“BUILDING TELEVISION PROGRAMME BRANDS IN THE DIGITAL MULTI-CHANNEL WORLD – PERSPECTIVES OF THE UK TELEVISION PROFESSIONALS.”

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Abstract

This research seeks to be a pioneering study of television programmes from a brand management perspective by bringing together published literature in line with industry perspectives on programme and channel branding in the UK.

The research traces the development of broadcast branding from its visual brand image era to today's strategic brand thinking and management of individual programme brands by studying the role brand management plays in broadcasting today in the UK. The research indicates that broadcast brands are being compared more often to retail brands with the TV channel being a store and a programme being a product or line. It establishes the growing prominence of programme brands, the reasons for it and how it affects the resulting changes in relationship between the producers and broadcasters, besides shedding light on how programme brand extensions will develop in the future. At the same time, it says that the channel brands are poised to grow and consolidated in this highly fragmented multi-channel digital world driven by interactive, convergent and user-friendly technologies. Finally, it underlines the growth of non-broadcast commercial brands (in terms of advertiser funded content) which will play a major role in shaping how the programme and channel brands are built.

Conducted in three months time as part of a Master's degree submission, the research uses qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews with purposively sampled industry professionals within an interpretive research philosophy. Though it does not deduce any theory, it adds to the definitive knowledge of programme and channel brand management in broadcasting today in the UK.

Disclaimer

This piece of academic research is not necessarily definitive, authoritative, or comprehensive. It represents the findings, views, opinions and conclusions of the respondents in their personal capacity only, and the researcher does not necessarily endorse the findings, views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research. The researcher accepts no responsibility for any action or fallout as a result of applying ideas from this research.

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1. Introduction

New digital media developments are breaking down the distinction between viewers and consumers; programmes are not just being watched – they are being watched, recorded, re-winded and fast forwarded. Producers are adding interactive elements to their programmes so that television users can interact with the programme makers and broadcasters, either to vote-in or text or shop from these programmes. Broadband makes it possible to watch programmes online on a computer in real time, without the need of a television set! And most importantly these developments are not exclusive; these represent a high level of growing convergence to provide a consolidated and comprehensive media offering to the consumer.

Innovations in television technologies such as interactive TV, personal video recorders (PVR), broadband internet and the renewed interest in convergent media are changing the way we watch television. Because of the multitude of television channels and media outlets available, the audiences are also getting fragmented. For example, ITV had maintained an audience share of 48% in 1983 in spite of strong competition from BBC1, BBC2 and C4; whereas today, because of digital channels such as Sky, UK Gold, Discovery and others, its audience share has shrunk to 22% (Reevel, 2004).

Interestingly, non-broadcasters such as Microsoft and BT are providing programmes directly to the consumer. MTV recently partnered with One.Tel to provide live music feed to its premium customers. Channel 4 partnered with Real Networks to provide broadband access to some of its cutting-edge programmes (Bulkley, 2004b). Many of BBC's current and archived programmes are now available online and more will soon be available, not only to be watched, but to be stored and edited by the consumers (BBC News, 2004). Hence, most media content creators, as well as broadcasters, have started creating and providing their media content across a range of media platforms. The situation is becoming more dynamic as television broadcasters are turning into complete entertainment and information publishers – BBC has a records label as well as a book publishing division and even helps school going children with their pre-exam revision (BBC.co.uk, 2004)!

As early as 1998, BBC Worldwide (the commercial arm of the BBC) mentioned in its annual report that its long term strategy was centred on achieving marketing and creative excellence in the way it "develops, manages and exploits its brands". To get maximum exploitation of this brand based strategy, it reorganized itself by establishing publishing groups and marketing teams by genre and there was evidence of increasing exploitation of its brands "across the widest possible range of media – television, magazines, books, videos, spoken word, music CDs and tapes, CD-ROMs, online, toys and other merchandise."

Hence in this multi-channel, digital and interactive world of television programmes, how will the users choose which programmes to watch and interact with? There will still be the trusted Radio Times, often being substituted by electronic programme guides. However, how will certain programmes stand out from other programmes to vie for the consumers' attention? Does the individual television programme have a brand image, identity and value of its own? Also, does the channel brand contribute towards why audiences watch a certain programme and how the programme is branded?

Some broadcasting industry professionals are looking at the growing power of the individual programme as a brand in the aforementioned TV mediascape. They argue that a programme may have a brand value which can be exploited; to position their channel, to gain secondary financial and other benefits from the brand, and most importantly to get the user's attention who is being bombarded with a multitude of media content each moment. This scenario will change the way producers and broadcasters have in the past managed their programmes and channel brands.

1.1. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research was to explore the UK television industry professionals' perspectives on building programme and channel brands in today's multi-channel digital world. Many objectives arose out of this aim. These were:

- Reviewing the existing literature on programme and channel brand management.
- Meeting and discussing the understated issues with practising broadcast industry professionals in the UK.
- Exploring the role of brand management in broadcasting today.
- Delving into the rise of the programme brand as a channel independent entity, its reasons and its effects.
- Looking at channel brand management in view of programme brands, multitude of channels and digital technology.
- Attempting a peep into the future of programme and channel branding.

This investigative research was carried out by first reviewing published literature as secondary evidence and then conducting interviews with leading industry professionals to provide primary evidence.

1.2. Positioning the research.

The research does not provide any industry specific benchmarks; rather it is a literary work indicating the strategies being used for programme and channel brand management and what challenges are on the way in trying to do so. Though the author does not seek much transferability, the research adds to the definitive industry knowledge of how programme brands and channel brands are being managed in the context of changing digital technologies and multi-channel expansion. The research is one of the unique initiatives in the UK to understand programme brand management from a strategic, rather than a visual 'brand image' perspective. It also provides useful insights into the effect of digital technologies on television brands.

2. Literature Review

Let us begin by examining the published literature on *brand management, channel and programme branding,* moving on to *new digital media developments,* and *advertiser funded content.* Finally, a brief mention will be made of *some recent trends* in broadcast brand management in the UK.

2.1. What is a brand and what are the benefits of a brand?

A brand has been defined variously by different authors. A brand can be defined as "*a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors*" (Kotler, 2003). Nilson (1998) has mentioned brands as a tool to build and communicate the trust and reputation of items and services of a company; his emphasis being on 'trust'. De Chernatony and McDonald (1998) went a step deeper and said that a brand is a complex entity which can be simplified as a "cluster of functional and emotional values" with the functional being *what the customers receive* and the emotional *how they receive it.*

Hence a brand exists to help consumers differentiate between various goods or services and choose the right alternative; an option not existing when goods and services are sold as a commodity. The right alternative will depend from consumer to consumer, and brand managers engage in creating specific attributes to a particular brand to appeal to differing sensitivities and tastes of consumers.

Kapferer (2000) contended that real brand management happened much earlier than the brand name, its logo and design, its advertising, level of awareness and its equity; brand management began with strategy and a consistent integrated approach. Thus, at the heart of brand management is the brand identity, not brand image, which must be defined and managed as the brand continues to grow.

Riezebos (2003) provides us with the following advantages of embarking on a branding strategy; financial (higher sales, higher margins and guarantees of future income); strategic (strong position in relation to competition, less dependence on any one supplier, and, ability to attract highly skilled managerial and technical staff); and finally managerial (ability to introduce brand extensions or endorsements and potentially exploit its brands in the international market).

Kapferer (2000) goes on further to give us some generic brand management strategies used by successful companies throughout the world:

a. product brand strategy; in which the brand is made synonymous with the product or the service it identifies and where in extreme cases the branded product does not have an equivalent, for example Post-it.
b. line brand strategy; in which a successful concept is exploited and extended, keeping however, very close to the initial product, for example many hair and beauty care line of products.
c. range brand strategy, where a single brand name identifies many different unrelated products but within a category such as food, cosmetics etc, for example Heinz products.
d. umbrella brand strategy, where a strong company or concept name extends to totally unrelated products or service categories, for example Sony.
e. source brand strategy, in which though there are strong family names, the individual product or service name is also made a strong brand. Sometimes this leads to double-branding, such as Nestle's Kit Kat.
f. endorsing strategy, where the family or company only provides a support role and the individual product or service is free to manifest its originality, for example GM's Opel.

Though these strategies have been mentioned as distinct, in real life all companies use a hybrid of these strategies to brand their different products and services in order to reach different types of consumers.

2.2. Broadcast branding – the traditional approach

For a long time, the study of broadcast branding comprised primarily of issues of design, logo, channel idents, and other visual or aural aspects of 'on-air marketing' which channels used to engage in (Lambie-Nairn (1997) cited in Hall (2004)), Meech (1999 and 2001)). Gaggio (1999) also defined broadcast branding as "to separate one channel from the competition, especially in interactive TV environments which offered scope for multiple channels, using a distinctive, relevant on air personality." Gordon (1991, cited in Chan-Olmsted & Kim(2001)), concurred that branding was applied by broadcasters only at the tactical level, i.e. designs and brand slogans which represent a short term control function rather than a long term strategic managerial commitment. Martin Lambie-Nairn, considered one of the pioneers of the broadcast branding in the UK, wrote one of the first books on the brand identity "Television Brand Identity: With Knobs On" in 1997. In this book he has laid an emphasis on the broadcaster's channel brand to evolve a clear and attractive brand image to effectively convey the nature and rationale of programming (Lambie Nairn, 1997). Hence brand identity in television was at one point of time synonymous with brand image.

From the above, it is clear that broadcasters were slow to realise the benefits of strategic brand management. Chan-Olmsted and Kim (2001) wrote about the increasing levels of awareness and importance of branding among channel managers in the US who, however, did not know how to strategically build their channel brands beyond logos and graphics. However, Secunda (1994) talks about how NOVA – a privately owned television station, just emerging from the government control of the erstwhile communist regime, had sought to strategically brand itself using customer oriented programming and off-air billboard-based marketing promotions to reach a wider segment of the population and build its brand. Nearer home in 2002, BBC paid £700,000 to broadcast branding consultancy, Lambie-Nairn, to change its idents to emphasize a more diverse and inclusive approach to its brand - a deliberate move away from its perceived southern, white and middle class values (The Observer, 2004). This was another use of broadcast branding for a more strategic and value based reason.

Turning our attention to broadcast and channel branding, Heyer (1999) mentions the growing importance of branding channels in an era of audience fragmentation. Such brands, according to him, will give the advertisers a good fit for offering their own brands as the channel brands will have already established a loyalty and connection with a particular type of audience.

Griffin (2002), giving us an insight into strategic broadcast branding, says that a successful brand is not only the image it conveys – it is every bit the actual programming content that consumers are watching. Brand loyalty means one thing to the audience – getting what they're expecting to see when they want to see it, with relatively few surprises. More recently, CTA's[1] annual marketing summit indicated that the ideal way to build brands was "*to devise and promote a compelling brand identity, back it up with relevant programming and take every opportunity to remind the viewer that you are doing your job"* (Television Week, 2003).

Hence, a brand in television, is not only about positioning in terms of values, audience associations, distinct markings, a logo, graphic guidelines, programme packaging, and a general look; but also about a contract, a promise of quality (either the product or the service), and, a way of addressing the audience. The brand allows choice because it reassures. It is a way of situating oneself in contemporary media.

2.3. Early thoughts on programme branding

Some early thoughts on programme branding were provided by Todreas (1999), who referred to the great paradigm shift in the digital television industry where the content creator, and not the content conduit or deliverer, starts to make greater profits, especially when the distinctions between television and the internet start to blur. He mentioned that such content creators, in addition, will have to engage in building their content's brands so that these brands stand out in a crowded market place.

An evidence of programmes being considered as brands arises on inspecting the success of BBC Worldwide, which racked in record profits of £123 million – bucking the trend for the lowly performing UK media industry (Rogers, 2003). Rogers cites the similarities of the brands of BBC Worldwide with Disney, saying that it extrapolates these brands across many territories besides engaging in cross promotions. BBC's successful brands include *The Office, Fimbles, Walking with Beasts, The Blue Planet, The Weakest Link, Top of the Pops and The Lost World.*

[1] Cable and Telecommunications Association, Seattle, US

Hughes (1992) has introduced the element of "brand image" of presentation style and presenter on which the four main newscasters in Australia were differentiating their news in the absence of content based differences. Hughes' research also commented that the audience watches one particular news programme above others primarily because of the brand fit it had with the audience. This element is primary to the development of a brand – people don't buy brands, they buy their own image in those brands!

Programme branding is also being utilized by children's channels because such channels have destination viewers (those who seek out a programme or channel for a particular programme and are not casual surfers). Branding television programmes helps the channels in creating a relationship with the target audience (Whitney, 2003). In the UK, BBC has a tremendous presence in the children's programme market where it has very strong brands (Fimbles, Tweenies, etc.) and the brand presence is fortified by being available for the children across media platforms.

Nadine Nohr, Managing Director of ITV's commercial arm Granada International, created programming sales divisions in her company by genre, calling them "brand heads", to exploit these genres to the full potential (Bulkley, 2004a). Nohr elucidates her strategy of creating strong programme brands which will not only become important for straight sales to broadcasters but also to build new revenue streams. Some of ITV's strong brands are *Coronation Street*, *I'm a Celebrity*, *Agatha Christie's Poirot* and the classic puppet series *Thunderbirds*.

Over at 4 Ventures, the commercial arm of Channel 4, Rob Woodward has also been concerned about creating powerful programme brands which can generate lucrative spin offs (Mutel, 2004). He lamented that Channel 4 wasn't able to capitalize on brands such as T4, which has a high potential for CD/ DVD sales and has, after that, put into place an exhaustive structure and practice to exploit several brands across Channel 4's portfolio of comedy, entertainment, music and films.

Some programme brands outlive their broadcast lives as well. BBC's *Doctor Who,* aired from 1963 to 1996, is such a brand (Keighron, 2004). It has been a merchandising broadcaster's dream, having sold 3 million videos and DVDs; 250,000 audiobooks, and has run in 60 countries of the world. Even after it was axed from BBC1, it continued to air as an endorser for other products like Kellogg's Sugar Smacks, Kit Kat, Portakabin, and Mazda! This strong brand is now being revived and modernized to be broadcast again on BBC1 from end 2004.

