

[Columns](#) » [Marketing Moves](#)



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No child's play, these game shows



Amitabh Bachchan on the sets of Kaun Banega Crorepati

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Judging by their popularity, brands will benefit from associating with these shows

Game shows have increasingly become a standard feature of a television channel's programming. Ranging from family quizzes and adventure activities to reality shows like the 'Big Boss' series, they are just about everywhere. They seem to have captivated the audience's attention, with the shows' seasons running into months or even years.

In India, it all started with *Kaun Banega Crorepati*. Amitabh Bachchan, with his rich, baritone voice, looked into the eyes of the *aam aadmi*, and infused in them a dream — a dream of becoming a millionaire. The nation responded, and how!

What works

The trick that worked was a combination of a simple format, the choice of a leading channel (Star Plus) and Big B himself. But what can really explain the increasing popularity of these game shows in such a short period?

~ *Engaging*: First, games are a very engaging way of hooking an audience. Since most are reality-based, people instantly connect with them. The TV time that would otherwise be used to watch mind-numbing shows have been converted to a pursuit of mildly tickling the grey cells for those who may not otherwise have much interaction with the outside world.

~ *Content*: Second, sourcing content is really easy. If one looks at the questions for any of these events, it is obvious that they are meant for the family as a whole, where anyone can tackle the quiz. This builds a sense of participation in the family. Prizes too are lucrative and relevant.

Measuring impact

However, measuring the impact of these shows is also important. The initial buzz generated around the launch says a lot. Given the everydayness of these questions, each game show has a celebrity host, who has a mass appeal.

Bear in mind that the TRPs during the launch period reflect the popularity of the celebrity, rather than the show itself.

Brand connect

Keeping these factors in mind, what kind of brands would want to be associated with game shows? The answer lies in what the brand stands for in terms of positioning.

There has to be a fit between the theme of the game show and its positioning. For instance, shows with an adventure theme may interest a brand such as Thums Up, since it stands for action-packed adventures. Similarly, quizzes could be sponsored by makers of children's food products such as malted food drinks and biscuits. The choice of the host, too, should fit with the values of each brand.

While doing an evaluation later, on whether this particular choice of game shows worked for the brand, companies should look at how the show enhanced their image. Has any specific perception about the brand changed? For example, if the show was about showcasing a singing talent, do people now identify the brand with related parameters such as achievement, pride and nurturing?

Organisations need to define these prior to the start of the activities, so that the results do not alter the perception.

The crowdsourcing concept, popularised by the IT industry for funding new ideas, has now acquired a new dimension in game shows. The format is for the public, of the public and by the public.

Game shows are here to stay.