

Beth Gardiner, Vice President, Global Original Programming, Playhouse Disney

Orion Ross, Vice President, Original Series, Disney Channel Emea

GENERAL ETHOS

All three channels are looking for really great characters and storytelling. They need a lot of content to feed 3 hungry brands.

“Shameless optimism of our brands and characters embodies them. You can do whatever you want: dream big, choose right and you will be rewarded with a happy shiny place”.

BETH GARDINER - PLAYHOUSE

Playhouse is Disney’s preschool channel throughout the world. 2-6 is the age range. The “sweet spot” is a 4 year old.

Thought is around the parent and the family, and stories that make their kids feel safe. It’s a combination of happy endings and learning. Most of Disney’s shows have an underlying curriculum element, which Beth and her team can help those pitching to find.

Beth showed *Jungle Junction*, which she explained is a good example of how the curriculum skills at Disney enhanced the show. The original jungle-set animals on wheels concept was tweaked to include curriculum themes of the environment and reading signs.

Finally, Beth reiterated that she’s looking for all kinds of shows, the channel output is like a portfolio and there is a broad range. She likes to have a conversation with producers at an early stage: a pitch might not be exactly what she’s looking for but there might be an element of your pitch which she likes and which she can develop. She also confirmed that they test with kids throughout production.

On Playhouse, Disney will fully fund shows.

ORION ROSS – DISNEY CHANNEL AND DISNEY XD

The older channels do for big kids what Beth does with the little ones. Shows have to work in the UK, Europe and ultimately across the world.

DISNEY CHANNEL

Orion’s mantra is that it’s ‘primetime for tweens’. Core target is kids 8-12 with the whole demographic of the Disney Channel being 6-14.

The aim is that kids’ favourite shows should all be on Disney and that they are all high quality. As an example he showed *Fineas and Ferb*, which works well on both channels, for boys and girls.

The Disney Channel is ultimately girl skewed, which is driven by live action shows from the US such as *High School Musical* and *Hannah Montana*. Orion is looking for animated shows from the UK that will complement these shows - what kind of animation could sit next to *Hannah*?

DISNEY XD

Orion described the channel as a 'boy-driven, girl inclusive network'. Age range is as the DisneyChannel with a slightly older skew. The content is comedy driven - *I'm in the Band* and *Kick Buttowski* are examples of the channel's output.

The success of the US imports is allowing them now to develop stuff in the UK. These might be wholly owned Disney properties or they could be co-productions: *Jimmy Two Shoes*, *Kid vs Kat* *Rekkit Rabbit* are all co-productions which came out of the UK.

OVERALL ANNUAL TARGETS

- 7 original long-form series per year for Europe
- One for Playhouse, two for Disney Channel, four for Disney XD
- 182 half hours altogether
- 14 pilots per year
- 30+ projects in dev
- Plus returning series.

HOW TO PITCH

- Watch the channels so you know what you are doing.
- Best pitches for us are conversations.
- No unsolicited pitches - email to arrange.

QUESTIONS

What about the girls?

"Girls grow out of the 11 minute slot. They look for more complexity at an earlier age. So better storytelling and layered characters are what they look for."

Only scripted stuff?

"Not necessarily - if it's a great idea for the brand we wouldn't say no. But at heart, story is what we are looking for. Short form is also an option though we really need half hour shows to drive the schedule."

What about the IP?

"Disney traditionally takes the IP but in the case of co-pros the IP rests with the originator, though these shows will be pushed less by the channels, as the own will carry all the ancillary revenue opportunities direct to Disney. In the past, perhaps we used to be inflexible but we still want key properties so there are more flexible ways now of dealing with IP issues."

Cross platform?

"It's a given that all shows have to be cross platform/cross media and anyway, if it's got a great character it will work across platforms. We don't mean just digital - comic books, graphic novels etc all are useful as source material for shows."

Only interested in 2D animation?

"No, whatever comes along. Stop motion, Flash, anything that suits the story and budget."