2.4. A brief on the new digital media developments

Let us now turn our attention to the new media developments alluded to in the previous few pages. According to Ofcom (2004a), the media super-regulator in the UK, some innovations which are changing the face of television today are Interactive TV, Personal Video Recorder and Broadband Internet.

Interactive TV may be considered as a two way system where viewers not only watch television content but also engage in voting, sending their comments, ordering movies and premium priced content and shopping using their TV. This technology is made available because of the increased penetration of digital TV signals.

PVRs, as Personal Video Recorders are also known, are like set top boxes with hard disks, just like a computer, that can be easily programmed via an intuitive on-screen menu system to record one's favourite programmes in a far more flexible manner than a conventional VCR ever could (WARC, 2004). Some of the main benefits of the PVR are that users can watch, rewind, fast forward, etc. just like a video or DVD as long as they are watching a programme on their television *after* it has been broadcast (in the traditional way) and it has been recorded in their PVR. This allows them to watch programmes many times over without having to worry about the broadcaster's schedule, and as a bonus, they can zap through much of the advertising, thus distressing the advertising industry. In the UK, the first PVR was launched by TiVo – a leading US player in the segment, however, TiVo backed out after considerable competition from the now successfully growing Sky Plus (WARC, 2004). BBC has also recently announced its intentions of starting an online PVR-like service, called the iMP (or Interactive Media Player), through which users could record and store their favourite programmes on their computer (The Guardian, 2004).

Broadband internet is a phenomenon where fast uninterrupted internet service is made available and which can support the transmission of almost TV like fast streaming audio and video files. Many television broadcasters have started taking advantage of broadband capabilities to sell their premium non-TV content over the internet.

The above technologies are coming together in a phenomenon known as convergence. Deloitte (2004), a business consultancy, defines convergence as “*the successful application of rich multimedia products and integrated services that previously did not exist, or were provided separately, from organizations across technology, media and telecom sectors*”. Hence convergence for broadcasters and other programme makers will mean the combination of programmes or services into an integrated proposition, driven by advantages in technology, changes in consumer behaviour, shareholder pressure for improved operating margins and the quest for new ways to increase revenues. Some recent examples of convergence have been the live broadcast of Channel 4’s “Shattered” on mobile phones. Thus convergence has tremendous implications for the development of programmes and other television content into integrated brand offerings.

2.5. <u>Advertiser funded programming (AFP) and advertiser funded channels (AFCs)</u>

Though it should be kept in mind that this research does not discuss advertising or sponsorship, the nature of advertiser funded programming, with a non-broadcast commercial brand in close proximity to a channel or programme brand, necessitates this section. Through AFPs, a commercial brand, for example a manufacturer’s product or service brand, can have either positive or negative effects on the programme brand it is associated with. Through AFCs, such a non-broadcast brand may have the potential to create certain challenges for an existing broadcaster.

Advertiser Funded Programmes (also referred to as AFPs, branded programming or content-led marketing) and Advertiser Funded Channels (AFCs) are two principal forms of advertiser funded broadcast content. An AFP occurs when an advertiser covers the total cost of producing a programme which is then provided to broadcasters in exchange for on air-credits and commercial air-time, recouping its investment primarily through the media value of the programme. Alternatively, as the media value attached to single programmes on UK television is rarely high enough to cover production costs, an advertiser contributes a proportion of the production cost of an AFP and in return obtains the right to be associated with that programme off-air as well. The main interest of an advertiser lies mainly in adding marketing support and building a culture around the programme to benefit both the programme and their brand (Alberstat, 2003).

Content-led marketing gives also advertisers the opportunity to engage with consumers in the context of programming that reflects their brand values, thereby building a relationship with consumers on a level deeper than traditional advertising (theallmodfoundation.com). However, Crown (2003) says that an AFP is not a risk free adventure, moderated by precise regulations which have been effectively used against broadcasters providing undue prominence to an advertiser or relinquishing their editorial integrity.

Advertiser funded channels was the term used to describe the non-BBC channels till the advent of the multi-channel revolution in the UK. In this research, AFC is used for TV channels which broadcast content funded by a company or brand owner. For example, Thomas Cook TV is available to be viewed on the Sky and NTL platforms and is funded entirely by Thomas Cook Holidays. Ofcom describes these channels as "*teleshopping and self promotional channels*" (Ofcom, 2004b).

Though some consider them as another variant of the shopping channels, gradually some of the AFCs are beginning to include editorially strong advertising or self promotion based programmes in their schedule, e.g. Thomas Cook TV, thereby bridging the gap between these branded channels and a regular TV channel. Though Ofcom (2004b) regulates against these channels entering into conventional programming, it does not specify that the promotions must be editorially weak. This provision (or the lack of it) can be used by the promoters to create promotions to have a viewer base of their own which mimics programme brands; thereby creating some competition for existing, especially niche multi-channel, broadcasters.

2.6. Brand management in broadcasting - current thoughts

Todreas (1999) maintains that the future audience's viewing habits, the economies of scale in programme production, and the needs of advertisers mean the inevitability of packaging firms (read broadcasters) – even in a world using agents for entertainment selection i.e. technologies such as PVRs. Hence, while recognizing the importance of programming branding, he suggests investment in building the channel or broadcast brand to maintain a share in the digital era.

Swain (2001), however, argues that the strategic shift of television viewing from a time based paradigm to a content based paradigm has many brand implications for the programming content. He says that today advertiser brands are shifting from borrowing value from existing content and appealing to a captive audience to a situation where they start creating an audience because of the inherent value of the content. Such value will be created by advertisers using programme concepts such as advertiser funded programming, advertorials, shopping channels, interactive sites and gaming propositions. In other words, more vistas are opening up for the programme or the content brand.

Curry (2004) says that in the future a channel will have to look into the high permission/high attention space of viewers either through a programme or a specific piece of content. He, however, reminds us that such programmes succeed because they are able to make an emotional connection with viewers; a connection which is more likely to come from the intuitive and often idiosyncratic insight of a creative producer rather than the calculations of the research or marketing department. According to him, television is about delivering an experience, not a brand; a moment, not a channel.

3. Research Philosophy, Methodology and Process

The aim of this research, to re-iterate once again, was to explore the UK television industry professionals' perspectives on building programme and channel brands in today's multi-channel digital world and it was carried out in a span of three months as a journey in exploration through secondary and primary data analysis. Phase 1 lasted from 27th May 2004 to 26th June 2004, in which the literature review was consolidated, the respondent sample for the primary research created and contacts with industry respondents established. Phase 2 (27th June 2004 to 26th July 2004) saw the research questions finalized and the primary data collected. Phase 3 (27th July 2004 to 26th August 2004) saw the primary research analyzed and concluded, with the research report being written in all stages.

3.1. Research philosophy: epistemological and ontological positions

According to Bryman (2003), an epistemological issue concerns itself with the question of "what is (or should be regarded as) acceptable knowledge in a discipline". It can be expressed either as a positivist stance, where there is strong distinction between theory and research and theory is said to have been researched only if it is objective (in the scientific sense) and can be tested or confirmed by the established human senses; or an interpretivist stance, which respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist or researcher to grasp or interpret the subjective meaning of social action.

The research under consideration may be seen from an interpretivist epistemology as the researcher neither starts the research with an assumption about the outcomes nor does he have clear theories about how programme brands could be built. Throughout the study, the researcher tries to grasp or interpret the actions or words of the secondary actors (companies, consultants and authors' views), as well as primary actors (the interviewed respondents). Hence, the outcome of the research, while not purporting to create a specific theory of programme brand management, outlines the *researcher-interpreted* perspectives of UK television industry professionals and can be seen as adding to the definitive knowledge of programme and channel brand management. It does not preclude the research from serious academic consideration.

Again, Bryman (2003) mentions the ontological position as "*whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors*", or "*whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from perceptions and actions of social actors*." Hence, an ontological position could either follow an objectivist approach, which asserts that social phenomena (for example an organization or culture) exists independent and irrespective of social actors; or a constructivist approach, which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors which are dynamic and in a constant state of revision.

The research under consideration may be seen from a constructivist ontological perspective i.e. the concept of brand management cannot be construed as a science with precise theorems or propositions based on explicit assumptions. Brand management, especially in television where a brand is extremely difficult to identify and define until it actually becomes a brand, is very much a social phenomenon which is shaped by all social actors involved in the creation, marketing, consumption as well as study, such as this, of brands. Hence, the brand and the way it could be built is a construction of the minds of the involved social actors. Though, unearthing historical and trend based evidence may tempt us into looking at the research with an objective ontology, the author of this research chose to approach the research clearly through constructivism.

3.2. Research strategy (methodology) and research design

Corbetta (2003) has mentioned that both qualitative and quantitative research strategies are "*consequential expressions of different epistemological and methodological manifestations of two different paradigms which imply alternative conceptions of social reality, research objectives and role of the researcher*". Hence the strategy used to research a positivist stance will be different from the strategy to study an exploratory stance. According to Bryman (2003) qualitative research may be regarded as denoting an approach in which theory and categorization emerge out of a collection and analysis of data. He marries cross sectional research design (which entails *"collection of data on more than one case and at a single point of time in order to collect a body of data in connection with two or more variables to detect patterns of association (Bryman, 2003)"*) to qualitative research strategy by referring to the use of interviewing a set of number of people at relatively the same point of time, thereby rendering qualitative research within a cross sectional research design.

Owing to the exploratory and interpretivist epistemological as well as constructivist ontological considerations, the researcher chose to follow a qualitative research strategy within a cross sectional research design. The qualitative research strategy helped the researcher to explore the various constructed views of television industry professionals in the UK and interpret them. This was gleefully achieved using a cross sectional research design in which professionals were interviewed at relatively the same time (separately but in the same time span or era where the chances of a radical change in brand based ideas or constructions are unlikely).

A quantitative strategy would not have suited the exploration of issues as firstly there was no set theory to begin with and secondly, quantitative methodologies have a tendency for a natural science or positivist sense with a dispassionate concept of social reality (Bryman 2003) which the researcher has sought to avoid.

3.3. Research method: Interviewing

Effective achievement of a cross sectional research design necessitated the use of interviewing as an appropriate research method. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) put forth interviews as the art of asking questions to produce *"situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes*", influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer. Thus the interview produces contextual meanings of concepts where the interviewer tries to create the reality of the interview situation. Fontana and Frey (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) call interviewing the most powerful form of human interaction, notwithstanding the residual ambiguity of the spoken word. Corbetta (2003) contends that a semi-structured interview style gives both the interviewer and the respondent ample freedom, while ensuring all relevant themes are dealt with and all necessary information collected.

This research was carried out using in-depth exploratory semi-structured interviews with the help of an interview guide or inventory of issues. However, any form of rambling, or moving away from the guide by the interviewees was encouraged, thus allowing them considerable time and freedom to answer on their own terms and conditions (Bryman, 2003). In other words, the interview was not based upon a set of relatively rigid pre-determined questions and prompts, and any additional or complementary issues that were raised eventually formed part of the study's findings.

Eight such interviews were conducted using a minidisk recorder. Out of these, six were face-to-face personal interviews, whereas two, owing to time and availability constraints of the respondents, were telephonic. The researcher tried to maintain all possible aspects of the face-to-face interviews, including depth of the topics being discussed, however the medium of telephone proves to be a disadvantage in creating a trust level with the respondents thereby causing them to be less willing to engage in exploratory discussion. Also, the telephone does not allow us the interviewer to gauge the visual cues of the respondent (Saunders et al, 2003), thereby minimising the level of in-depth interpretation of the said word.

Later, the interviews were transcribed to collate and interpret the data to come up with final conclusions of the research. One sample of a face-to-face as well as a telephonic one is appended.

3.4. Sampling: Judgment based

Sampling is the procedure through which, from a set of units that make up the object of study (the population), a limited number of cases (the sample) are chosen according to some pre-defined criteria that allow the results to be projected to the whole population (Corbetta, 2003). Corbetta goes on to define non-probability judgement sampling as the form of sampling where the probability of selection of each unit is not known and units are chosen rationally on the basis of their characteristics.

The interviewees were based on a non-probability judgement linked sample of marketing managers, producers and broadcasters from UK based broadcasters and producers resulting in eight in-depth interviews. This form of judgement based sampling was necessary to deliberately select decision making professionals in order to obtain perspectives which were particularly informative (Saunders et al, 2003). The researcher tried to arrive at a balance between marketers and programme makers; two differing camps of the television industry in the UK with seemingly polar motivations and some suspicions about each other.

A disadvantage of judgement sampling is that it does not allow for simplicity of implementation as seen in other forms of sampling and makes it difficult to keep biases at bay when sampling individuals, but it is highly convenient for small numbers of samples, as in this particular research (Corbetta, 2003).

The sample consisted of the following respondents. Their detailed profiles have been appended to the report.

Broadcast Marketers	Producers/ Programme Commissioners
i. Jo Davey, Controller of Marketing, ITV1	i. Danny Cohen, Commissioning Editor, Documentaries, Channel 4
ii. Matthew Woods, UK Marketing Director, The Hallmark Channel	ii. Jason Langley, Head of Business Development, Two Four Productions
iii. Mike Morris, Marketing Director, Channel 4 International	iii. Peter Cowley, Director of Interactive Media, EndemolUK
iv. Nick Thorogood, Head of Lifestyle Channels, UKTV	iv. Sham Sandhu, Controller of Special Events and Pop Features, FIVE

Figure 1: List of interview respondents with their working titles

3.5. Data analysis: Coding

Bryman (2003) mentions use of coding to be an attractive and manageable form of qualitative data analysis. This, according to Strauss & Corbin (1998 cited in Bryman, 2003) entails reviewing transcripts and giving names to component parts that seem to be of theoretical significance to the study under consideration. They mention three levels or types of coding, namely; open coding which yields concepts which are later to be grouped and turned into categories; axial coding where data, after it has gone through open coding, is put back together in new ways after marking connections between categories; and finally selective coding, where a core category is selected and systematically related to other categories, refining them in the light of the core category.

