “But I’ve had the opportunity to have virtual meetings with Mike Beale and Phil Gurin from the FRAPA management board, both of whom were extremely warm, funny and helpful. I wouldn’t hesitate now to send them an email as they’ve been so accommodating.”

Lafor points out that, although diminished, there is still a “real world” out there. “I’ve learned that not everything actually is happening online,” she says. “If you get out there, there are still big opportunities. Among my networks, people are still creating and delivering content, and demand for it is skyrocketing. But on the other hand, I’ve struck up some great relationships with extremely generous senior executives after I’ve attended their webinars and panels, and then followed them on social media. Open-mindedness, I think, is the crucial skill right now.”

This is echoed by David Homer of The 2 Lords, the subject of this month’s New Members Profile. “I’d wager most of us got into this business because somebody helped us,” he says. “If we each helped somebody get an idea to market, we’d all be winners.”



FRAPA general board member Jin Woo Hwang, founder and president of Something Special, hosted a FRAPA presentation at leading Asian content market, Broadcast Worldwide (BCWW), which took place online in early September. Hwang's session focused on the importance of a safe and secure IP environment for the booming K-formats industry, which has exploded on the back of MBC's global sensation, *The Masked Singer*.

FRAPA SERVICES

Mediation: it helps to talk

One of FRAPA's most valued services is mediation; and for sound business reasons. Unlike litigation, with its potentially disastrous financial and PR consequences, mediation preserves relationships and brands. It is also quicker than grinding through the courts, immeasurably cheaper and stands a far greater chance of producing a pragmatic, business-driven solution.

So what does it entail? In essence, mediation is a negotiation between two warring parties carried out with the assistance of a neutral intermediary — in this case, a FRAPA board member, who is paid a small fee for his or her time. The aim is to reach a consensus between the parties, who remain in control of both the proceedings and the outcome. Mediation is confidential. Anything that is admitted, proposed or offered during the process is inadmissible in subsequent litigation, which

encourages a frank and open exchange of views.

“When FRAPA launched 20 years ago, the formats community was small, cliquy and interconnected,” says FRAPA co-chair Jan Salling, remembering the origins of the mediation service. “It was clear that it was in everybody’s interest to resolve infringement issues in the most civilised, least damaging manner. And the best way to come up workable solutions that kept people out of court was to ask the most experienced format executives of the day — in other words, the founding members of FRAPA — to bring their judgement to bear on the problem.”

That offer still stands — and, as Salling points out, is arguably more relevant today than it was back in 2000, given the punishing cost of legal action. “Ultimately, 99% of all format disputes are concerned with rights and revenues, which is an area in which we have forensic knowledge,” he adds. “Handing over a case to lawyers often means starting from scratch as they try to unpick and define the very notion of a format. I’ve seen companies ruined and brilliant formats killed stone dead as a result of long, painful and expensive court cases.”

Mediation under the guidance of a FRAPA board member aims to resolve format disagreements before they have escalated into major disputes. For more serious accusations, an ‘alternative dispute resolution’ service is provided by FRAPA partner WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization). Under the collaboration, WIPO appoints an expert from its team of film and media mediators and arbitrators to oversee the negotiations which, again, are aimed at achieving practice-oriented solutions.

Litigation is stressful, costly and damaging. In the formats business, outcomes are also uncertain, given the unsympathetic legal environment for copyright disputes in many territories and jurisdictions. Against this backdrop, FRAPA’s advice is to avoid legal action until every other avenue has been explored. “Please get in touch with us if you find yourself in the unfortunate position of considering legal action,” Salling urges. “Going to court generally isn’t any fun.”

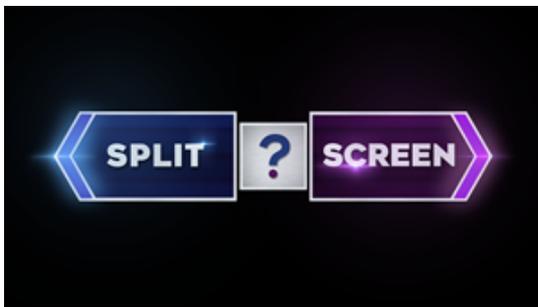
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NEW FORMATS OF THE MONTH

Split Screen

Genre: game show

ITV Studios Netherlands/WeMake



Broadcaster: SBS6 (Netherlands)

Split Screen is all about numbers — starting with two contestants, 10 giant LED screens and a prize pot of €100,000. In the number-guessing game, two contestants face a line of giant screens, which block their path to the exit. Each screen flashes up two pictures when a contestant is asked a question. Both images represent a number related to the question, such as a person's age, a building's height or an object's length. To split the screens, escape from the game and win the jackpot, contestants must give a numerical answer that falls somewhere between the numbers represented by the pictures. For example, if the two images are of Usain Bolt and a cheetah, the contestant must guess a speed in between that of the fastest man on earth and the fastest land animal. Contestants can call on three helplines — ask for the audience average, ask an audience member or ask for the number of a specific picture to be revealed — each one of which costs €1,000.

Split Screen is hosted by Rolf Wouters, the original host of the Dutch version of *Big Brother*, and is the first quiz show to come out of WeMake, which was launched in October 2018 by former Endemol Shine France chief Bouchra Réjani with Federation Entertainment. The format TXed on Talpa's SBS6 on August 30, with the first episode pulling in 652,000 viewers. It was recorded in front of a socially-distanced audience.



Watch!

Genre: game show

Media Ranch

Watch! brings together two proven bankers — game shows and world-class talent — in one fun, fast-paced package.

