

- Do your research (e.g. don't pitch pre-school to non-pre-school channels!)
- Show minimal materials – send later so execs don't have to carry it all home
- Plan your journeys – try to fix consecutive meetings on stands not too far from each other; the Palais is a big place.
- Ensure your technology is functional (laptop batteries etc). Don't offer used inner ear headphones!
- Make a full day plan and use it to keep clear notes per meeting.
- Try to avoid requesting delegates to leave the Palais to meet you elsewhere – they've paid a lot to be registered and a journey to and from their stand soaks up valuable time.
- But it costs quite a lot to register for access to the Palais, and they will come out occasionally, so you can have a productive market without registering, though this is being made more and more difficult.
- Always follow up your meetings diligently soon after the market.
- If you're meeting foreigners, establish the language of the meeting in advance.
- Keep your pitching concise and interesting. Make sure your characters are clearly defined.
- Give a concise description of your company as well as your project.
- Don't burden people with scripts at the market.
- MIPCOM in October is the better of the two Cannes markets to attend because it includes the two-day MIP Junior market the weekend just before the main event.
- Kidscreen Summit in New York (February) is rapidly becoming a must-attend event.
- Annecy/MIFA in June is good for animation and is a more relaxed affair, although it can be tricky to pin people down there as different areas of the event are spread across the town.

Monetising Multiplatform

Genevieve Dexter

Genevieve briefly outlined the Cake-distributed project *Total Drama Island*, originally produced in Canada, which depended in part on a major website which seeded activity amongst the show's audience and caused them to return to the programme week by week. Cake had taken a decision to monetise this website, which was difficult because up to now most companies "give away" their sites as part of the promotion of the series.

It took a while to get programme-commissioners to understand that to get the full benefit from the series they should also buy into the website too, which could be re-versioned in the languages of the territories into which the series was being sold. The huge success of the site and series in Canada eventually persuaded other broadcasters to follow-suit.

Though beware because online success breeds additional costs rather than additional revenues. As numbers accessing the site ramp up so do the costs of online hoisting for the broadcasters.

It was possible to run the series with a light version of the site, basically with the games in a non-scheduled way, and without the complexity of an updating leaderboard. But for those companies which did buy into the idea of part-funding a moiré complex, and more scheduled experience, that tied in with the programmes week by week, the business model was relatively simple. It was based on the programme licensing model. The website cost a certain amount to build, and each broadcaster paid a licence to use it in its re-versioned form – just as the programmes were licensed to them.

The site was proving very successful and was earning money. Interestingly the territories which took the scheduled complex version of the site all experienced significant spikes in viewership.

Top Tips for Attending and Presenting at the Markets

Anthony Utley, Sarah Muller, Oliver Ellis

Anthony introduced a short video (made in 2000 for BBC execs) demonstrating what goes on at MIPCOM each year.

Top tip: Don't wear heels!

- Sarah Muller as a commissioning Exec, won't take pitches for UK companies in Cannes at Mip or Mipcom – that should be done in the UK.

Judith outlined the UKTI Creative Industries Marketing Toolkit available on the UKTI website: www.creative-industries.co.uk/

The toolkit brings together key messages, facts and figures that can underpin and reinforce a creative business's own promotional activities. The messages in the toolkit capture and celebrate the successes of the UK Creative Industries.

Karen talked about local initiatives and companies being supported on foreign missions, such as visits to MIP, Annecy etc. In this, UKTI North West works very closely with Northwest Vision and Media.

International Distribution, Licensing and Business Affairs

Andrew Baker (Rights TV)

Oliver Ellis (Target Entertainment Group)

Genevieve Dexter (Cake Entertainment)

Kelvyn Gardner (manufacturing companies consultant and Chair of LIMA)

Andrew explored how their companies worked and the relationship between producers, distribution and licensing.

OE: Target has offices in London, NY and LA. One stop shop. Strategy for roll out of shows varies in any particular territory.

GD: Cake is a smaller version of Target. No in-house merchandising and licensing dept, but manage it through others.

OE: Target also develops its own shows. If the producer is new into the market Target would want evidence that project has been well fleshed out. They have an in-house development team which works on concepts.

GD: No in-house development team. Want to see a bible and script. Will distribute pre-school but don't invest as market is too competitive.

KG: although L&M process is much further down the line, do think about its potential early in process. The licensing tail should not wag the programme dog.

OE: projects should have broad global appeal. Licence fees from broadcasters have dropped, so L&M appeal has become increasingly important, particularly in pre-school projects. Shows must work character-wise as well as story wise.

KG: Shows must have a minimum of 52 episodes before L&M will show any interest. Handle your rights in house or pass to an agent who will deal with sales and marketing. Fees and commission are usually negotiable but usually 30 – 35%.

GD: TV sales are a B2B operation and handled by territory specialists. Commission is 30 – 35% from gross licence fees. Cake is particularly hungry for comedy driven shows for 8 – 12 year olds. Pre-school is very competitive and much is locally produced.

OE: 5 min slots ok for pre-school. 10 min slots for pre-school and older are acceptable, but half hour slots for older children is the preferred format. Will offer some deficit funding, recouping in first position. Commission rate is usually 25 – 30%. Factual programming for children travels less well internationally and is usually fully-funded by the host broadcaster for this reason.

Tips to build the right partnership:

SM: build relationships and don't scattergun.

ME: get to know companies and work with people you like who share the same sensibilities as you.