Using the strategy of coding, an analysis of the findings was done to yield an exploratory framework of respondents' perspectives. However, some writers have questioned the use of coding as a means of effective qualitative data analysis. Coffey and Atkinson (1996 cited in Bryman, 2003) spoke about a loss of sense of continuity and context when data is chunked into categories. This contention has been kept in mind by the researcher as a limitation while interpreting the data, however, in the absence of a competing method of qualitative data analysis, coding seems most appropriate. Moreover, as far as possible a narrative style of presentation of the data has been preferred while trying to retain as much as possible the original words of the interviewees.

In this research, open coding was not used as the research objectives and the interview guide conveniently yielded a largely coded set of categories. Of course, the process of research being iterative, some changes were inevitable as well as welcome in modifying these categories. Below is the set of categories which were used finally to analyse data according to axial coding:

1.	Role of brand management in broadcasting.
2.	Rise of programme brands - a challenge to channel brands?
3.	Programme brands and extensions – a deliberate move with assorted benefits.
4.	Managing programme brands and channel brands.
5.	Effect of digital media developments and convergence on programme brands.
6.	The programme brand and its effect on the producer – broadcaster relationship.
7.	AFPs and AFCs – brand based challenges to programme brands.
8.	Future of programme and channel branding.

Figure 2: List of categories used for axial coding based data analysis

Axial coding was necessary as many respondents had chosen not to follow the interview guide, some respondents had also volunteered information in addition to what had been initially sought. However, it may be kept in mind that selective coding was not done as the researcher was not attempting to come up with any particular theory; the attempt has been to add industry perspectives to the existing knowledge of programme brands and branding.

3.6. Reliability and validity: Trustworthiness of the research

Though reliability and validity (in their absolute measurement-based meanings) may be considered reflexive forces acting upon quantitative research (Bryman, 2003), a similar argument exists for qualitative research as well. Guba & Lincoln (1994, cited in Bryman, 2003) have given us alternative reflexive criteria for evaluating qualitative research owing to its non-positivist stance of the social world. They equate reliability and validity to **trustworthiness** of qualitative research; trustworthiness being made up of credibility (the research's acceptability to others), transferability (the research's significance to the aspect of the social world being studied), dependability (the research having followed an auditing approach throughout) and confirmability (not allowing theoretical inclinations or personal biases to have coloured the course of research).

This research maintains credibility because it followed a member validation process, i.e. the researcher went back to a few respondents and cross checked his analysis with them. It is dependable because the data has been collected by use of an interview guide, which provided a standard set of topics to be discussed with each respondent and hence set up a uniform area or equal platform of discussion. Moreover, the interview guide was validated by the research supervisor who had the subject-specific knowledge. The research is also dependable because, right from the onset, it followed an auditing approach so that readers can see the building blocks of data and findings for themselves. For the purposes of auditing, the interpretive framework consisting of the *interview guide, samples of interview transcripts* (face to face as well as telephonic) and *respondent profiles,* has been appended to the research report.

The research is confirmable as biases have been sought to be avoided using careful purposive sampling. A sample interview script was shown to the research supervisor (who had the subject-specific knowledge) and he was asked to ascertain face validity of the findings, i.e. were the findings obviously logical and plausible.

Transferability or generalizability of the research has not been highly sought as long as the research is of a high standard owing to other considerations of trustworthiness. However, the findings of the research are contextual and significant to the area of brand management of television programmes and hence a cautious transferability may be attempted. Bryman (2003) observes that much research cannot or may not be generalized if it scores well on other discussed measures. Moreover, a reader is well poised to undertake transferability of the report after undertaking a detailed reading of this particular chapter which contributes to the thick description of the research process (Writing@CSU, 2004).

3.7. Ethical and other considerations

Owing to ethical research considerations, the names, titles and affiliations of the interviewees have been divulged only with permission. The interviewees were asked if they wished anonymity or any use of pseudonyms but none replied in the affirmative, thereby allowing the researcher to quote them wherever required in the research.

The interviewer had taken prior appointments and to a large extent all interview start and end times were honoured, except for a singular case where the interview was re-scheduled at the last moment owing to a major transport strike in London. Moreover, rapport was established with the respondents by using the following techniques:

a) The interview guide was sent in advance by email so that the respondents could familiarize themselves with the topic being researched and more time in the actual interview could be spent on discussing issues on a common platform rather than creating a platform for discussion.
b) Some time was, however, spent on giving a background of the researcher as well as the topic so that the industry experienced respondents were comfortable in the interviewer’s ability to understand and assimilate jargons and nuances of the broadcasting industry.
c) The researcher tried to be pleasant, sincere, sensitive and non-evaluative (Sekaran, 2003) while the interview was being conducted.

4. Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Let us begin by first looking at respondent quotes in each coded section, written in a narrative style of presentation, succeeded by the researcher's own thoughts and interpretations.

4.1. Role of brand management in broadcasting.

Matt Woods, The Hallmark Channel, thinks of a brand in television as the sum total of the ethos of a channel. "*It is the emotional experience, the relevance of meaning communicated by the idents, the nature of the continuity, the reliability and the clarity of their proposition – all leading to the channel's positioning in the market place. A good brand is about how you communicate how different you are and what you stand for.*"

Jo Davey, ITV, thinks that brand management gives a short hand to viewers to the programmes they can expect on a channel. "*In a world of 3000 plus commercial messages a day and 200 plus channels, viewers just need a quick way of understanding what to expect when they switch on a channel. The programmes that you choose, they way you promote and present them – all encapsulates brand management in TV*".

Providing an independent producer's perspective, Jason Langley, Two Four Productions, thinks that brand management is weak, underdeveloped and still emerging in the UK's broadcasting industry. "*Five years ago, I would have said that brand management has no role in television vis-à-vis any other retail or professionals' services sector, however, it will soon have a significant role to play. There are very few TV companies which practice brand management to the core, notable exceptions being Disney, CNN, and Fox. Amongst the UK companies, BBC has a very strong brand management team in place, but they are less commercial in the way they deal with things and ITV is a relatively weak brand if you take into account their organizational turnover.*"

Peter Cowley, Endemol UK, however feels that brand management can already be seen in the marketing of TV channels and programmes in the new multi-channel world. "*A great deal of thought has gone in to bringing all the ITV companies under one brand, to differentiate between the BBC channels, to position Channel 4 and to grow FIVE*."

Woods thinks that historically there has been a lot of mysticism and voodoo attached to branding in TV. "*The role of the name and how it is designed is insignificant. The Hallmark Channel in UK plays hard-hitting gritty contemporary dramas and the way to specifically brand our channel has been to use the colour and feel of the channel output. As soon as the clock turns eight, the channel tone turns from a lush-orange, gold and black packaging to ice-blue, silver, and black – the atmosphere and the idents become more masculine, edgy, racy and discordant. So, the role of the night time brand of the Hallmark Channel is to affectively convey the nature of the programming. You can change the logo and name of the channel and it would not have a profound effect on the overall viewing of the channel. The tone in how we communicate is important, and hence the lush cinematic tinge to the screen and the big emotive and emotional design of the Hallmark Channel.*"

Mike Morris, Channel 4 International, talks of Channel 4 as a strong international business-to-business (b2b) brand. "*Our brand is known to work with the cream of UK production talent - seen internationally as a hotbed of incredible ideas. International distribution is a labour-intensive, high-cost, low-margin business; so unless you can aggregate a large amount of content it's hard to get a one to one relationship between producers and a foreign broadcaster. Also, where you are committing to ideas which you haven't really seen, there is a huge element of shared risk; Channel 4 understands the type of programming each UK production house usually comes up with, thus mitigating the risk of the unseen programme for the international broadcaster. Finally, the comfort level provided by rights handling, cross national financial and legal complexities etc. all makes the Channel 4 brand attractive for the international broadcaster.*"

Woods also thinks of the channel brand as a b2b brand. "*In the TV market you have to commit money to a product before it is made, you will be more inclined to commit to an established programme maker such as CBS, or Nine Network, so the brand is the façade in front of the reputation. What is also important is that the brand perception is somewhat behind the nature of the product, and the product's competitive advantage. For example, it took four years in the UK for the Hallmark brand to be taken seriously, because it was perceived as a greeting cards brand playing Gulliver's Travels and things like that.*"

Danny Cohen, Channel 4, considers brand management in television to be operating at two levels. "*At the channel level it is hugely important to have a clear identity in a much more cluttered market place. In a digital market place there is a lot of same-iness between various channels and having a distinctive unique offering is hugely important to survive. To do that you need to have a brand that sort of markets that distinctive outlook and allows survival in British television today. At a more micro level, you have programme brands that can play an important part within the overall branding of a channel. For example at Cutting Edge, we believe in benchmarking the documentary quality, so our micro brand's key is the quality of our output and its distinctiveness; having certain brands at the programme or strand level that have a strong reputation is thus very important for the channel brand.*"

Sham Sandhu, FIVE, agrees with Cohen that brand management is about making programmes and the channel personality stand out from others. "*Especially in an increasingly competitive and noisy environment with multi-channel penetration getting deeper and deeper, it's about communicating the personality of the channel and pointing out a difference to the audience. In spite of the broad remit of the terrestrial channels, you still have a rough idea before you press the remote, what sort of show are you going to get and what perspective it is going to look the world from. For example our news is always going to be different from BBC News or Channel 4 News. By the way, news is a very interesting phenomenon of judging how a channel would like to brand itself and almost all broadcasters like to treat their news in a particular way.*"

Nick Thorogood, UKTV, feels that brand management in the multi-channel world is different from terrestrial channels because of the way people access these channels. "*In order to access UKTV Style, a viewer has to go through first a menu of at least 30-40 channels in the EPG, maybe he is accessing the channel through genre menu, or while he is with one programme, he is also flicking through other channels; so at the end it is about individual programme titles. It is also about the number of eyeballs and numbers of homes. Moreover, multi-channels tend also to have a very specific purpose, it focuses on delivering to an audience or a particular genre. These unique characteristics of the multi-channel world emphasise the role which brand management can and does play today in the UK TV scenario.*"

Inference:

The majority of the respondents say that the role of TV brand management in UK today is to cut through the clutter of increasingly penetrating multi-channels. A brand becomes important as it provides a short-cut to viewers to expect a certain type of programme on a channel, i.e. provides the channel's as well as the programme's positioning in the market. The channel as well as programme brand tries to establish a distinctiveness epitomized by a viewer's emotional experience gained through the type of programming, style, idents, self-promotions etc. Thus, for some respondents, the brand image is still a very important part of brand management in broadcasting. This reflects Chan-Olmsted and Kim's (2001) arguments from a study based in the USA that the awareness of brand amongst broadcasting professionals is increasing, however falls short of Kapferer's (2000) contention about the strategic nature of brand management. Griffin's idea, that brand management is seen from a brand image point of view, is also seen here.

In a business to business scenario, channel brands provide a safety net when commissioning overseas programmes and allow channels and networks to deliver specific style of programming, thereby reducing dissonance between expected and delivered content. Big channel brands usually are able to aggregate rights and make a profit in the low margin business of international rights sales, something which independent producers may not be able to sustain without the support of a strong channel brand. This indicates Riezebos's (2003) advantages of embarking on a brand strategy.

An interesting relationship between the channel brand and the news brand has been identified, where the news is usually an indicator of the position which the channel wishes to obtain in a viewer's mind, i.e. the news is the most visual branding statement of the broadcaster. A reflection of Hughes's (1992) study emphasizing that branding of Australian news channels is closely linked to the presenter or type of news is brought to mind.

There is a growing feeling amongst broadcasters and programme makers to now look at channels and programme branding not only from a brand image perspective (Lambie-Nairn (1997) and Meech (1999 and 2001)), but from a more strategic brand identity approach where each channel and its programme brands are created to have a distinct brand identity which provides certain competitive advantages in the market (Kapferer (2000). Thus brand management has started to play an important role in broadcasting today and this is expected to increase in the future.

4.2. Rise of programmes as brands - a challenge to channel brands?

Woods deems channel brands to be the sum total of the programming and the way it is presented. *"However, particularly now that the degree of differentiation is pandering to niche audiences, the programme brands are becoming important and extending beyond their broadcast lives to packaged media, licensed goods, etc. I am certain that audiences watch programmes and not channels and the trick is to get as many programmes as you can together to create a bigger target for someone to aim for. If we were to buy Charmed or Buffy instead of JAG which we had at one point of time, different type of audiences will come over to our channel as its perception and positioning in the market will change considerably. Ultimately, people seek out programming and the best way to look at channel brands is that these are sign posts or navigations and then within these there are programmes as signs and navigations in the schedule*."

Langley also sees programmes brands rising in prominence while maintaining the importance of channel brands*. "Every year a handful of programmes break through the schedule, usually as a result of marketing support from the broadcaster and/ or an innovative format. However due to limited creativity and marketing budgets, many other programmes struggle to be heard above the crowd. For these programmes the channel brand is crucial, it guarantees an audience because the viewers are confident the channel will broadcast something they like."* Langley thinks that this will see strong channel and programme brand co-exist: "*a programme can exist by itself, people can know of it independently but it does not mean that it cannot be part of a bigger channel*".

Thorogood says that different UKTV programmes espouse values of their overall brand. "*We commission a large amount of programmes on our channels and these programmes can be considered the voice of the channel. UKTV Food is a good example where a big part of our expenditure goes into a live daily food programme which is our mouthpiece. It's with the attitude and style that we want to talk about the value of the global brand UKTV*."

