

# FROM LOCAL HITS TO GLOBAL TV's New Trade Routes

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# CONTENT

**INTRODUCTION – P.4**

**TOP 10 TIPS: TAKING LOCAL HITS ON THE GLOBAL ROAD – P.6**

**WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY** (Content Media; Global Agency; ITV Studios;  
Keshet International; STAR India; Banijay Rights; DRG) – **P.8 to P.28**

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**KESHET'S MASTER CLASS**

**MASTER  
CLASS**

**FROM LOCAL... TO GLOBAL**  
Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

Up to about 10 years ago, broadcasters were expected to localise global hits if they wanted to be part of a successful international-TV story. Up to about four years ago, the tide turned.

Increasingly, scripted and non-scripted local shows made in a local language and aimed at domestic viewers are finding a global audience. **And building a fan base overseas can only boost the revenue potential.**

Almost half of Israel's TV households tuned into interactive singing contest Rising Star (this white paper's cover image) when it premiered in September 2013. Since its availability at MIPCOM 2013, the format has been sold to 25-plus territories, including the US (ABC network), Brazil (Rede Globo), Spain, Indonesia, Italy, France, Russia, the Nordic region and China.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

Rising Star has been snapped up by RCTI in Indonesia and Telefe in Argentina. And the Indian version hit the screens in February 2017. As this white paper will illustrate, it isn't only creatively crafted non-scripted formats that have found an audience abroad.

Historically, dramas and comedies have not travelled well because they are steeped in local customs, conventions and cultures. Yet, Keshet's *Loaded*, STAR India's *Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon*, and *Broken Pieces* from Turkey's Global Agency make compelling scripted entertainment centred on universal truths.

This white paper talks to connoisseurs in international content production and sales to confirm that, these days, **a locally made local-language programme need no longer stay put on only the local screens.**

## TOP 10 TIPS FOR PRODUCERS: TAKING LOCAL HITS ON THE GLOBAL ROAD

- **Talk to sales** and distribution specialists early during the production's development stage for advice on the markets likely to show interest in the show even before debuting in the home market.
- **Make friends** with these distribution specialists; they have their ears on as many grounds as possible to recognise what is trending, what is working locally and what will translate internationally.
- **If a show's** storyline or plot is convincing, compelling and captivating, and produced to the highest standard, there will be an international audience somewhere.
- **There is a** voracious appetite for high-end expensive looking dramas and for low-cost quick-to-produce formats.
- **Although producers** clearly prefer to focus on a show's creative elements, they will do well to come to grips with the budgeting and cost issues involved.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

- **Be flexible** about the permissions given to adapt your intellectual property in other countries.
- **Be prepared** to woo big-name actors, directors, writers and showrunners with international experience – they come armed with a variety of possible creative solutions to your TV storytelling.
- **Collaborate with** as many international partners as possible to development not only the global marketing campaign for the show, but also bespoke messages for the individual foreign markets.
- **Exploit all overseas** awards and accolades to raise awareness for the show's export capacity in even more markets.
- **Never underestimate** the power of social media to test how your show might, will and does perform abroad; it might resonate with viewers in the most unexpected places.

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

In the following pages, big-name executives in the global TV business explain why original foreign-language productions made with a domestic audience mind and their adaptations are providing the industry with a pleasantly surprising new source of income on the international landscape.

**LINE OF DUTY**



**CONTENT MEDIA**

Interview

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

**Greg Phillips**

**President of Distribution  
Content Media(UK)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** Time is of the essence in securing quality content and we are rarely afforded the luxury of seeing how new programming performs locally before committing to it. Partnering with talented production companies in the early stages of development is imperative in ensuring a consistent and dependable flow of fresh product into our distribution business. Focusing our investments and partnerships on a hub of expert creative partners that we trust and believe in is a key factor in minimising risk when forecasting the global potential of a production prior to its domestic performance.

**Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** We are in the business of building global franchises, and one of our most successful British exports is the hit BBC drama **Line of Duty**. Now in its fourth season, and with a further two seasons commissioned, the sophisticated globally-relevant storylines from Jed Mercurio, brilliant and recognisable casting and extraordinary creative talent all ensured the series was a huge success in the UK and have also now firmly established it as one of the UK's all-time great dramas on the international stage. This outstanding series is now either on air or due to air in pretty much every territory around the globe, delivering an impressive and ever-growing international following.

# THE MAGNIFICENT CENTURY



**GLOBAL AGENCY**  
Interview

## **Senay Filiztekin Turan**

**Head of Drama Acquisitions**  
**Global Agency (Turkey)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** If the project is from a new player in the sector and the cast is unknown, we prefer to wait to we see how it performs before we consider its potential in the international market. But if the show is made by experienced producers who have already made successful international hits in the past, we would automatically consider it as they already know what it takes to have international success.

**Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** It's always a challenge to make an international hit from a local successful project. It's a very competitive business and we need to plan the right time with right campaigns to launch the right project for the international market. Not all successful local productions have the potential to gain international attention, so we need to be very selective. You need to create a tremendous impression to influence buyers and convince them that is the right project. But once we succeed, it adds value to our reputation and that's the biggest reward for us. Even the Turkish Electro Technology Exporters' Association recently ranked Broken Pieces, one of the most successful shows in our catalogue, as the top-selling drama from Turkey.

**THE SALON**



**ITV STUDIOS**  
Interview

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

**Ella Umansky**

**Head of Formats Support  
ITV Studios (UK)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** There is an important, if challenging, balance that needs to be struck between producing and developing for a local broadcaster whilst preparing for a global market. Producers and broadcasters are increasingly aware of the potential of the global format market. So we work closely with our producers on the ground across our territories to make sure the teams are aware of global trends and are identifying universal themes that will resonate well in the international market. Nonetheless, it is important to focus on creating a hit in the local territory first in order to use that as a springboard for an international launch. It needs to be produced with a specific audience in mind to give a show character and direction.

## From Local...To Global

### Television's New Trade Routes

#### **Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** Producers and distributors are working harder for their new formats to stand out in the crowd, especially given that the big juggernaut formats (i.e. reality talent show *The Voice*) continue to dominate the programme schedules in many territories. However, the next international hit could come from anywhere, and local formats (particularly those from smaller territories) can offer lower-budget options whilst still delivering a show with a proven track record. For example, ITV Studios recently added two fixed-rig formats to its catalogue: *The Commute* from Waddell Media and *The Salon* from Boom Cymru. Both were produced for local UK regional broadcasters (BBC NI for Northern Ireland and S4C Wales respectively) and offer low-cost, quick turn-around production models in a genre traditionally dominated by expensive and lengthy production builds. Their high quality allows them to stand out in the international market.

#### **Q: Does the internationalisation aspect affect the budgeting of a show?**

**A:** A strong format can be adapted to suit a range of budgets and requirements. For example, *Keeping The Nation Alive*, developed in the UK by The Garden Productions for BBC2, was an ambitious project involving numerous simultaneous shoots. It was subsequently adapted by ITV Studios Norway for TV Norge, which was able to produce it on a far smaller production workflow, whilst still retaining the heart of the format. This award-winning version then became the model for subsequent international adaptations, allowing us to be flexible with individual territories and their budgets.

**LOADED**



**KESHET INTERNATIONAL**  
Case Studies/Interview

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

**Keren Shahar**

**COO/President of Distribution  
Keshet International (Israel)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** The starting position for our production companies making shows like Prisoners of War, Traffic Light, Rising Star and The A Word is always to be aware of the local audience. Keshet is a commercial general-entertainment channel in a very competitive market. Our shows need to reach on average 40% of the prime-time audience, which is a very high bar to reach. From a commercial perspective, because Israel is such a small market, advertising spend is limited and there is only a certain amount of return on investment (ROI) to expect from airing in only Israel. That ROI margin is even more challenging when it is high-end scripted content. But creators come to us because they know Keshet's strengths include taking an idea that originates in Israel for the domestic audience, as well as taking that vision to the international market.

**Q: Does the internationalisation aspect affect the budgeting of a show?**

**A:** Israeli dramas, especially dramas you want to sell as a finished production for broadcast, are made within very strict budget parameters based on advertising sales. And those parameters don't always correlate with the amount of money we need. So we opt for creative solutions to get budgets that will be reflected in the end product. This is where Keshet International collaborates with our network. We will sometimes contribute to the budget, which will give us the licence to sell the show. We find international co-production partners for stories where there is strong lead character and the narrative takes place in Israel and overseas. Or we will pre-sell the show to a key buyer, allowing us to form new deep relationships to develop new business models together.

**KESHET INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES:**

**Show's Title: False Flag**

**Genre:** Thriller

False Flag is the winner of the Audience Award, the Grand Prize at France's annual Series Mania Festival, and was selected as one of eight international dramas to be screened at the Berlinale Special 2015. In October 2015, Keshet International closed a global deal with Fox International Channels (FIC) in which the international network took exclusive first-window rights to the drama, marking FIC's first non-English series to be acquired on a global scale.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

### **Show's Title:** Loaded

**Genre:** Comedy drama

The winner of four Israeli Academy Awards, Loaded is a dramatic comedy that was commissioned for a local adaptation in the UK by Channel 4 in January 2016. It is a Keshet UK and London-based Hillbilly Films and Television co-production. Keshet International has also licensed the format to Mexico's Televisa as part of a four-series scripted deal, and to Huace Group/Croton Media in China as part of a two-series deal.