How advanced should development be before pitching?

SM: likes to see projects at an early stage, but for overseas partners you probably need a strong bible, a script and a clear idea of top line funding – for credibility.

NC: also good to have some level of commitment in place from your domestic broadcaster.

ME: be careful about handing over bibles etc to potential foreign partners, and don't give them carte blanche to approach broadcasters in their own territories. Check potential partners are being truthful with you.

SM: talk with respected middle-men such as Decode, but bear in mind their share will erode your own margins.

SM: CBBC is probably not the best partner for live action drama. US series such as Hannah Montana etc are much glossier than UK produced drama, and there are probably better partners than CBBC for this genre. However, CBBC is an excellent partner for animation.

ME: HIT is primarily interested in animation projects.

Where are the best places to co-produce?

ME: Canada (subsidies to be had) but the dilemma is you will be giving away the majority of production work in return for the finance it will bring. Australia – good animation studios. New Zealand – for live action and animation; massive feature film associations; not a lot of finance but there is a tv and movie subsidy. France – but geared towards subsidy for domestic production. In general beware of subsidies and how they might affect other parties' involvement. MEDIA in Brussels – can offer grants but will also gap fund and help with distribution costs. Cartoon Forum – very good venue but huge amount of work and costs to qualify – entry paperwork very daunting, but best networking opportunity (DCMS paperwork for co-pro treaty is comparatively easy. Kidscreen Summit, NYC – expensive to attend, but good opportunity to network with North American and European partners.

SM: MIP and MIPCOM are still effective but be sure to book meetings in advance.

Final thoughts:

ME: The work split – try to use whichever partner is better at different tasks (e.g. story boarding, scripting). So split the work according to strengths. Remember to be clear on PAL or NTSC for deliveries as this can be costly if overlooked.

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)

Judith Rooney (London)

Karen Holden (North West)

Kids are not watching TV in the traditional way; they are tweeting, gaming and on social networking sites. However Neil feels that the big children's production companies won't be around in their present form for much longer. In the past it was about growth in production, building libraries. Now it's about being smaller and more flexible.

Neil decided to work as a consultant with a handful of smaller, smarter companies. One being Kudos (Spooks, Life On Mars, Hustle, Ashes To Ashes), and although the parent company is big, its children's business is small, currently with just MI High on CBBC. Neil wants to grow that part of the business. He admires Stephen Garrett (boss of kudos), who is has recently been Visiting Professor of Broadcast Media at Oxford University and quoted from one of his lectures:

"Mediocrity is easy. But to be excellent – to make things of real creative value happen – is incredibly difficult...Creativity is really hard work. It takes patience and persistence, sweat, if you like, and a lot of it. Ideally, too, there needs to be a right to fail. But it also needs a whole lot of luck."

Neil described his own good luck story leading to the formation of his former company, Decode Entertainment in Canada in 1997, which has now been sold and which Neil has left, a richer man.

Neil felt that producers living in the North of England are fortunate and lucky that CBBC (probably the best funded children's service in the world) is moving to Salford and has stated it will ramp up its commissioning outside of London.

But it is easy to fritter that luck away, because mediocrity is easy. Those who seize good fortune are the smartest, most creative, most passionate and hardest working.

His advice was to recognize your weakness. Then partner with someone with complementary skills. Maybe someone who is more creative, or more business savvy than yourself. You need to absorb massive amounts of information and find an angle which makes you different and more outstanding than the competition. And be passionate – not obsessive, but passionate.

The Business of Co-Production

Neil Court, Sarah Muller, Marion Edwards

The panel explored the basic "rules" of co-production under questioning from Neil.

Co-pro is a broad term, covering pre-sale or true co-production where two or more funders finance a project. The reason for engaging in this is because no one partner can bring sufficient funding, but also because another partner can bring complementary creative elements to the show.

Tackling the Markets – Report

**The Children's Media Conference/Northwest Vision and Media
Thursday 18 February 2010 at Northwest Vision and Media, Salford**

This was a one-day seminar specifically designed for companies who are already actively, or have ambition to be involved in the production of children's media content internationally.

This seminar explored key trends from the international markets for children's content and addressed questions such as:

- Which territories are the most lucrative and most likely?
- Where do co-production possibilities lie?
- What are the differences between European, Transatlantic, Asian and Middle Eastern markets?
- Who are the major players and where can you go for more information and help?
- What needs to be done to make programmes internationally attractive and viable?
- How much money can you expect to make from international sales?
- Where do multiplatform projects fit into the equation and how can they be monetised internationally?
- How can you work with a distributor and what can they do for you?
- How does licensing and merchandising fit into the international equation?
- Kidscreen, MIFA, Cartoon Forum, Mip Junior - Do I need to be at these markets?

The seminar was produced and introduced by Helen Brunson and guest speakers were as follows:

Neil Court (Consultant)
Sarah Muller (CBBC)
Marion Edwards (HIT Entertainment)
Judith Rooney & Karen Holden (UKTI)
Genevieve Dexter (Cake Entertainment)
Andrew Baker (Rights TV)
Kelvin Gardner (Licensing Agent)
Anthony Utley (Media and Distribution Consultant)

Keynote Speech Highlights

Neil Court

Neil said he wanted to talk about the changing times the children's market is in – both terrifying and invigorating. Terrifying because times are tough and industry people are so stressed and scared because of the depression but also invigorating as the traditional TV funding model is being undermined.