Sandhu feels that programme brands are getting more important in their own rights. "*I don't think these programmes can still be regarded as independent brands. Programmes have to stand alone, even if they have to reflect the channel personality. Let's look at channel branding as the micro stuff and programme branding as the macro stuff. The programme brand cannot become completely independent of the channel brand - it has to fit in. Because when we sit and decide what to commission or buy, it has to reflect the values or traits of the channel as well.*"

Cowley feels that it is only producers who are interested in creating brands out of programmes. “*The broadcasters believe that the channel is the main brand whereas producers want to create brands out of programmes to gain re-commissions and provide for commercial exploitation.*”

According to Cohen, at times not identifying with the macro core brand of the channel can be advantageous because one has to keep the audience interested by one’s distinctiveness. “*The Channel 4 brand surprises you, innovates and does amazing things – so you can make this feature an important part of your brand*.” However, he does feel that a programme is inextricably linked to the channel’s ethos. “*If Cutting Edge was to move to another channel, it would do different kinds of stories, every channel has a different set of viewers who have a set expectation from a channel, and so a programme picks subjects and conventions according to that channel.*”

Morris conveys that Channel 4’s marketing promotion to drive viewing has always been programme specific. “O*ur billboard campaigns over the last few years have been about our programmes, our relationships with US studios and our commitment to documentaries and not about the corporate Channel 4 brand. At the same time, now with so much choice available, programmes may be harder to find and viewers might need some guidance through the morass of undifferentiated programming, it may be that a channel brand is a way of differentiating amongst all the programming available. It’s about differentiating*.”

Inference:

There is a general consensus among respondents that programme brands are rising in prominence steadily, though some feel that the broadcasters are interested in creating only the channel brand and the producers are interested in creating the programme brands. Further, the channel may position itself on the type of programming or sometimes the programming is based on the existing positioning of the channel brand – hence both are inextricably linked to each other. However, at times programmes also like to innovate beyond their channel’s identity in order to surprise the viewer and keep the interest level high.

It is evident from the responses that most viewers watch a programme because of its intrinsic values, not so much because of channel which broadcasts it. Hence if a programme brand moves from one channel to another, viewers are likely to shift their channel loyalties as well. However in case of much day time and other non-branded programmes, the channel is still the reason why viewers watch television, comforting the viewer by providing a guarantee that the programme will be watchable. Moreover, channel brands provide the support and infrastructure to programmes before these become brands; hence channels are not at risk of being obviated by programme brands, in fact both are poised to co-exist and add to each others' strengths.

4.3. Programme brands and extensions – a deliberate move with assorted benefits.

Davey considers programme brand extensions as massive revenue generators. "*A strong programme brand gives you the opportunities for telephony, internet, merchandising of games, etc. We are working on a magazine to complement our soaps; but since the print media is such a saturated market, programme brands may have to look for innovative brand extensions.*"

Thorogood feels that if you develop a successful brand, you develop a trust and that is the key to either trying to extend the programme's length of run or using it to get more viewers into your channel's other schedule. "*CSI is a good example, or having spin-off brands such Joey coming out of Friends. The difficult thing to achieve is creating programme brands which add to your channel brand which in turn adds to your network or company brand.*"

Langley, however, feels that currently brand management decisions are borne out of commercial opportunism only. *"The potential of financial exploitation is driving brand extensions rather than somebody with a brand marketing background planning and deciding in advance that we need to create programmes as brand drivers and extend it across various platforms."*

Woods feels that for a large corporation which has interests over a variety of distribution channels such as broadcast, packaged media, licensed consumer products, etc. the nature of the programme brand is considered right at the development stage. "*Particularly in the children's market it's absolutely vital that the programme has a life beyond the TV screen. However, if there is a natural fit only then brand extensions should be tried. Saga started as a travel company for over 55s and now has diversified into magazines, heath, insurance and finance, radio and social networking. The AA was highly capable of moving outside their business of recoveries into other segments of travel. So there is no reason why channel and more importantly programme brands can't do that.*"

Cohen however feels that we have got to be careful in doing so. "*You could argue that Wife Swap is now a brand, but you would not have gone into it thinking 'this is our plan and how successful it is going to be'. You want to have programmes that people notice, having a successful brand means that people are aware of it. Some programmes would do that for you and some won't*."

Morris feels that though the Channel 4 brand means something to industry professionals but it does not have much relevance to consumers while buying a programme extension or product off the shelf. "*The retail market is driven by the consumer's desire to buy a programme product such as Bo Selecta or Ali G or Phoenix Nights, not because it was on Channel 4! Our brand, however, does reassure the consumer that it is coming from a trusted source and not an unknown production house*."

<u>Inference:</u>

The responses reveal that successful programmes are not only being exploited as brands but their extensions are also being created more often. However, the decisions to create these extensions are borne out of the financial viability of these extensions alone; there is low evidence of any comprehensive brand strategy producers or broadcasters put in place for a programme. Here, Rogers' (2003), Mutel's (2004) and Keighron's (2004) observations about programme brands moving across various platforms have been qualified further and given more depth.

Traditional extensions such as magazines, books, etc. are losing ground because of the saturation in the print market; hence brand extensions must be sought in other media such as spin-off programming across multiple platforms, retail, consumer goods, etc. The importance of brand extensions in children's programming has also been highlighted, reflecting Whitney (2003)'s writings that the children's market being a destination market needs a closer look.

However, programme brand extensions should be tried only if there is a fit to the original values of the programme, thereby retaining the trust with the viewer established because of the original programme brand.

4.4. Managing programme brands and channel brands.

Woods feels that the principles of retail brand management are entering the TV industry. "*Sky today is selling boxes just like a retail store and they don't care about the content as long as it delivers audiences. The channel is now a retailer, and within it you have lines or segments which you could equate to programming. So if a rival retailer offers the same product at a lower price, people will go there. However, the shop front or the reason why a customer walks into the shop, i.e. the idents and the tone of the message of the channel needs to be attractive and instil confidence in the nature of the programming.*" Woods equates the broadcasting industry further to established high street retailing, "*if you come to us, you will expect a certain quality and standard of a product in the same way as you will when you shop in Lidl or Asda, both are positioned as cheap low price shops, in contrast to Waitrose which stands for quality at a fair price.*"

Davey also provides an example from retail marketing. "*If audiences invest their time in a programme, they want to know that it comes from a trusted source, when we (ITV) had Home and Away five years ago it used to get about 5 million viewers and then it moved to FIVE and now it gets 2 million. So a reason for a channel to exist is to initiate for brand loyalty for the programme as well. I can buy lettuce in Asda as well as Marks and Spencer's, I will probably buy it at Marks and Spencer's, and hence the same principles are starting to take shape here.*"

Langley, however, considers the brand management techniques to be quite sophisticated for the current broadcasting market. "*The industry has always been skewed with BBC which has always taken a non-commercial line. You could say that BBC is an umbrella brand and under that you have all sorts of programmes, consumer products, shops, events and magazines and all that kind of stuff; and taking into consideration BBC Worldwide you can apply a typical brand management model easily but it is only very slowly that the commercial channels are catching up.*"

Cowley contends that brand management is today practised by all marketing departments of broadcasters. "*There is little emphasis of brand management in programmes, although this area is becoming important with the growth of format shows like "Big Brother", "Pop Idol" and "Celebrity-Get-Me-Out-Of-Here". The industry is becoming more aware of the importance of creating a channel identity and hence a brand – though this concept is understood by schedulers and marketers, not many commissioning editors are in favour of it. And there is very little perception currently of programme branding".*

Sandhu agrees with Cowley that commissioners like him are more cynical about branding of programmes. "*We see it as a necessary evil, there is a sort of underlying tension between programming and marketing as the marketing department who are responsible for selling the show don't always reflect the key assets of a show. Though I would not suggest that marketing gets involved at the commissioning stage, they too have a budget for selling shows and it would be necessary to involve them at some stage, hence the tension of when should marketing get involved.*"

For Nick Thorogood, the recent brand building activity of UKTV has been a rewarding success. *"First we developed individual channel brands, inspired by the programming or genre, say you were watching UKTV Food; you knew it was going to be a food channel. The second stage was to develop genre brands like Lifestyle and so on and beyond that we developed a more structured and complex brand proposition, about understanding the values, essence and communication of UKTV and to develop it as a network brand."*

Davey, while enumerating some conflicts of managing programme and channel brands, feels that it is easier for smaller channels which have a niche remit and specific target audience to commission programmes selectively to identify closely with its brand identity. "*ITV is harder to manage because it is a broad mass appeal channel for 16 – 70 year olds, and every night there are different types of programmes. So we use glitz and star value to endorse and thus brand our channel. Our brand's job is to tell people "what's on and when" on this channel with star names and high quality drama that makes people talk about us. But the producers have their own departments responsible for the development of a programme brand. After the success of a programme, its brand guardians come to us and say that they need to position and brand the programme in a particular way; that may not be consistent with how we want to brand the programme on our channel – so you have to find a common ground. Also, some programme brands are so strongly ingrained in our culture that it would be silly to try and make these brands fit into a tight mould of a corporate or channel brand."*

<u>Inference:</u>

There is evidence that the principles of retail brand management are entering the broadcast industry, thus programmes will soon be considered a product or line of the channel brand, though some feel that television is far from becoming another retail outlet as programme brands are still not being managed with accepted marketing tools. Even the comprehensive programme and channel branding initiatives adopted by the BBC are yet to filter down to the overall broadcasting industry. Broadcasters like to refer to the importance of the channel brand which provides undifferentiated programming the opportunity to be consumed by the audience, linking it directly to the value of the shop front in retail branding, and referring it to the channel's brand image (or visual styling) as a reason for viewers to walk into the shop front or the channel. This is not necessarily the case with branded programmes as discussed in the previous sections.

It is easier for small niche channels with a genre based definition to create channel brands but it is a difficult for a channel with a broad remit to do so. The broader remit channels seem to depend on branded programmes (and sometimes the brand or star value of its actors). Hence, even the big players have to sometimes negotiate with the branding of a strong programme to fit their channel brand values.

Evidence of a residual suspicion between programme makers (i.e. the producers and commissioners) and the marketers (the sales and business development department) of the broadcasters has also surfaced, partly due to the exclusivity between various programme functions such as production, commissioning and marketing. This however, will wane away in the future as these exclusive functions are coming together because of societal and digital technology changes, discussed further in the next section.

4.5. Effect of digital media developments and convergence on programme brands.

Thorogood contends that it is because of technology that the programme brand comes into the play. "*When you have a single box solution that accesses a database of every programme ever made, that puts a great deal of power into programmes brands. However, at the end of a hard difficult day, do you really want to sit down and dial your way through menus and decide what to watch? There is something straightforward about going to a channel that delivers what you want to watch when you want to watch it. The other part of the situation is the whole event based and time connected type of programming. You can't have live events on a PVR, because part of the reason you are watching it is for the excitement of something to happen. So there will always be a place for event based and live programmes for people to come back to specific channels.*"

Sandhu agrees that technologies are affecting programme and channel brands. "*There isn't much group experience based lean back entertainment available in society and that's what television provides us today. Technologies such as PVRs allow us to watch the content we want to".*

Langley thinks that the reason for the growth of brand management in broadcasting is the way people are watching content nowadays supported by technologies. "*Technologies such as PVR, broadband, multi-platform consumption of content massively change the viewing habits of people. If people are given any opportunity to interact with content, they do that and as a result they go to trusted brands; brands they know will deliver content consistent with their viewing needs*."

Morris laments that the power of the digital technologies is yet to be realised seriously by industry professionals. "*PVRs can differentiate between the programme brands and store the relevant ones for you. This completely challenges the channel brand. Sky, for example, has an advertising team selling to our advertisers the ability to hold a number of advertisements specifically for audiences they know are going to be watching on the PVR. Viewers can actually download a specific number and type of advertisements. So they are selling the technology – and trying to come between us and our audiences. The ads themselves, when do viewers watch them, when are these downloaded into the hard disk of the viewer and when are these deleted are all controlled by Sky, not by the viewer. And this I think is the biggest threat to traditional terrestrial broadcasters' brands*."

According to Woods, technologies are forcing broadcasters to think innovatively to safeguard their audiences. "*One of the reactions is to have a portfolio of channels, UKTV is a good example as it can cross promote and is less concerned about people being loyal to specific channel brands and more about people sticking with a bouquet of channels. Another reaction is for the broadcasters and advertisers to find more efficient ways of weaving commercial messages in the programme or channel brand. A third, less intrusive reaction, would be to have on-screen graphics and promotional trailers soaked in the essence of an advertiser's brand in the EPG system. The interactive way by which you navigate across the TV scape will be the key point of entry for commercial brands when they want to look beyond spot advertising.*"

Woods continues by arguing that digital technology is the key for enhanced brand communications in TV today. "*It is technology that is enabling broadcasters to offer a more complex and deeper array of services. For example, about 40% of BSkyB's advertising revenue, including subscription and technical services, comes from interactive services alone. So previously where Sky Sports would offer the best sports coverage and the best games live as a value addition, now consumers are expected to pay extra for these features, and in order to be a competitive sports brand, they needed to have the technology for gaming, the insights, the opportunity to buy stuff while watching TV. It's affecting both the ways packaging and promoting is differentiated, but it's also affecting the very nature of the programme itself – it's becoming deeper and the breadth of services are increasing exponentially as time goes by.*"

Davey's advertisers today want to know what she is doing to preserve her channel's position in the digital world. *"One way is to develop a family of channels. You recognize that if at some times you are going to lose audiences lose them in your own family. That's one of the areas we are working at, creating brand extensions within the TV platform, so if we had Pop Idols, we created Pop Idols Extra. We have launched a new channel ITV3 and there would be more channels to follow so that we can minimise the switch to other competitors*". Davey goes on to give another example. "*Advertisers are thinking to check adverts on fast forward, that's how some people view advertisements in the PVR era, and if you can't make sure that you have your message consistently on for 30 seconds in the same screen spot; it's likely that your viewer will miss it. Understanding how consumers are consuming media in total and then working out some complete media strategies so that they see us in the right places at the right time is the key to success."*

On convergence, Morris suggests that the real value of channel brands to those offering solutions in new technologies is, "…*we have had a hugely successful recipe in the last 20 odd years, by excelling in an editorial environment, which attracts commercially viable audiences, hence it would be great to work together with new technological partners and develop things which appeal to audiences. However, Channel4 is not poised to be a good endorser of other brands. Simply having C4's logo on your mobile is not going to drive any value. When we launched "A Place in the Sun" and "Grand Designs" magazines based on successful Channel4 programmes, there was a move to apply the Four Homes brand (an umbrella brand to get sponsorship for home improvement programmes) to the magazines. However, these magazine extensions and their parent programmes attack a specific niche audience; probably a reason why these magazines were successful. Grand Design occupies a niche between building and architecture review types of magazines and A Place in the Sun targets people wanting to buy a property abroad. What is Four Homes? It appeals right across the homes segment audience and hence is too broad for sustained success. This is an example of a channel brand not adding any value to the end consumer but a programme brand adding massive commercial value.*"

Cowley argues that trusted content brands become very important in the fragmented multi-channel distribution platforms. "*People recognise brands and trust the content when given a large amount of choice, for e.g. on the Internet, mobile portals aggregate well known content from the BBC, ITN, Sky etc.*"

Inference:

A consensus amongst respondents is that digital technology contributes towards growth of the individual programme brand because viewers, or their digital programme selectors, plough through programme and genre criteria to select a specific programme to watch; thereby effectively bypassing the channel and its schedule (bring forth Todreas's (1999) thoughts that the content creator will in the future have prominence over the content conduit). This happens except in the case of live or event based programming where both the programme as well as the channel brand is affected by other concerns of digital technology.

