

# Writing a Treatment for a New Entertainment Idea...

## Format or Factual Entertainment?

We can only read and reply to Format or Factual Entertainment ideas, you can find examples of existing programmes below:

| Examples of Format Entertainment Programmes |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Quiz shows                                  | Question of Sport, Mastermind |
| Game Shows                                  | Total Wipeout, Pointless      |
| Talent Shows                                | Strictly Come Dancing         |

| Examples of Factual Entertainment Programmes |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Magazine Shows                               | Top Gear, Hairy Bikers               |
| Human Interest                               | Junior Doctors, Don't Tell The Bride |
| Talent Shows                                 | Dragons' Den, Masterchef             |

## Why, What & When?

Before you start writing your proposal please consider why you think it will make a good show. Who will watch it? What will keep them watching. What time will it be on? What is the best channel for your idea? We make programmes which attract an audience of 2 - 8 million viewers and broadcast to the whole of the UK. Does your idea have broad enough appeal and can it reach such a large audience for the channel you have chosen? [The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board \(BARB\)](#) provide a good idea of programmes that attract a large audience.

## Is it fresh and new?

The most successful proposals are those that are fresh and innovative or have a creative new take on things that have worked well in the past.

The [BBC Entertainment page on the Commissioning website](#) is intended for independent television production companies but you might find some of the information helpful.

## The Treatment

### Is it more than just a good idea?

We receive lots of great ideas but unfortunately an idea in itself is not enough, it's the treatment that makes an idea feel fresh and new. **You will be expected to combine an idea with a well-thought out treatment.** You need to be clear about how the show will be structured. How long is it and is the idea strong enough to sustain a 30 or 60 minute show? Does it build to an entertaining climax?

### Please keep it brief

The best ideas are simple. Your proposal should be **no more than two pages of A4** (no tiny text please). If you find you have to write more than two pages to describe how a programme works it's probably too complicated. The best ideas we receive are usually on one page.

## **Synopsis**

It can be really helpful to open your treatment with a quick synopsis. Most of the best shows on TV can be summed up in one or two sentences. Try to aim for a synopsis of 40 words or less... the kind of summary you'd read in The Radio Times.

**Tip:** We recommend using bullet points can help to outline the main elements/structure and can help with the presentation of your proposal.

## **Sending your idea to us**

### **Contact Details**

Please ensure you include your contact details.

### **Timeline**

As soon as we receive your proposal it will be passed on to the development team to be read and assessed.

Due to the volume of proposals sent to us we do not send an acknowledgment. We read and reply to every single idea sent to us. The relevant department will either reject or progress proposals for further consideration within six to eight weeks of receipt.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I have an idea for a documentary; can I send it to you?**

BBC Entertainment does not accept ideas for programmes of a documentary or factual nature. Examples of such programmes include Panorama, Horizon, Question Time, Countryfile, Coast, Frozen Planet, I'm not really happy with it.

If your idea is of local interest then it may be worth contacting your regional BBC network or newsroom to see if they are interested in covering the story. Contacts for regional BBC stations can be found on [BBC Local](#). You can also send your ideas to Inside Story. If you feel your ideas is of wider interest then please contact [BBC News](#).

### **I have an idea for a drama/comedy, where can I send my script?**

Please send your script to [The Writers Room](#).

### **Can I request a confidentiality agreement?**

The BBC will treat all proposals as confidential. The BBC adheres to the highest standards of rights ownership. If this is still of concern to you we would suggest seeking a legal adviser or lawyer who specialises in this field.

### **Can we meet to discuss the idea further?**

We do not discuss proposals in person at such an early stage in the process.

### **It's been eight weeks and I haven't heard from you?**

Please write to us if you have not heard from us within eight weeks. We will guarantee you a response within five working days. Please include an email address and/or contact telephone number if it was not included in your original correspondence.