The format from Canada's Media Ranch is simple in structure but timeless in appeal: two teams meet on a shiny-floor stage to witness amazing variety acts, from musicians and magicians to singers, dancers and comedians. But they're not just there to enjoy the show — our contestants must also remember the details of the various acts, because the more details they remember, the more money they can earn. After each performance, the teams are quizzed on the performances, with a wrong answer giving their rivals a chance to steal the win. The tension builds as the

stakes get higher and higher: with each right answer, the prize pot increases, but so does the chance of losing everything.

A local version of *Watch!* rolled on Germany's ProSieben in July, entitled *Wer Sieht das denn?!* and hosted by Ruth Moschner, whose credits include *Germany's Got Talent* and *The Masked Singer*. Created by ex-Mark Burnett producers Dan Munday and John Kirchoffer, the format has also been optioned in 11 territories, including Bunim/Murray Productions for the US, RDT/Fizz (Banijay) for the UK and ITV Studios for Sweden.

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

'You remember the people who helped you'

David Homer and **James (Jay) Catalano** aren't your average format executives — David is an architect with a side line in stand-up and after-dinner speaking, while Jay is a professional singer and entertainer. But when they met at one of Jay's shows in 2007 and discovered they both had a passion for game-show and reality formats, they decided to join creative forces. The result was *The 2 Lords*. "There are loads of brilliant raw ideas out there," David tells the FRAPA newsletter. "We want to help take them out into the world."

Tell us more about The 2 Lords...

"The name was inspired by the fact that we're real-life Lords of Hougum Manor in Cumbria — both Jay and I are Black Country lads from the heart of England. At the moment, we've got several formats in development, including an interactive TV game show called *Cash Cube*, which has casino, mobile and online gaming potential. We're also working on a reality format called *It's Your Birthday* and a game-show called *What's Up Doc*. But we're most excited about a talent-based reality format called *The Secret Six*, which we originally created back in 2007 and have been refining ever since. We reckon it's now just about ready to take the music world by storm..."

What's special about your approach?

"We strive to be different, while appealing to all demographics and nationalities: we don't want to exclude people on the basis of language, intellect or age. And we also want to help other people to realise their creative projects. So many people have brilliant ideas but no idea what to do with them — they don't have the contacts, knowledge or confidence to realise their dreams. When Jay and I started out, we walked the streets of London trying to pitch our ideas to production companies. Let's

just say a lot of doors were slammed in our face! You remember the people who helped you and it's important to us that we pass that help forward."

Is format theft a worry?

"Not so much in Europe or North America, but we're concerned about Asia, where IP theft appears to be endemic. And the winner always seems to be the one with the deepest pockets, which is disturbing when you're a small creative company. But we hope FRAPA membership will offer us a greater level of security, along with the opportunity to get to know and work with like-minded colleagues."

How are you coping with covid-19?

"We live 200 miles apart, so we spend a lot of time writing long emails and telephoning each other! Obviously, the financial impact of the pandemic is putting the brakes on a lot of new projects for a lot of companies, large and small. But our industry will weather this crisis as it's survived others in the past. And the great ideas will still be there when we move out of this moment in time."

Any last thoughts?

"I'd wager most of us got into this business because somebody helped us; somebody passed on our details, or made an introduction or put a treatment in front of the right pair of eyes. Some of the greatest formats have come from people outside of the media bubble — Fintan Coyle, who co-created of *The Weakest Link*, was a GP in south London. If we each helped somebody get an idea to market, we'd all be winners."

RETHINKING DISTRIBUTION

FRAPA's Guide to Producing Shows for VOD Platforms

The Age of the Streamers is disrupting the traditional role of the distributor - and there are likely to be casualties, particularly among those with smaller catalogues and limited resources. This was one of the key findings of FRAPA's latest report into producing shows for the VOD platforms, designed to help its members adapt to the new market realities.

But reports of the death of distribution should not be exaggerated, the report stresses: while the old-school distribution model is taking a beating, many distributors have succeeded in rethinking their role and are helping to close the gap between supply and demand. The more proactive among them are even operating as 'mini-commissioners', actively sourcing ideas, putting together coalitions of the

like-minded and helping to raise funding by mixing and matching the requirements of territories, broadcasters and platforms.

FRAPA's report predicts that distributors will continue to transform into full-service partners for producers and platforms, becoming involved earlier in projects and adding value at every stage of the creative journey, from concept to post-production sales. And while this evolution may seem to favour the bigger players with skin in both production and distribution, boutique distributors will still have a market among those producers looking for a more attentive, bespoke service. As distribution veteran Paul Heaney, founder of TCB Media Rights, puts it: "Big distributors can be... well, too big. The danger is that your precious show about dogs will be lost among hundreds of other shows about small furry animals."

As to the type of content that appeals to the digital platforms, several distributors point to unscripted formats as among the most promising genres - at least in the long term. "For the time being, though, it seems that global and regional VOD services establish themselves first as originals' commissioners on the scripted front, before moving into unscripted genres," the report concludes.

Download A FRAPA Guide to Producing Shows for VOD Platforms



Create evidence of your work on FRAPA's FRS (Format Registration System)

[Read more](#)



FRAPA is one of the founding partners of the The International Format Awards.

[Read more](#)

CODE OF CONDUCT

"FRAPA believes in and fights for the protection and recognition of formats worldwide. As a global organization it represents the international community of format creators, distributors and producers and, as such, believes passionately in the principles of freedom of expression and the right to fair trade. All persons associated with the

creation, production and distribution of formats should have the right to be heard without fear of political interference or injection. The opportunity to exercise these basic creative rights is to be enforced regardless of ethnicity, religious beliefs, political affiliation, race or gender. We appeal to our members to respect one another's right for free expression."



Read more



DECLARATION OF COOPERATION

Intellectual property is the basis upon which a global economic industry grows and prospers in virtually every country on earth.

Find the declaration in your own language

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