In today's TV scenario, given an opportunity, audiences like to interact rather than just be passive viewers. It can therefore be surmised that audiences are more likely to interact with trusted brands, rather than other unbranded programmes or promotions. Moreover, technology helps the producers to pack in more interactive features to a programme to help it become interactive, thereby changing the nature of programming as well. Even broadcasters are beginning to use such interactive features to complement their live and event based programming, in many cases to open extra revenue streams.

Many broadcasters feel that digital technologies are not only having an effect on the programme brand, they are actively undermining the channel brand, especially when a retailer or a programme re-packager comes between the broadcaster and its intended audience. One way to counter this threat is to utilize technology to build the broadcaster's brands. For this the nature of channel promotion might need to change and become more visually explicit and prolonged so that even fast forwarded channel promotion may have impact. Another way is to cross promote on the family channels so that loss of audience happens only within the family. A third way would be to use technology, such as sophisticated on screen graphics and electronic programme guides to help reinforce and build the channel brand.

Programme brands are also poised to move across various digital media platforms as audiences start to trust these brands irrespective of the platform. However, these cross platform movements must be attempted only when there is a natural fit to the brand values of the programme in order to sustain interest in the target audience. This is another case where the corporate channel brand fails to be an effective endorser and add value to a cross-platform brand extension initiative but the programme brands succeed.

4.6. The programme brand and its effect on the producer – broadcaster relationship

As an independent regional producer, Langley always dreams of a format that is going to break through because "*…it changes the balance of power from just another programme supplier to a gatekeeper to value which the consumer is looking for. You may break through a broadcaster with a hit show and once it has broken through, there is no reason why you won't be able to go directly to a retailer such as Sky Plus with your programmes. But this is going to happen only if the idea is so fantastic and out of the world. But you will still have to fund from somewhere to produce it, distribute it, market it and negotiate space on the retailer's schedule, thereby turning the production company into a quasi-broadcaster itself. So in the end it might still be simple to go through a broadcaster who already has a reputation with the audience.*"

Cowley also suggests that not much change has happened in the relationship due to digital developments, "*Although there is more choice of broadcasters, there is still a limited supply of programme budgets – so larger production companies will still be reliant on the major terrestrial broadcasters for big budgets. Only a few of the digital channels actually commission.*"

Thorogood thinks that traditionally the producers have been focussed on themselves, "*but now they have to understand the channel brand and know what is required by the target market of this brand. Equally what producers may want to do might be more diverse than what the brand allows or needs; so getting the balance right is the key thing. However, I don't think producer's bargaining powers has increased, because in-spite of the small number of strong programme brands, a broadcaster also supports a multitude of weak programmes from the same producer. With some very successful programme brands, the producer may have a slightly different position of power, but in the multi-channel world, it is difficult*."

Morris links the expansion of the digital space to the increase in the value of programme rights and thinks the new regulatory terms of trade with the programme supplier view in place, institutionalises the power of the producer. "*Part of the reason why Channel 4 was set up was not only to create an alternative platform to BBC and ITV but also to encourage an independent production community by substantial investments. The new terms of trade has severed the link between the odd 275 million that Channel 4 spends in fostering independent productions and its ability to recoup this investment through international distribution. This isn't going to sustain a* *small fragmented UK production market with small pockets of rights to be brought onto the market by individual producers*."

For Sandhu, as the rights become more valuable, the producer's relationship does change with the broadcaster. "*That's fine because as the rights become more valuable, producers place more emphasise on the saleable aspects of the programmes. Remember that they own an idea and they walk in through our door with it; inevitably we as broadcasters then shape it, and the idea evolves to make it right for a channel. That's what becomes tricky during the negotiation – deciding how much of the idea remains theirs. This process shapes the relationship.*"

Cohen also thinks that the producer's power does increase when they have got a brand, because it is a position of strength. "*I think we need strong producers who can come up with the next lot of successful programme brands, so it is mutually good news*."

<u>Inference:</u>

The responses reveal that the increasing awareness of strong programmes as brands, helped by the digital technologies, has substantially increased the original producer's powers, which many in the industry still deny. However, producers recognize that the broadcaster has to support much of the generic undifferentiated programming besides the strong programme brands. Besides, particularly in the case of commissioned programming, the broadcaster shapes much of the producer's idea, thereby securing for itself a strong position in the relationship.

Regulation has also stepped in to give the original producers more ownership of programme rights, thereby rendering the broadcasters as one of the outlets where producers may sell their goods, namely programme brands. This makes some broadcasters clearly unhappy who argue that the increasing power of the producers will make it difficult for them to infuse much needed development investment. On the other hand, the producer or the commissioning controller viewpoint is that the increase in power will mean much better programming as the producers will also keep an eye out for the saleable aspects of a programme.

4.7. AFPs and AFCs – commercial brand challenges to programme brands.

Morris contends that whereas once advertisers had to just worry about the competitive advertiser within the breaks on the other channels, now investment in content by creating brands which cuts through the fragmentation is driving the current interest in AFPs. *"However, unless you are going to have an AFC which competes with the general interest terrestrial channels, then it would still be seen as a shopping channel; whereas programmes or formats which specifically support an advertiser's message and which can defend their place on a major broadcaster's schedule is going to be a major power for a broadcaster.*"

Cowley makes the difference more explicit. "*AFPs are a replacement of the 30 second spot whereas AFCs are about re-distributing long term marketing money into a channel. Whereas AFCs need to compete against normal channels, AFPs still need to attract good audiences.*"

Morris, however, feels that a gap in understanding between the broadcasting commissioners and advertisers is keeping more AFPs from being made. *"Why can't we create a virtuous circle as both broadcasters and advertisers are facing the same problems of trying to generate content which cuts through the fragmentation and secure an audience, thereby benefiting the channel and also an advertiser. That cannot be as crude as having programmes which are thirty minute adverts, because that beats the objective. And the advertisers, who are highly intelligent people, understand the nature of editorial integrity and the idea of keeping faithful to the viewer. Though historically advertisers have been interested only in the breaks between programmes and broadcasters have been interested in the programmes; now there is common purpose and hence the economic environment will necessitate more of alliances in the near future*."

Cohen is more apprehensive about AFPs. "*I think they rarely work but we will see more of them, the big question is whether they compromise any editorial integrity of the programme, I haven't seen many who have done so yet but we might see some as broadcasters look to save more money.*"

Sandhu feels that it's very rare that advertisers actually know what would work as a programme for the audiences. *"It's an attractive proposition that they pay for the show, however, if you are not financing a programme, giving undue prominence to a partner becomes a huge issue. As far as AFCs are concerned, most are like shopping channels with no real programming. It is feasible for channels such as those selling insurance or holidays to niche target markets such as sixty plus but the audience numbers are very small to make these into brands in their own right or to challenge existing broadcaster brands.*"

For Langley there is a possibility that brands will increasingly become content providers in their own right. "*It's about secondary brand association; advertisers now want their brands to be associated with existing programmes or broadcasters' brands that appeal to a specific target market. They know to relinquish editorial control over to the broadcaster as otherwise the broadcaster and the audiences will not associate with them at all. So there is always going to be a balance of power between two competing brands, this is unique when you look at secondary brand associations in other industries. There you are not dealing with unquantifiable definitions, i.e. my opinion of what constitutes a good programme may differ from yours, so it's very difficult to get an advertiser's brand onto a project. That is going to make AFPs quite difficult to make and run.*"

Langley does feel an impending challenge to the existing channels from AFCs. "*Tango – the drink guys consider themselves to be an entertainment brand and are planning on launching Tango TV; Sky Travels started as a shopping channel selling holidays and destinations and they have now moved to a more editorial content. So it will be interesting to see how AFCs develop because regulation does not say that the channel has to be editorially weak".*

Inference:

There is a sharp divide between commissioners and marketers of programmes regarding advertiser funded content. Programme commissioners feel that AFPs hardly work and the advertiser is always trying to get undue prominence from the programme producer. However, marketers are of the opinion that a virtuous circle, without compromising editorial integrity, can be created which benefits all parties. Though many respondents feel that the regulation is well defined in terms of AFPs and AFCs, others cite examples where certain programmes have been interpreted by the law in ways not conducive for the producer and the broadcaster. This coincides with Crown's (2003) contention about AFPs that regulation is keeping a closer look on the industry. The industry, however, seems poised to see more of AFPs and AFCs in the future.

Most respondents feel that AFPs still need to attract the fragmented audience, part of the reason why they exist. However, the presence of a commercial brand in the programme may help drive synergies for the programme brand. Hence, secondary brand association will be seen more now in television. However, some respondents, while acknowledging that AFPs will increase in the future, are also wary of experimenting with them as of now – some attribute it to the lack of awareness on part of the advertisers (who still feel safe with spot advertising) or a fear of backlash from the audience (who may feel undue prominence given to an advertiser). AFCs, on the other hand, may become a threat to established channel brands only if they increase their editorial content and integrate it with their self-promotions.

4.8. Future of programme and channel branding.

Langley feels there is massive potential of niche channels. "*Increasingly, we will have to look at channels from a more holistic viewpoint. Simple straightforward spot advertising as a means of earning revenue is going to decline; however, a lot of revenue can be driven from magazines, events and consumer products. These can be used to drive the editorial then.*"

Cohen also thinks that brand management in broadcasting is going to become more important. "*Both producers and marketers want audiences to watch our programmes, however, marketing should not get involved at the commissioning stage since I would not know the best way of marketing the programme, so I would not expect a marketer to know the best way of making a programme. You have to make a good program first and worry about the marketing after that*".

But Davey argues that brand management in broadcasting will not happen till marketing gets involved in programme commissioning and production. "*Marketing in another customer driven industry gets involved in new product development, working out the product shelf life and so on. By emphasising that we need particular types of programmes to fit our channel brand, marketing goes through the core of the programme. The above to some extent happens currently in BBC and to a lesser extent at FIVE. It is also critical that the producers become marketing savvy; they will find difficult to sell to viewers without being open to the suggestions of the marketing team. For example, some producers commission actors, who we know, will not sell anymore or some find it hard to swallow that we try to crystallize their months of hard work into one phrase etc. to brand a programme*."

According to Thorogood, "*If you think about the technological changes that we have seen in the last twenty years, and the idea that we would be carrying around in our pockets a computer so powerful that it can send video images, take photographs, store and play music, play games and also phone people, it's just extraordinary. So there is no reason to assume that we won't be having a pocket television in the same way of some sort by which we will be receiving programmes and video on demand – thus increasing the brand value not only of the content carrier but also the content*."

Woods sees umbrella network brands appearing as trusted brands. "*Cross promotion opportunities can really make or break a broadcaster's business. ITV1 can shift a million viewers to ITV2 in the blink of an eye with one promo. Umbrella network brands provide a level of trust to the viewer for another type of programme. For example, the sum total of UKTV's cross promotions across its sub brands is yielding results for the UKTV network brand. Sky or Discovery did it the other way around – starting off with a big parent brand and slowly introducing sub brands*."

<u>Inference:</u>

Marketers wish to get involved with the programme right at its idea and conception stages to evaluate its fit to the overall channel brand, position it appropriately in the target market and to apply product life cycle concepts to it – thus eventually increasing the prospect for a well thought-out and planned brand extension strategy, something which the programme makers understandably don't want as it seems to compromise their creative position. This needs to be addressed by emphasizing to programme makers and commissioners the importance of overall marketing – not just selling. Some broadcasters have already put in place cross functional teams which look at programmes as brands right at their conception – without compromising the creative aspects of the programmes.

The future will see more secondary brand associations, i.e. AFPs and AFCs, besides brand extensions of programme brands in various other media such as internet, telephony, other programming, events, consumer goods, etc. This has close resonance with Swain's (2001) thoughts that value creation through various associated brands will drive content creation in television. Such developments will be accentuated by advances in television broadcast technology.

Another trend is towards amalgamation of channel brands under strong corporate or family brands. This will not only drive synergies between the various family channels but also provide broadcasters an opportunity to tie audiences between their various channels.

5. Conclusions

The role of brand management in broadcasting

Brand management has started to play an important role in broadcasting today. Channels and programme brands are being looked upon not only from a brand image and style perspective, but also in a strategic view to create a distinct 'brand identity' which can provide competitive advantages. A brand in television today provides a panacea against the morass of undifferentiated programming and increasingly penetrating multi-channel expansion. The brand represents the channel and programme positioning by establishing a distinctiveness epitomized by a viewer's emotional experience.

Broadcasting brands are now being equated to retail brands, where programmes can be considered a product or line of a channel. However, comprehensive branding initiatives adopted by the frontrunner of the UK's TV industry, the BBC, are yet to be filtered down and replicated. Moreover, broadcasters like to refer to the importance of the channel brand as it provides undifferentiated programming the opportunity to be consumed by the audience. They link it directly to the value of the shop front in retail branding, and referring it to the channel's brand image (or visual styling) as a reason for viewers to walk into the shop front or the channel. But this argument largely fails in the case of branded programmes.

The rise of the programme brand

Programme brands can be seen as rising in prominence steadily as a majority of industry professionals feel that most viewers want to watch a programme and not because it is broadcast on a particular channel. Hence if a programme brand moves from one channel to another, viewers are likely to shift their channel loyalties as well.

