

From *Bigg Boss* to *Dare 2 Date* to *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, a slew of reality television shows has become dearer to marketers & advertisers

Reality Bytes All

WHY THEY LOVE IT?



PRODUCERS

- **Cheaper** to make, yet sells at a higher price than fiction shows
- **No need** to hire actors; a large aspiring population willing to participate for free
- **Nothing** goes waste; auditions to choose participants & behind-the-scene shots are used



CHANNELS

- **Wide scope** to rope in brands for co-production, product placement, product giveaways and so on
- **Most shows** take viewers' feedback through SMSes & calls. These generate extra income via tie-ups with mobile operators
- **Helps** attract young audience who provide free publicity through social networks and word of mouth



VIEWERS

- **A means** to showcase talent and realise dreams; a shortcut to fame and money through participation
- **More** involving because their voices are heard, votes are counted



BRANDS

- **Larger** scope to get the product noticed within the show, without advertising
- **Allows** co-production where the product becomes the theme of the show
- **Helps** connect with the youth



Omkar Sapre
PUNE

TRUTH is stranger than fiction. And more profitable, going by big brands' rush to associate with reality shows on television. A slew of reality shows – or, television programmes where real people play themselves and usually walk away with prizes or gifts – from controversial *Bigg Boss* to provocative *Dare 2 Date* to game show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* has become dearer to marketers and advertisers than fictional serials.

These shows are highly popular, particularly among the youth, and offer a wide scope for brand visibility including co-branding, prize sponsorship, business partnership and guest appearance.

"Truth is stranger than fiction; that is the bottomline of these shows," says Ogilvy & Mather national creative director Abhijit Avasthi. "I think viewers had had enough of saas-bahu dramas, which is why you see a rise in reality shows," he adds.

According to TV-audience measurement agency TAM, reality shows commanded 14.7% share of the viewership in 2010 on the top 5 Hindi channels, second only to serials' 64% share.

Reality shows are cheaper to produce and easier to sell to marketers because they give brands a wider scope to participate than family dramas.

Stunt Mania, a stunt show that ran on MTV for two seasons, for example, was woven around Bajaj Pulsar motorcycle.

"We didn't see it (Stuntmania) as a reality show," says Bajaj Auto's two-wheeler marketing head Milind Bade. "For me, it was a one-hour commercial, which talks to the customer every minute, in a language he (or she) understands in a non-intrusive and engaging way."

Hosted by Bollywood stunt director Allan Amin, the show had more than 50,000 youth,

including girls, lined up for auditions.

Bade said the company is discussing a third edition of *Stuntmania* with MTV. The music channel also runs a similar show, *MTV Roadies*, with Hero Honda Karizma motorcycle. The eighth season of the show started last week. Brands get their play even if their products are not crucial to a show.

Cadbury's chocolate is exchanged in *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, the fourth edition of the popular quiz show now running on Sony channel, while General Motors give away Chevrolet Cruze sedans to the winners of *Bigg Boss*, which makes various celebrities live in



ABHIJIT AVASTHI
NATIONAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR, O&M

Truth is stranger than fiction; that is the bottomline of these shows. I think viewers had had enough of saas-bahu dramas, which is why you see a rise in reality shows

the same house for three months and viewers choose the best resident.

Reality shows also offer scope for promotion of films or cross-promotion of shows. Madhuri Dixit, for example, appeared on *Kaun Banega Crorepati* as a participant, and also announced *Jhalak Dikhala Jaa*, another reality show on Sony channel in which she is a judge.

Reality shows are particularly popular among the youth.

"Reality as a format appeals and connects well with the youth," says Nikhil Gandhi, business head of youth channel Bindaas that airs shows such as *Emotional Atyachaar*, *Date Trap*, *Love Lockup*, and *Dadagiri*.

It's in line with the developed markets such as the US and UK. Reality shows dominated

ratings among viewers aged 18 to 49 in the US last summer. A New York Times report said that 15 of the top 20 highest-rated TV programs among younger adults were reality shows such as *America's Got Talent*, *Big Brother*, *The Bachelorette*, *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Survivor*.

All of these shows have been remade in India. Unlike fiction shows, where actors are paid, most participants in reality shows come free, in search of their five minutes of glory on TV and to become famous.

"The shows are made in a real environment, with no lavish sets, reducing production costs. We bank on the concept and its power to connect with the youth, for which I do not require celebrities to host my shows or participate in it," says Bindaas' Gandhi.

Also, none of the content produced during a reality show shoot goes waste.

"Even auditions and behind-the-screen happenings are shot, and broadcast before the actual show goes on air... controversies and fights between participants create a frenzy and the show becomes a talking point in the press or on social media," says a professional in the production team of a show.

Production firm UTV Television's CEO Santosh Nair says TV channels buy reality shows at three times the price they pay for fiction shows. UTV Television has produced reality shows *Dance India Dance* for Zee TV, *Cash Cab* and *Emotional Atyachaar* for Bindass, *Rakt Sambandh* and *Rakhi Ka Insaaf* for Imagine TV, and *Maa Exchange* for Sony TV.

Channels pay more because there are many ways to attract advertisers and marketers and earn extra income. SMS votes are a big draw for game shows and talent competitions, and also generate revenues for the channels.

Today, there are more than a dozen reality shows on air across all kinds of channels, from general entertainment to youth channels to the regional, all on prime time.