### **Show's Title:** Master Class

**Genre:** Musical talent show

This elimination-free musical talent show, in which children demonstrate their talent and sing all-time classics, attracted a 48% average audience share in Israel. It has enjoyed similar success in Hungary. The third season of the Hungarian adaptation on TV2 was often the most watched show in the entire week. Other successful local adaptations have taken place in China (on Beijing Satellite TV and Yunnan TV), where it was renewed for a second season, in Greece (Mega TV) and in Slovenia (Planet TV). Versions are also on air and in development in Vietnam (HTV3) and Uruguay (Teledoce).

### **Show's Title:** MICE (The Gordin Cell)

**Genre:** Espionage thriller

The format of spy drama MICE (The Gordin Cell) has been remade in two territories: the US (NBC), where it is called Allegiance, and South Korea (KBS) where it goes by the title Spy. It has also been optioned in Russia.

**Show's Title:** Prisoners of War

**Genre:** Political drama

In late 2009, Keshet International (KI) and creator/executive producer Gideon Raff sold Israeli drama Prisoners of War to the US' Twentieth Century Fox. The adaptation that established KI's influence in the US is Showtime's Emmy and Golden Globe-winning drama Homeland, which received an order for three additional seasons in June 2016. As well as winning eight Prime Time Emmys and five Golden Globes, Homeland has broken viewership records for Showtime. New versions of Prisoners of War have been made in Russia (WeiT Media, an Endemol Shine Group company) and India (Star India) with much success. The format is in development for Mexico (Televisa), Colombia and the US Hispanic market (Univision) and has been optioned for local adaptations in Korea by Star J Entertainment and in Russia by Rossiya 1 (Russia 1). The original Israeli series has been sold in more than 20 territories, including the US, the UK, Australia and Finland.

**Show's Title:** Rising Star

**Genre:** Interactive reality singing contest

This is the first show in global-TV history to incorporate real-time viewer voting via a fully integrated app during a live broadcast. Since its debut in Israel in September 2013, the show has broken records, capturing an audience share of 49.4%, meaning almost half of all the TV audience tune in. During the first season, the show's app was downloaded more than 1.5 million times, and participation rates were 10 times higher than any other show. Since its introduction at MIPCOM 2013, the format has been sold to more than 25 territories, including the US, Brazil, Spain, Indonesia, Italy, France, Russia, the Nordics and China. ABC premiered the US adaptation of Rising Star in June 2014, while Rede Globo aired a third season of the Brazilian adaptation in 2016. Additionally, both RCTI Indonesia and Telefe in Argentina have aired two seasons. The Indian edition of Rising Star launched in February 2017.

**MAHABHARAT**



**STAR TV**  
Case Studies/Interview

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

**Gurjeev Kapoor**

**President, International Business  
Star India (India)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** The contemporary themes of our stories and the production standards make it easier to engage audiences across the world. And, to date, our shows have travelled to more than 100 countries and are enjoyed by viewers in their native languages. Our dramas are not just popular in Asia, Europe and the Middle East but also in Turkey and Latin America, traditionally considered to be markets with extremely strong locally produced content. Our contemporary romances like (Strange Love and Saraswathichandra) have made the Indian stars household names in Turkey and Latin America. Similarly, mythological content like Mahabharata has enjoyed stellar viewership in countries like Thailand and Malaysia, countries with unique and totally different cultural leanings.

**Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** A good story has the power to cut across borders and we have seen that with a number of shows from our catalogue. Any new programme from Star India generates considerable interest in India and international markets as well. The pressure to exceed expectations has been instrumental in producing engaging content. At Star, we regularly collaborate with our local partners to drive deeper engagements with the viewers and ensure a holistic brand experience. Our viewers in Turkey, Thailand and Indonesia have been a part of these special engagements that have driven conversations in both local and social media. This has further led to many producers, broadcasters and partners in the international markets approaching us to procure remake rights for local versions of our content.

**STAR INDIA CASE STUDIES:**

**Show's Title:** *Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon* (English Translation: *Strange Love/What Do I Call This Love*)

**Genre:** Drama, Romance

This story of two star-crossed lovers gained a massive fan following in India, where it won several awards at The Global Indian Film and TV Honours, the Indian Telly Awards, the Indian Television Academy Awards, People's Choice Awards India and Star Parivaar Awards. It is arguably India's biggest international hit, having aired in more than 50 countries. It made history as the first-ever Indian drama series in Turkey, where it was also an audience-ratings hit. The sequel, *Strange Love Season 2*, is currently on air in Turkey. *Strange Love Season 3* is scheduled to broadcast in India in July 2017.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

### **Show's Title: Saraswatichandra (English Translation: Saras & Kumud)**

#### **Genre: Drama, Romance**

From one of the biggest Bollywood directors, this poignant love story consistently featured in the Top 10 shows on Indian TV. It has also won many awards, including the Best Actor, Best Actress and Favourite New Actor categories. Internationally, Saraswatichandra has been sold to more than 40 countries. It has been hugely popular in Turkey and Latin America, where it is currently on air in Chile.