The rise in programme brands can be attributed largely to digital technology as viewers, or their digital programme selectors, can now plough through programme and genre criteria to select a specific programme to watch; thereby effectively bypassing the channel and its schedule. This, however, does not happen in the case of live or event-based programming where both the programme as well as the channel brand is affected by other concerns of digital technology, as discussed further.

It may be remembered that in today's TV scenario, given an opportunity, audiences increasingly like to interact rather than remain passive viewers. And they are more likely to interact with trusted programme brands, rather than unbranded programmes and promotions. Here again, technology helps the producers to pack in features to a programme to make it interactive, thereby changing the nature of programming as well.

Programmes are not only being seen and exploited as brands but their extensions are being created more often, particularly in the case of children's and event-based programming. Traditional extensions such as magazines and books are losing ground because of the saturation in the print market and so brand extensions must be sought across media platforms such as spin-off programming, internet, mobile telephony, retailing, events and consumer goods; all developments accentuated by advances in digital technology. Here, it strongly appears that the channel brand fails to be an effective endorser of a programme brand extension initiative.

Currently, however, programme brand extensions are only borne out of their financial potential. There is no evidence of an industry wide comprehensive brand strategy which producers or broadcasters are putting in place to create programme brand extensions. Broadcasters also have to keep in mind that brand extensions may be tried only if there is a fit to the original values of the programme, thereby retaining the trust and interest with the viewer established by the programme.

Advertiser funded programmes, another type of branded programming, seem to be on the increase as well, though a part of the industry is wary of experimenting with them, attributing a lack of awareness on the part of the advertisers (who may feel safe with spot advertising) or a fear of backlash from audiences (who may feel undue prominence being given to an advertiser). However, the industry is coming to terms with the fact that presence of a commercial brand in close proximity to a programme helps drive synergies for the programme brand. Advertiser funded channels, on the other hand, may become a threat to established channel brands only if they increase their editorial content and integrate it with their self-promotions. Ultimately, the future will see more secondary brand associations (i.e. AFPs and AFCs) in the broadcasting industry in the UK.

Regulation is another factor which has contributed to the growth of programme brands. It gives the original producers more ownership of programme rights, thereby rendering the broadcasters as just one of the buyers to whom producers may sell their goods, namely programme brands. This, coupled with the awareness of following a brand strategy for programmes, has substantially increased the original producer's powers. This unsettles the broadcasters who argue that the increasing power of the producers will make it difficult for them to inject investment to develop and market innovative programmes. Producers recognize that the broadcaster supports the development as well as the marketing of most of the generic undifferentiated programming besides the branded programmes; particularly in the case of commissioned programmes where the broadcaster shapes much of the producer's idea and secures for itself a strong position in the relationship. Overall, the increase in power means better programming as the producers will also keep an eye out for the saleable aspects of a programme.

Building the channel brand in context of programme brands

On the interaction between programme and channel brands, it is easier for niche channels with a specific genre remit to create channel brands; the same is difficult for a channel with a broader remit. The broad remit channels seem to have a higher reliance on programme brands (or sometimes the star value of its principal actors). Some channels position themselves on the type of programming and sometimes programming is based on the existing position and perception of the channel brand – both being inextricably linked to each other.

From a channel's perspective, digital technologies seem to be undermining its brand, especially when a retailer or a programme re-packager comes between the broadcaster and its intended audience. However, technology can also be utilized to brand the broadcaster's channels as well. Digital technologies also offer sophisticated on-screen graphics and electronic programme guides which will be used to help reinforce and build the channel brand. Interactive features will be used to complement live and event based programming to build the channel's brand and in many cases to open extra revenue streams. It is also clear that, because of digital technologies, many more channels exist today, however the future will see amalgamation of these numerous channel brands under strong corporate brands in order to drive synergies by cross promoting and tying audiences down between the family channels.

An interesting relationship between the channel brand and the news programme brand has been identified, where the news is usually an indicator of the position which the channel wishes to obtain in a viewer's mind. In other words, the news becomes the most visual branding statement of the channel.

In a business to business scenario, channel brands provide a safety net when commissioning overseas programmes and allow channels and networks to deliver specific style of programming, thereby reducing dissonance between expected and delivered content. Bigger channel brands usually are able to aggregate rights and make a profit, something which independent producers may not be able to manage and sustain because of low margins in international rights sales. Channel brands provide the development support and infrastructure to programmes before these become brands; hence channels are not being obviated by programme brands. Both are poised to co-exist and add to each others' strengths.

<u>The future of programme and channel brand building.</u>

Finally, today's TV marketers wish to get involved with the programme at the conception stage to evaluate its fit to the overall channel brand, position it appropriately in the target market and apply sophisticated marketing tools. This increases the prospect of a well planned brand management and extension strategy, something which the programme makers don't want as it seems to compromise their creative position. Suspicions between programme makers (i.e. the producers and commissioners) and the marketers (i.e. the sales and business development department of the broadcasters) remain, mainly due to the perceived exclusivity between various programme functions such as production, commissioning and marketing. These need to be addressed by emphasizing to all concerned the importance of overall marketing – not just selling. Slowly, the exclusivity of programme functions is breaking down because of changes in digital technology, as some broadcasters are putting in place cross-functional teams which consider programmes as brands during conception itself, without compromising the creative and innovative aspects of the programme.

6. Limitations of this research & Scope for further study

Terms such as 'programme branding', 'channel branding' and 'broadcast branding' have been used interchangeably at some places ostensibly pointing to a limitation. This is in fact one of the strengths as, even though the focus of this research has been to study programme branding, wherever appropriate the author has discussed channel branding, giving a holistic picture of programme branding in the context of overall broadcast branding. Many industry professionals also do not look at programme, channel and overall broadcast branding as distinct areas, thereby allowing the researcher to do the same.

Some readers might propose a lack of representative responses from the BBC and BSkyB, companies which have a major role to play in shaping how the industry is managed. However, all respondents have contributed in their capacity as part of the broadcast industry profession with many moving from company to company with similar understanding of issues and an equal playing field.

The generalizability of such a study can be strengthened if more time and resource is allocated and the scope of the research expands to take into account other stakeholders such as advertisers and broadcasting intermediaries such as content re-packagers and last mile connectivity vendors (examples are Top-up TV, NTL, Telewest, Freeview etc.).

Programme brands may also be studied from the perspective of audiences, another important stakeholder in the broadcasting business. They can provide their own unique outlook on programme branding. This was, however, beyond the purview here, leaving the scope open for developing the topic for another post-graduate research or a doctoral research.

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8. Appendices

8.1. The interview guide

Snapshot of Page 1 of the Interview guide:

“Building Television Programme Brands - perspectives of UK television professionals?”

Kindly see the next page for notes on the Aim of the Research, Interview Rationale, Interview Administration and Ethical Considerations and Declaration.

Interview Questions or Areas of Discussion

1. What is the role of branding/ brand management in television?
2. What is the current industry professionals’ perception of channel branding?
3. What is the current industry professionals’ perception of programme branding?
4. Is the programme brand independent from the channel brand?
5. Are broadcasters deliberately trying to create brands out of their programmes? Are there any benefits in either following or not following this strategy?
6. How are the new digital media technologies affecting the above branding issues? Or are the branding changes happening irrespective of digital developments?
7. Does the producer’s relations (i.e. bargaining power with the broadcaster) change in the context of the new media digital developments?
8. What is the future of channel branding? Will programme brands outgrow the channel brands to exist on their own?
9. Your thoughts on existence of channel and programme brands across a variety of media platforms such as TV, Internet, Mobile telephony etc.?
10. Your thoughts on whether the existing product and services brands taking on the role of programme and channel brands through advertiser funded programming (recent examples may include Fashion House and Thomas Cook TV) will this create a challenge to the channel’s brand?
11. Any other thoughts on programme and channel branding?

Page Break

Snapshot of Page 2 of the Interview Guide:

Aim of the research

The aim of this exploratory research is to identify the current UK television industry scenario in television programme branding and channel branding. In other words, it wishes to answer the question: if the television programme is considered a brand today, what methods are the broadcasters' and producers' applying to manage it along with their own channel branding?

Interview Rationale

This guide outlines a set of questions which are designed to indicate the areas on which the interviewee may wish to discuss during the interview. However, at no point should the questions be regarded as limited only to part of a questionnaire or a rigidly structured interview, in fact these may be seen as a guide engulfing a region of knowledge for discussion. Any additional thoughts and ideas concerning TV branding are sought as well.

Interview Administration and Recording

The interview in most cases would last for approximately 30 minutes. Though this seems a short time for in-depth qualitative interviews, the busy schedule of senior industry managers has been kept in mind and hence this guide is being sent in advance to familiarize the interviewees with the issues at hand and create a common ground so that they are not unfamiliar with the area of discussion. <u>It is proposed that all interviews be recorded using minidisk recorders.</u> However, in particular situations where this is not possible, the interviewer will take notes as a basis for subsequent write-ups which would be checked later with the interviewee to ascertain accuracy.

Ethical Considerations and Declaration

The names and company affiliations of the interviewees will be divulged only with permission. If an interviewee wishes anonymity, it will be assuredly provided and his/her pseudonym will be used in the dissertation report. It is also hereby declared that the interview responses will be used only for generalized academic activity and not for any commercial purposes. Finally, a copy of the final report will be sent to all respondents.

8.2. Sample interview transcripts (face-to-face as well as telephonic)

Face to Face Interview with Mike Morris, Channel 4 International.

SS[2]: What, according to you, is the role of branding in television?

MM: In terms of Channel 4, the big question about channel brands that we wrestle with in consumer products division is the value of Channel 4 brand itself as a business to consumer brand, what relevance does Channel 4 have, I am here thinking specifically about the work we do in international sales and consumer products. There has long been a feeling that the Channel 4 recipe for success – I mean we have been very successful over the last 20 odd years that we have been in existence, with a specific recipe – a recipe which enables us to be very effective in recruiting upmarket and young sectors of the audience – the 2 sections which are the most commercial sectors of the audience in UK…in fact the most commercially successful audiences world wide, and that the programme mix and the brand proposition of Channel 4 has enabled us to do that. Helped by the fact that we have had very little competition – the discussion within Channel 4 has always been that can we take the recipe and can we apply that internationally? 8 – 10 years ago, it was possible to become a launch partner in digital media technologies in many territories of UK, it was economically , there has been a big internal argument in that whether Channel 4 has a big brand to drive that internationally or at home – let's talk about international first – my view is that it is not possible. Internationally, Channel 4 is a business to business brand – it is a brand which means something to other industry professionals – it does not have any relevance to consumers in the US or other consumers in any other territory of the world. Our international plans are simply about taking our programmes and selling them to existing broadcasters in the respective territory – we have no plans to take the Channel 4 brand and try to export that internationally – the way some other broadcasters – such as BBC, with BBC America, has done. Plus, BBC already has a particular brand recognition in various parts of the English speaking countries of the world, something which Channel 4 does not have simply because of the small time that we have been around.

Now, in consumer products, especially in the UK, you would think that Channel 4 would have a bigger brand recognition with consumers and more leverage with consumers – in fact if you see the limited research available (or speaking more intuitively), when people buy books, DVDs or

[2] SS means Sukhpreet Singh (the name of the researcher and MM means Mike Morris (name of the respondent).

material based on programme brands, the Channel 4 added value at retail is minimum. It's a useful endorsement for the trade, it's useful endorsement in the promotion of books, magazines, DVDs, etc, but actually what drives the retail market is the consumer's desire to buy products that relate to the programme, not because it was on Channel 4, they buy it because it is the DVD of Bo Selecta or Ali G or Phoenix Nights.

SS: Is this phenomena existent across UK markets, international markets or both for Channel 4 produced products?

MM: Well, in the UK, the brand of Channel 4 itself may not add too much – maybe it is that you can drive better retail or business proposition with another business by using the brand value that Channel 4 has in terms of a business to business brand. It adds a feeling of authenticity for a broadcaster or a scheduler – that this programme has not simply come from a producer – but these are only B2B benefits. The consumer does not care whether the programme has been on Channel 4 or BBC or ITV – they simply want to buy the programme.

SS: Now, that's for selling programmes, however, what is the scenario when the programme is scheduled on Channel 4 for UK audiences, does the Channel 4 brand make a difference to whether audiences choose the programme or not?

MM: I think that is the big question, we have always believed that it does, and the promotion that Channel 4 has behind its brand has been in support of this idea….the idea that if it is on Channel 4, then it is as an alternative to other channels. However, if you look at the marketing promotion that actually drives viewing, it has been very programme specific. If you look at our ability to reach twice the amount of 16-34s for advertiser's value, this has been based on promoting programmes, which relate to that demographic. Hence, our advertising has been suited to the above idea, or if you see our ability to double count the package that has been appealing to that audience, if you look at our billboard campaigns over the last few years, it has been about ER, it has been about Friends, it hasn't been about the corporate Channel 4 – it has successively been about the programmes, about our secure relationships with US studios, or our commitment to documentary film making – the specific inserts in the Times for example, do not talk about if you have nothing to do tonight, watch Channel 4, it has specifically been about ER, the last episode of friends, a cutting edge documentary over this and so on…it has been typically about programmes. The big question hence is in a much more competitive environment, with so much choice individual programmes may be harder to find and you might need some guide through the morass of undifferentiated programming, may be a channel brand is way of differentiating amongst all the programming available.

SS: Are you then implying on a level of trust between the viewer and the channel?

MM: Almost, it's about differentiating – let's say if there is a choice between 4 channels then you can pick the programmes, the ones which appeal to you - hence where they particularly appear isn't much important to you. If you have got a choice of hundreds of programmes and if you live a world of media driven by technologies such as PVRs and other digital menu systems (interactive TV etc.), there may be a bigger role for something in trying to cut down your choices and make the offers, which will appeal to you the most. The channel brand may help in that.

But I am not saying it exactly does, because the technology takes the concept to another level. Let's talk about the Sky Plus box for a moment. In the past six months, people have changed the way they look at advertiser funded programming. The box does a lot of the thinking for you. You don't necessarily are faced with a multitude of choice. The technology can differentiate between the brand and store the relevant programmes for you.

SS: But doesn't this challenge the broadcasters' brand?

