

It all comes down to content

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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2017 is going to be the year of content as king, whether it's mobile or digital, and this is certainly the case for broadcasters with multi-platform offerings.



Pierre Branco

So says Pierre Branco, vice president and general manager of Southern Europe and Africa for Turner Africa. “The biggest trend in TV production will always be content. Creating original content and looking for new ways to promote this content to specific target audiences will be the biggest challenge. Content that is creative and exclusive is what Turner continually strives to achieve, and this is evident in the ratings: our top-performing channels are winners because of their great line-up of content.”

With this in mind, Turner is looking to increase its investment in content production across both its general entertainment and kids’ channels. Its general entertainment channels such as TNT and TBC will receive a boost to their exclusive content offering in 2017, with a \$1bn production budget increase for original series.

The #1 and #2 kids’ channels on the continent, Cartoon Network and Boomerang, will also be aligned to this new strategy of innovating across platforms through local marketing, content and programming initiatives. Local productions are in the pipeline for both channels for linear and non-linear distribution, and will also include exciting extensions onto the relevant digital platforms. Another initiative under consideration is the dubbing of specific programmes into local languages in various territories.

Turner’s focus on innovative digital content is another focus areas for 2017, and will include the introduction of new digital products such as mobile apps for kids and adults alike, to create a 360° multiplatform experience. The launch of an interactive Cartoon Network app – CN Anything – in the New Year is at the forefront of this digital wave, and will incorporate games, videos and ‘micro-shorts’ of some of the channel’s popular TV programmes.

Building brands in Africa

With a strong presence and audience in South Africa, Turner is now focusing its efforts on other key markets across the African continent. Many of the broadcaster’s channels and programmes enjoy a strong following on the continent, but Turner is continually looking to create a content viewing experience that resonates even more with its African audience.

“Television viewing across Africa appeals to a younger, more urban segment, and these viewers have a desire for action,” Branco says, and this rings true for one of its channels – TCM, the channel that is ‘Powered by Movies’.

He states that when they investigated why this popular movie channel was not appealing to a wider African audience, research showed that the content being screened – classic older movies – did not resonate with this audience.

As a result, Turner undertook an extensive rebranding and refreshing of TCM, giving it a new payoff line, ‘Powered by Movies’. The revised line-up and schedule positions it as the go-to American movie channel, with a focus on big Hollywood blockbusters and action movies from the 1907s to the present. Since the new-look channel launched last year, it has delivered an impressive increase in viewership, with +374% in ratings (source: DStv i-data YTD April 15-Nov 16).

Following its successful launch in various key European markets, Turner’s latest kids’ channel offering, Boing, is enjoying increased success as it expands into various markets across the continent. These include Nigeria (Consat and Suburban), Zambia (Muvi TV), the Seychelles (Cable Wireless) and in French-speaking African countries.

Comments Branco: “We have noticed that kids in these markets consume more television content than their counterparts around the world. We attribute this to the fact that many kids watch TV with older siblings and so it becomes a shared experience within families. As a result, we are confident that there is room in the market for more kids’ channels.”

Expanding on digital, creative content

Another trend that is taking centre stage is the move to mobile viewing. “Africa has an appetite for short films and they are looking to consume more digital content,” says Branco. To satisfy this demand, Turner will be introducing a variety of webisodes from January 2017. These will be showcased online at first and then migrate to the various TV platforms. A big focus with this initiative is local content and finding new creative talent to tackle new productions and create relevant and interesting content.

An innovative partnership with Animation SA (ASA) at Discop 2016, which took place in Johannesburg last month, exposed Turner to some exciting new talent. “We increased our presence at Discop this year. This included the partnership with ASA to sponsor the inaugural Animation Lounge and host the first Turner Kids’ Animation Pitching Competition to showcase new talent in Africa.

“Through this sponsorship, we had the opportunity to interact with some really exciting new talent, give advice and network with young creatives. This bodes well for our future endeavours to create original content and local productions across our markets,” states Branco.

“Discop is a wonderful platform to interact with the industry, and provides a great opportunity to connect with current clients and meet future prospects across Africa. It’s also a good place to meet with potential marketing partners to grow advertising and collaborate on new projects.

“Looking ahead, Turner Africa is committed to creating content that is fun, exciting, interactive and, above all, original. We

want to continue connecting with our viewers on a daily basis, and creating an experience for everyone to enjoy."

For more information visit: <http://www.turner.com/>.

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow @BevCPT.

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