### **Show's Title: Mahabharat**

#### **Genre: Costume Drama**

Mahabharat, a mythological epic set in the Indian subcontinent, opened to one of the biggest viewing figures achieved on Indian TV by a mythological show and 23.6 million people watched the first episode. The show has been a massive hit across more than eight countries. In Indonesia, the show's popularity has created a demand for more mythological costume dramas produced by Star India, including a new show titled Chandra Nandini, the story of Chandragupta Maurya, one of India's most popular rulers.

## **Caroline Torrance**

**Head of Scripted  
Banijay Rights (UK)**

**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** As distributors, we automatically consider the international potential because distribution funding is fundamental to getting the drama made. It is really difficult for producers to create dramas with only the licence-fee funding for just a local market. Distributors will look at the international potential and consider contributing towards the advance for the distribution rights. With our experience, we would look at the package and determine the territories in which they would work. It isn't an exact science, but hopefully we get it right most of the time. When we took on Haut et Court's French-language supernatural drama *Les Revenants* (The Returned), everyone loved the concept and the production's quality. But no one had any idea it would be the huge international hit it became. When it premiered on Channel 4 in the UK in 2013, it was one of the first totally sub-titled foreign-language dramas to air on a main network in a very long time. And we also sold it to Sundance TV in the US and that blazed a trail for foreign-language dramas overseas.

**Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** Ennemi Publique (Public Enemy) is one of the first local-language dramas commissioned by Belgian public broadcaster RTBF, which has normally bought scripted content and not invested in that many original local dramas. However, drama is becoming very international and they see there is a big market for it. So, on the one hand, they want something that appeals to the local audience to meet their public-service broadcast remit, but they also realise these dramas travel incredibly well.

**Q: Does the internationalisation aspect affect the budgeting of a show?**

**A:** As budgets for dramas become increasingly more constrained, broadcasters are relying more on international sales and co-producers to can offset some of the production costs, which are going up. I always encourage producers to talk to distributors when developing their ideas to get a sense of what the international market can bring to the project.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

**Richard Halliwell**

**CEO  
DRG (UK)**



**Q: Do companies like yours automatically consider the global potential of a production before it is even made, or do you wait to see how it performs locally first?**

**A:** You may have found one or two foreign-language programmes in our distribution catalogue three to four years ago. Today, the number is at least a dozen. Based on the quality of the programmes being made at the local level, it is a phenomenon that has been accelerating. In the US, some executives have expressed fears that the international formats for scripted might take a hit because finished foreign-language shows are so good. The fact that they're happy with sub-titles means no compromise is required for the original. We've moved so far away from the 1990s, when a whole rainbow of co-producers got involved in one production (the stolid dramas called "Europuddings") in the hope of finding an international audience.

## From Local...To Global Television's New Trade Routes

### **Q: What are the challenges and rewards of a local hit getting international attention?**

**A:** As distributors, DRG takes a closer look at local-language programmes with more confidence. We also have a two to three-year track record that says we now know how to sell foreign-language content.

When we pitch to producers, and broadcasters, we explain what sort of job we've done selling finished programmes and formats overseas. It gives them confidence to know that if they do a good job on the production, there might be an international market for it too.

### **Q: Does the internationalisation aspect affect the budgeting of a show?**

**A:** Production budgets are going up and up internationally every month. That is due to the quality of the work put on screen because there is a healthy market of broadcasters out there willing to pay for quality content. At the same time, there is a dearth of good content. But competition is dynamic. If there ends up being an oversupply of high-end content, it could push the prices the other way.

# About the Author

## Juliana Koranteng

**Juliana Koranteng** is the founder/editor-in-chief of **MediaTainment Finance (MTF)**, the business journal that covers investments in the international media, entertainment and creative sectors. Koranteng, an international journalist, has been a contributing editor at Billboard magazine, and the daily magazines published by Boutique Editions at the annual MIPTV, MIPCOM and Cannes Lions events in Cannes.

She has been a correspondent for TIME magazine, the Hollywood Reporter, Advertising Age, the Washington Post, The Economist, UK national newspapers and the author of several books and reports. She also conceived, developed and sold New Media Age, the UK's leading digital-marketing publication, to Centaur Media. She has given speeches at international events and been interviewed on BBC TV and radio, CNN and Bloomberg TV.

MediaTainment Finance and sister title TechMutiny are published by JayKay Media Inc, the London-based media group that also includes an editorial consultancy, speech-writing, ghost-writing and photography-design among its activities. **@OutsidetheBoxMT @MediatainmentMT @TechMutiny**

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