MM: Completely, let's see at what is happening. You don't have to look very far in the future. Sky already has an advertising team selling to our advertisers the ability to hold a number of advertisements specifically for audiences; they know are going to be watching on the PVR. You can actually download specific advertisements. And that is a service which Sky is currently selling to advertisers. So they are selling the technology – and trying to become a go between Channel 4 and our audiences.

Also, let's make a distinction between the Sky Plus box and other boxes made by hardware manufacturers. Take Sky Plus – the potential is to make our offering to the advertisers virtually irrelevant. Because they are saying that for those audiences which own the Sky Plus box, they have the ability to re-programme our offerings to our audiences. The ads, when do viewers watch these, when are these downloaded into the hard disk of the viewer and when are these deleted are all controlled by Sky, not by the viewer. And this I think is the biggest threat to traditional terrestrial broadcasters or ad funded business models.

SS: Any strategies to counter this threat?

MM: I think these are really early days, only in the last six months has the power of the PVR become apparent. I don't think this is something which has been particularly taken in by industry professionals. Obviously, the fragmentation of the media landscape has been discussed for sometime now as the major challenge to terrestrial broadcasters and this resulted in BBC Three and BBC Four, our own digital environment – i.e. if the Channel 4 terrestrial channels appeal to 16-34s, then the digital channels E4 and the forthcoming More 4 appeals to the more upmarket demographic. That's a sort of sensible response to the problem that we thought we had – i.e. the massive fragmentation of channels and the audiences. This maximises the power that the terrestrial channels have. What I think now is that we are not even in this landscape, we are further, now driven by various technologies. Some things which gave us some comfort were free technologies such as *Freeview* which emphasized to the market that there is demand for that type of TV distribution. Hence our digital strategy.

But when you throw in PVR into the mix, whether it is sky PVR or a hardware PVR in a TV supplied by Sony or Philips, and you realize that this actually takes away the control over advertising really. And our response to that is pretty nascent as of now. Its something which hasn't really been looked at – the power has yet to be realized.

SS: What would you think is the role played by your brand i.e. Channel 4 in terms of international alliances and so on?

MM: Yes, it does play a role. We don't really produce any of our programmes but our brand is known to work with the cream of the UK production talent, so it is seen internationally as a hotbed of incredible ideas; this plays well with our partners. So, we try and drive as far as possible with our international development partners, based on the power of our brand and our offering, which we then feed in our partners. We have current development deals with ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) and in the US with a number of PBS stations for developing documentary programming. We have similar head office relationships with CNN and other similar broadcasters like ZDF (Germany) and France Television: and all these are driven by the Channel 4 offering. The fact that we occupy this position and that we can develop a slightly differently oriented documentary, factual and entertainment programming for the UK gets us the alliances.

SS: Would you then say that international producers tend to trust an established brand such as Channel 4 than going directly to a UK producer for their programming needs?

MM: Yes, some do, some don't, however there are benefits in going through Channel 4. I think it is interesting to note that recent amendments to the new Ofcom regulations regarding distribution rights and so on. That's going to unsettle the market considerably, keeping in view that we don't automatically get rights to programmes that we commission, which is a slightly bizarre and uneconomic situation to be in, but that's where we are. The economics of distribution internationally actually mean that it is fairly labour intensive high cost small margin business to be in, so unless you can aggregate a large amount of content – which we as Channel 4 can because of our historical position – it's hard to get a one to one relationship between producers and a foreign broadcaster.

There's also the question, certainly in co-production stages of development, where you are committing to ideas which you haven't really seen, there is a huge element of shared risk. You know while some producers have developed these trust relationships with international broadcasters, Channel 4 and the UK producers understand each other and we more or less know the type of programming each production house usually would come up with, thus mitigating the risk of the unseen programme for the international broadcaster. Also the comfort level provided by rights handling, cross national financial and legal complexities etc. is usually borne in mind and the Channel 4 brand becomes more important.

That is not just restricted to scheduled television programming and deals, when we look at the whole area of advertiser funded programming. I have been talking to a number of major advertisers to get involved in this phenomenon, sharing development costs of programming etc. however interestingly it is a new area for most advertisers. Most advertisers are risk averse and they know not much about television. So, whilst it is appropriate for a producer to come up with a programme and then go to an advertising agency which sells space; there is a huge comfort factor in dealing with a recognized brand name such as Channel 4. If the project does not work, both have brand equity to lose, the television brand as well as the advertiser's brand.

Hence, in summary the Channel 4 brand becomes important in all business to business relationships, whether it is between us and international broadcasters, advertising brands, or content co-developers such as Microsoft and Sony.

SS: Do you see the role of the producer changing in this new business scenario?

MM: It does, and I think that with the new terms of trade with the programme supplier view in place, institutionalises that. It's to a certain extent that all UK broadcasters have being prevented from using their natural economic power with the producer - that's what has come out of the programme supplier view. Which is a perfectly good scenario – part of the reason why Channel 4 was set up; not only to create alternative programming to BBC and ITV but also to foster and encourage a lively and independent production community; and I think the programme supplier view has tried to put in place some business terms to formalize this. I think from the commercial point of view, it means that we sort of have a non-commercial relationship with the producers, which if fine, however we all have to work together in the global industry with things such as international distribution being a low margin capital intensive business, means that you have to aggregate rights; you can't afford to have the legal advice, payment infrastructure, rights management systems etc. if you are selling 100 hours of programming, you need to sell several thousand hours of programming to break even. The new terms of trade has severed the link between the 275 odd million that Channel 4 spends in fostering independent productions and it's ability to recoup this investment though international distribution. This isn't going to sustain a small fragmented UK production market with small pockets of rights to be brought onto the market by individual producers. I think that's the disservice that the programme supplier view has done to UK Plc because the whole dynamic that drive the international market is massive fragmentation of production but consolidation of ownership.

SS: Turning our attention now to advertiser funded programming, what do you think is the difference between advertiser funded programming such as Fashion House and AFCs such as Thomas Cook TV?

MM: I think the whole advertiser funded area covers a huge range of different sorts of business solutions for advertisers. And the thing to focus on is the solution not the means by which we attain these solutions. There is obviously a difference between the 2. The key difference is that the pressures which an advertiser faces are the same pressure which a terrestrial broadcaster faces is the fragmentation of the audience. Previously big media buyers such as Initiative buying on behalf of Unilever would buy TV hours in the most cost effective manner. You can do that when you have a few routes in media market to reach the consumer. When that is massively fragmented, you are facing the same problems that the broadcasters are facing, as it adds huge costs to reach the consumer that you actually want to reach; massive competition in that market for example whereas once you had to just worry about your competitive advertiser within the breaks on the other terrestrial channels, now with fewer people watching and more methods of getting the media messages across to them because of digital enhancements; that's a big problem for an advertiser and hence investment in content by creating brands which cuts through the fragmentation is what drives the current interest in advertiser funded programming.

So, obviously behind the development of concepts such as Fashion House, the idea is that it is something which is going to cut through the fragmented nature of the market and is something which people are going to talk about and discuss. For the channel it is about providing another bit of fragmentation which helps the advertiser communicate what they wish to their audiences. So I think there are 2 different responses to the same problem, unless you are going to have a AFC which competes with the likes of general interest terrestrial channels such as Channel 4 or FIVE, then the AFCs would still be seen in the same way as shopping channels; whereas programmes or formats developed which specifically support an advertiser's message and which can defend its place on a major broadcasters' schedule is going to be a major power for a broadcaster.

SS: What about editorial integrity – would it get compromised?

MM: I think there are obviously different agendas between an advertiser and a broadcaster. The traditional commissioning editor view is that you can't take the dollar without compromising your integrity. However, your integrity is being compromised all the time. There is the idea that the channel knows more about the audience than any advertiser possibly could; which is often not the case. I was taught this very early in my career when I used to work for Yorkshire Television. I once went to sell a sponsorship package to Boots based around a Miriam Stoppard afternoon medical show, and I went and told the marketing director that if they sponsored my programme, an estimated target market of about 800,000 people per week would watch them. The marketing director was singly unimpressed, he said Boots used to get 8 million of my target market every week through his doors and hence I should pay him instead! I think there is this huge gap in understanding between the commission side of broadcasting and the advertisers. No one really seems to understand the viewer, however in the above story Boots understood our viewer!

So there may be different agendas, but I don't see why you can't create a virtuous circle as we both (broadcasters and advertisers) are facing the same problems – we are both there to generate things which cut through the fragmentation and secure a bigger audience…why there cannot be stuff which creates better programming which supports the channel and also creates benefits for an advertiser. Now, that can't be as crude as having programmes which are 30 minute adverts for advertisers, because that beats the objective of the advertiser as well as the broadcaster. I think there is a certain amount of suspicion and a lack of understanding that the advertisers want that. The advertisers don't want that – advertisers are all highly intelligent people – they are not simpletons – they all understand the nature of editorial integrity and keeping faithful to the viewer – and they are doing that in their daily lives in a slightly different situation.

Historically advertisers were interested in the breaks between programmes and broadcasters were interested in the programmes; now there is common purpose and hence I think the suspicion will wane away. The economic environment will necessitate these alliances and we will see much more of it in the near future.

SS: What about regulation in the field?

MM: There are strict guidelines about editorial integrity and regulation does not deter us from producing any advertiser funded programming. Obviously, the editorial control cannot be handed over to the advertiser, however whenever there is common purpose, why cannot we create programming which serves both the advertiser and the broadcaster?

Let's take for example The Salon. It was not created by an advertiser – it was created by a dedicated production team - and let's take a Unilever hair care brand. There are 2 ways of Unilever looking at this. One is that Unilever takes all the merchandising rights to The Salon and builds in-store advertising promotions around the concept. If the brand values of The Salon match the brand values of the brand they want to promote – it would be a sensible thing for them to do. Now, to have come across The Salon by accident is one thing and then to think why don't we work with people who make programmes like The Salon and integrate our brand's values right form the conception stage – the benefits in the second case would be great for both parties.

SS: Do you think in the near future your brand would transcend media platforms such as move into mobile telephony and things like that?

MM: Our real brand value is the business to business brand value – it being able to say to people involved in new technologies, whether it is mobile phones, or gaming or other areas in which we don't currently have any strong relationship, saying look, we have had a hugely successful recipe in the last 20 odd years, we have developed a method which attracts most young commercial 16-

34 audiences and we have done that by excelling in an editorial environment. You might know about the technology involved in mobiles or gaming, but the editorial process of getting programming ideas and content is our strength, hence it would be great to work together and develop things which appeal to such an audience. This is the B2B brand value.

However, I don't think Channel 4 is poised to be a good endorser of other brands. Simply having C4's logo on your mobile is not going to drive any value. The best example of this is: we launched 2 magazines recently, "A Place in the Sun" magazine and "Grand Designs" magazine – both based on successful Channel 4 programmes. When we launched these magazines the deal with producers was that we divide the net revenue 50-50. There was a move within the Channel to apply the FourHomes brand to the magazines – this brand is a sort of an umbrella brand to get sponsorship for all home improvement related programmes within Channel 4. It would make a lot of sense commercially as then we would be able to divide the cost between all the home improvement programmes.

However, both the above mentioned programmes attack a specific niche in the Channel 4 market and the content of the magazines related to the programmes; probably a reason why these magazines were successful. If you put a FourHomes magazines out, you would not be targeting a specific niche in the market; Grand Design occupies a niche between building or architectural review type of magazines; and it is a offering which is specific to Grand Designs programme, A Place in the Sun targets people wanting to buy a property abroad. What is FourHomes? It appeals right across the homes target segment and hence is too broad for sustained success. This is a perfect example of a channel brand not adding any value to the end consumer but a programme brand adding massive commercial value.

End of Interview

Telephonic Interview with Sham Sandhu, FIVE

SS: What is the role of branding/ brand management in television?

SSF[3]: I think the role is that in an increasing competitive and noisy environment, with multi-channel penetration getting deeper and deeper, it's about making your programmes and your channel personality stand out and communicating it, point out a difference to the audience.

SS: So are you suggesting that the brand is associated with what the channel stands for?

SSF: Yes, my understanding of branding is the personality of the channel. It should be infused with that.

SS: What is the current industry professionals' perception of channel branding as it exists currently in the UK?

SSF: It depends which bits of the industry you are talking about, for example programme commissioners, like me, are probably more cynical about branding or overall marketing generally than if you talk to someone who is head of marketing of a channel. In my area, we see it as a necessary evil, but, there is a sort of underlying tension in most channels between programming and marketing.

SS: Why do think this exists?

SSF: Because, from my personal experience, the marketing department who are responsible for selling the show don't always understand or necessarily reflect the key assets of the show.

SS: So would you want the marketing department to get involved at the commissioning or production stage of programmes?

SSF: Not the commissioning stage at all, and especially not here at FIVE; however since they have a budget for selling shows, it would be necessary for them to get involved at some stage of

[3] SSF means Sham Sandhu (name of the respondent).

the process. Hence, there exists this tension of when should the marketing guys get involved – a phenomenon across the broadcasting industry in UK and I think probably something which would exist in almost all industries.

SS: However, do you see a difference of marketers getting involved with channel branding or programme branding or in both cases?

SSF: Both, as I think the programme branding has to fit in with the channel branding. Let's look at channel branding as the micro stuff and programme branding as the macro stuff.

SS: What is the current industry professionals' perception of programme branding?

Parts covered in previous questions.

SS: Is the programme brand independent from the channel brand?

SSF: No, it all has to fit in. Because when we sit and decide what to commission or buy, it has to reflect the values / traits of the channel as well; which is about the channel branding, isn't it?

SS: Are broadcasters deliberately trying to create brands out of their programmes? Are there any benefits in either following or not following this strategy?

SSF: Yeah, that's what current research tells us. For example with technologies such as PVRs, programme brands are getting more important in their own rights. I don't know if these programmes can still be regarded as independent brands, however, even if these have to reflect the channel personality, they also have to stand alone.

SS: How are the new digital media technologies affecting the above branding issues? Or are the branding changes happening irrespective of digital developments?

SSF: Multi-channel in general, more channels, more crowded market place.

SS: Is there an element that as a society we have so much choice that…

SSF: …that we are competing with other media? Yes, of course. However, essentially the audiences that we find valuable, the 16-35 year olds, the ABC1s, they don't watch much telly anyway. You can say there are more demands on their time, but, I suppose these changes are more to do with PVR and other changing technologies. You know, in spite of all this talk of people watching telly on their PC, there still isn't much lean back entertainment which is a sort of a group experience that television is. So I think this competition thing is a bit overplayed.

SS: Does the producer's relations (i.e. bargaining power with the broadcaster) change in the context of the new media digital developments?

SSF: Yeah as the rights become more valuable. I think that's fine because, as the rights become more valuable, producers place more emphasis on the saleable aspects of the programmes. For example, some businesses such as RDF – their whole business is built on the ownership of rights and selling the formats all around the world.

SS: So, would the programme makers become more pushy in the near future as the programmes are becoming important?

SSF: They already are and have always have been in a way. They own an idea and they walk in through our door with it; inevitably then we as broadcasters shape it, and then the idea evolves to make it right for a channel and that's what becomes tricky during the negotiation – deciding how much of the idea remains theirs.

SS: What is the future of channel branding? Will programme brands outgrow the channel brands to exist on their own?

SSF: Not really, let's look at McDonalds. They are constantly changing their menus, now they have salads and stuff, however their McDonalds brand is still important to get people through their door.

SS: So are you implying a sense of trust in watching a particular channel, I mean, considering it a trustworthy outlet in itself?

SSF: I think when you watch a particular channel, you have a fair idea of the sort of programmes you are likely to watch. So, in spite of the broad remit of the terrestrial channels, you still have a rough idea before you press the remote button, what sort of show are you going to get and what perspective is it going to look the world from? For example our news is always going to be different from BBC News or Channel 4 News or ITV. News is a very interesting phenomena of judging how a channel would like to brand itself and almost all broadcasters like to treat their news in a particular way.

SS: Your thoughts on existence of channel and programme brands across various media platforms?

SSF: I think those heady days of around the dot com boom and every brand was moving across every platform – in broadcasting I can't think of many examples where this is working. Interestingly I was reading a report on Channel 4 wanting to launch a radio station. I think with our budget being so tight and we still having a lot of work to do driving up our audience share, that's where our primary focus is as of now.

SS: Your thoughts on whether existing product and services brands are taking on the role of programme and channel brands through advertiser funded programming (recent examples include Fashion House and Thomas Cook TV)? Will this create a challenge to the channel's brand?

SSF: I think it's a nightmare - I have never done it. You see, outside of a Hollywood studio, financing a show about making of a blockbuster – besides that I have never done it. Because the way it works is that a production company or an advertiser, say Smirnoff, would come and say that they want to make a programme, about so and so. It is very rare that they actually know what exactly would work for the audiences as a programme. And we know instantly whether it's going to work for us or not. Also, I have heard a lot of horror stories and that's why I stay clear of them. It's an attractive proposition, that they pay for the show, however, it's a mine field in terms of Ofcom's regulations and stuff…and you can imagine if you are not financing a programme, giving undue prominence to a partner becomes a huge issue and it's a bit of mine field – you know life's too short really!

SS: Do you think the editorial integrity may get compromised?

SSF: Yeah, that's what I mean by undue prominence. I mean it can be. I often find that it isn't. Just because you are financing something, doesn't mean that you are making it. But, I think more often than not, these are not killer ideas that we would want them desperately. And if we do, we tend to pay for it.

SS: What about funded channels then? Do you see existing broadcasters entering into alliances with major brands for dedicated channels?

SSF: First let's come to terms with the fact that there is no real programming happening there in any case. Most are like shopping channels. I think that can exist in a very niche way, you know we are in the business of a mixed main stream entertainment channel and that does not make sense for us. For example, it is feasible for niche channels such as a channel selling insurance to 60 plus people or for example Saga selling specific holidays products to a niche target market. But the audience numbers are very small.

SS: Any other thoughts on programme and channel branding?

SSF: I think the main thing is, the more people you talk to, there is a tension between people who make or commission programmes and those who market the programmes or the channels and that is a rich area for you to research.

End of Interview

8.3. Respondent profiles

- Danny Cohen, Commissioning Editor, Documentaries/Cutting Edge, Channel 4

Cohen started his career in television as a researcher for companies including Real Life and Granada. He then spent four years at Diverse Production, working on a range of documentaries and arts programmes for Channel 4 and the BBC. In 1999, he became Head of Development at Diverse but left in autumn 2000 to take up the role of Factual Commissioning Editor at E4, responsible for programmes including the documentary strand Generation E, Chained, Nu Skool, Bar Wars and E4's Big Brother 2 content.

- Jason Langley, Head of Business Development, Two Four Productions

Langley has responsibility for developing the branded and interactive programming aspect of one of the UK's leading broadcast and corporate producers Two Four Productions. Since 2001, he has been bridging the gap between the company's corporate and broadcast clients by providing channels with high quality programming which also communicate the intricate marketing messages of the commercial partners. Langley came to Two Four from Shout Television where he specialised in commercially funded programming for a range of broadcasters including BSkyB and GSB. He has a wealth of experience across various media platforms – from developing content to community and commerce initiatives on broadcast channels, broadband, narrowband and iDTV. Langley's skills have been developed from a background in the broadcast industry including working for the cable television channel, Performance. He also has a first class MBA from Manchester Business School.

- Jo Davey, Marketing Controller, ITV1

Davey handles the more operational day to day marketing aspects of the ITV1 channel. Her post was created after the merger of Carlton and Granada. Previously, she has been Head of Viewer Marketing at ITV. She has about eight years experience in broadcast marketing having joined ITV as a marketing assistant.

- Matthew Woods, UK Marketing Director, The Hallmark Channel

Woods' channel belongs to the Hallmark Group which began about 60 years ago as a small mail-order business selling premium greetings cards in Kansas, USA. Today, The Hallmark Channel is part of its fast growing television network and one of the world's largest producers of award-winning programming. The Hallmark Channel UK ranks about sixth in the top ten non-terrestrial channels by making programmes which reflect 'Pure escapism' and 'a positive antidote to reality TV'. Woods has substantial experience in marketing published media prior to broadcast marketing.

- Mike Morris, Marketing Director, Channel 4 International

Morris' company Channel Four International (C4i) is responsible for exploiting programme rights acquired by Channel 4 when it commissions programmes for its UK terrestrial audience. This involves licensing to TV stations and selling rights for exploitation across PPV, DVD or new media platforms. Besides, C4i is also responsible for all co-production activities for Channel 4, working with the world's major broadcasters. Morris operates within a very well defined business to business environment where the emphasis is on highly focused marketing, ensuring that each piece of communication is appropriate to the particular audience. He has extensive experience in selling and marketing television programmes around the world, and previous to being marketing director of Channel 4 international, he was deputy managing director for 4Rights.

- Nick Thorogood, Head of Lifestyle Channels of UKTV

Lifestyle channels of UKTV include UKTV Style, UKTV Food and UKTV Bright Ideas. Thorogood graduated from Dorset Institute of Higher Education, the precursor to today's Bournemouth Media School and became a producer for Yorkshire television early in his career. Today, he is responsible for the overall management of the lifestyle channels, and hence has balanced perspectives of the programme and the channel brands. UKTV has recently completed a substantial overhaul of its branding strategy and hence it made Thorogood an ideal choice for the purposive sample.

- Peter Cowley, Director of Interactive Media, EndemolUK

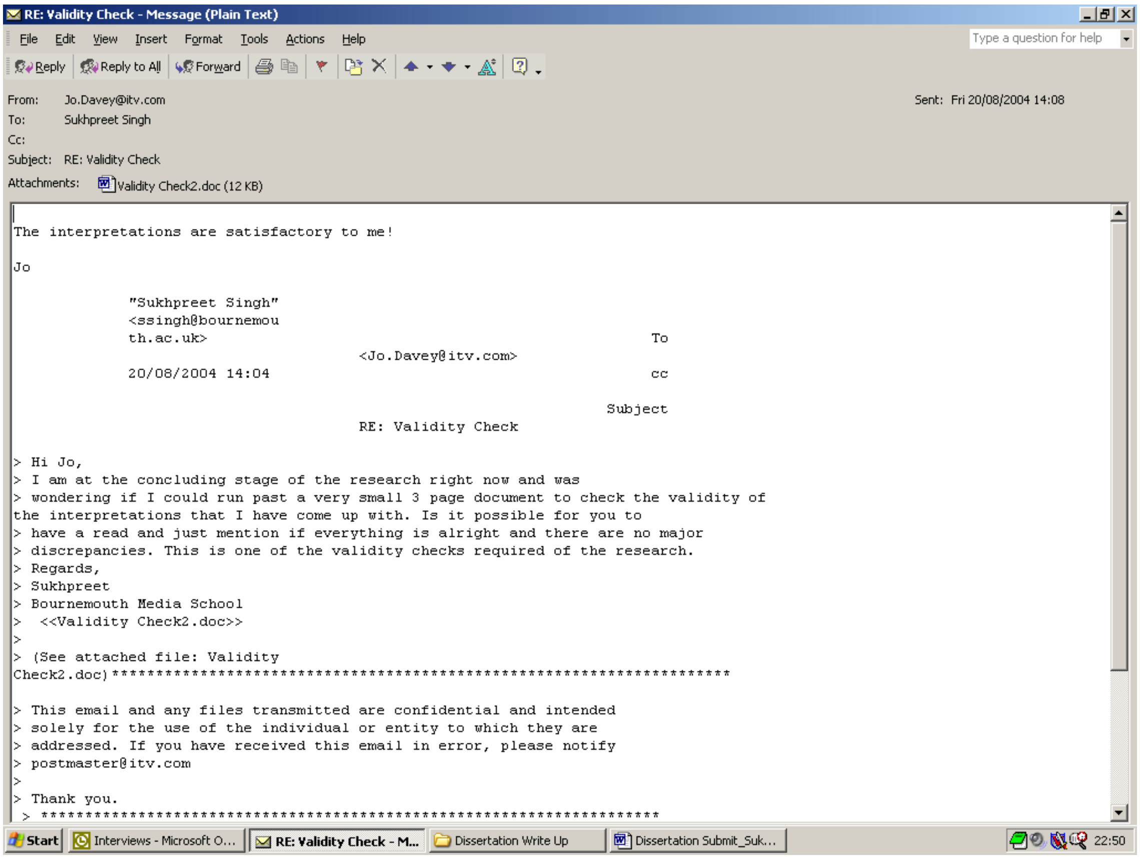
Cowley's role, to develop and implement Endemol's interactive media strategy in UK, is a board level position, demonstrating the importance Endemol gives to the exploitation of interactive media. Strategically, Endemol looks to exploit its TV brands on a multi-platform basis and funds its activities via broadcasters, advertisers or consumers. Increasingly Endemol is looking to develop entertainment products on new media platforms such as mobile, broadband and interactive TV. Previous to Endemol, Cowley has worked in the media, marketing and advertising industries at Freeserve, Cable & Wireless, Videotron and Bartle Bogle Hegarty.

- Sham Sandhu, Controller of Special Events and Pop Features, FIVE

Sandhu started as a Director/ Assistant Producer on Blue Peter in 1998. A weekend's exposure to the George Bar at the Edinburgh Television Festival gave him a taste of working within the commissioning side of the industry and within a few months he became a Development Planner for BBC One - running the channel's Entertainment and Factual development slates. A year later he moved back to BBC Production – working for Lorraine Heggessey as Head of New Media and New Channels. In 2000, he was poached by Dawn Airey to the position of Controller Interactive Programmes at FIVE and was appointed Controller of Youth and Music the following year. Now he is Controller of Special Events and Pop Features at FIVE and brings to this research a programme commissioner's perspective.

8.4. Example of member-checking: proof of credibility

The following is an example of the credibility correspondence sought by email. This particular one is from Jo Davey, ITV. She was sent a small part of the analysis and her comments were sought.



RE: Validity Check - Message (Plain Text)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Reply | Reply to All | Forward

From: Jo.Davey@itv.com
To: Sukhpreet Singh
Cc:
Subject: RE: Validity Check
Attachments: Validity Check2.doc (12 KB)
Sent: Fri 20/08/2004 14:08

The interpretations are satisfactory to me!

Jo

"Sukhpreet Singh" <ssingh@bournemouth.ac.uk>
20/08/2004 14:04
To <Jo.Davey@itv.com>
cc
Subject RE: Validity Check

> Hi Jo,
> I am at the concluding stage of the research right now and was
> wondering if I could run past a very small 3 page document to check the validity of
the interpretations that I have come up with. Is it possible for you to
> have a read and just mention if everything is alright and there are no major
> discrepancies. This is one of the validity checks required of the research.
> Regards,
> Sukhpreet
> Bournemouth Media School
> <<Validity Check2.doc>>
>
> (See attached file: Validity
Check2.doc)***

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> Thank you.
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The following is another example of the credibility correspondence. This one is from Jason Langley, Two Four Productions. He was sent a small part of the analysis and his comments were sought.

RE: Final Validity Check - Message (Plain Text)

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You replied on 23/08/2004 15:59. Click here to find all related messages.

From: Jason Langley [jasonlangley@twofour.co.uk] Sent: Mon 23/08/2004 15:00
To: Sukhpreet Singh
Cc:
Subject: RE: Final Validity Check

```
Hi Sukhpreet

Thanks for sending this through, all looks very good to me, you have interpreted me perfectly!

Best wishes with the report.

Jason

Jason Langley
Head of Commercial Development
twofour

T:  020 7242 4007
M: 079 3908 4976
F:  020 7242 4077



-----Original Message-----
From: Sukhpreet Singh [mailto:ssingh@bournemouth.ac.uk]
Sent: 23 August 2004 14:53
To: Jason Langley
Subject: RE: Final Validity Check


Hi Jason,

Thanks for the amendments, I see the point actually. I am attaching a document with the changes. Is it possible for you to
mention in return mail a line saying something about the interpretations and quotes are satisfactotry to you.

Regards and thanks

Sukhpreet
 <<Validity Check3.doc>>
```

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