

LA- and London-based Small World IFT, which pioneered K-formats like *Grandpas* on the global market by securing adaptations in countries including the US, Russia, Italy and Turkey, is one such company.

“South Korea is becoming more complicated because since we planted the flag all those years ago, the big guys have moved in and a lot of good new formats have one of them attached already,” says Small World president Tim Crescenti.

He adds that development agency Kocca has done “a great job” raising the visibility of Korean formats but admits he skipped the BCWW conference in Seoul this year because of the bigger players moving in, although he will return for some one-on-one meetings in search of the next K-format hits. “But I guess we need to find the next South Korea,” he says, adding that he suspects Latin America, rather than another country in Asia, is a better bet as a source of potential untapped hits.

Others are securing partnerships in multiple Asian countries to increase their chances of striking gold. As well as South Korea, Thailand has piqued the interest of NBCU’s international formats division, which co-developed the format *Singer Auction* alongside Thai producer Zense Entertainment.

The show, which sees celebrities bidding for amateur singers without hearing their voices, launched at Mipcom in October having debuted in a primetime slot on Thai broadcaster Channel 3.

Ana Langenberg, who was named senior VP of format sales and production at NBCU International Formats in September, says it’s important the company has partnerships with key



TV Burabha's lifestyle programme *Creepy Crawly Superfoods*. Right: NBCU International Formats' Ana Langenberg



players in different markets to ensure formats from different countries can complement those already in its catalogue.

“It’s a matter of spending time with each other and understanding what works for them and helping them understand what works for us,” says Langenberg of the co-development partnership with Zense.

The exec, who before joining NBCU



Nattanan Kulrapeekorn of TV Burabha

spent almost two decades at Endemol and latterly Endemol Shine Group, adds that there continues to be high demand for gameshows and shiny-floor shows in Asia. This bodes well for *World of Dance*, the Jennifer Lopez-backed competition series that NBCU is distributing, and Langenberg hints that multiple deals to adapt the show in Asia are in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, Amanda Groom, MD of UK-based Asian copro specialist The Bridge, has been encouraged after seeing companies from countries such as Malaysia attend international markets in greater numbers in recent years.

“In a nutshell, South-East Asian nations have watched the success of South Korea closely. They are all now, in their various ways, looking at similar models of investment and stimulation for their own media industries,” says Groom.

And Groom, former MD of Sky’s Channel Health, believes that rather than obsess over how to break the tumultuous Chinese market, western producers should look at partnering with “progressive” companies in countries such as Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

On her travels to various international markets, Groom says she has noticed

increasing collaboration between countries in Asia, particularly in factual content. This is encapsulated in an initiative titled *The Asian Pitch*, which sees NHK in Japan, KBS in South Korea, PTS in Taiwan and MediaCorp in Singapore co-fund original HD documentaries made by local firms.

Groom believes that healthy factual industries in local markets could form the bedrock for globally exportable businesses, especially with the support of government agencies that help raise awareness at markets with eye-catching pavilions.

“Factual programming is where Korea started 12 years ago, before it got stronger in entertainment formats. I firmly suspect that is what will happen with Thailand and Malaysia. Factual programming is a safe place to start. It enables considered discussion and it’s not so much about opinions, cultures or tastes,” says Groom. “The cultural department of Thailand isn’t suddenly going to back a wacky entertainment programme idea. But it will back a highly professional factual programme made in partnership with NHK in Japan or PBS in the US.”

One example of a company with a background in factual content that is spreading its wings is Singapore- and UK-based Make Productions, which recently appointed former A+E Networks executive ▶

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Breakthrough exec takes D360 sales role

Canada’s Distribution360 has appointed a former Breakthrough Entertainment executive as its director of sales and acquisitions with a remit across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Scandinavia. Jodi Mackie has joined the D360 team in Toronto after 10 years at Breakthrough, which has seen a string of executives leave in 2017. She will be tasked with driving revenue growth across D360’s catalogue through content sales with a focus on finding new titles for distribution and developing production and content creation relationships.

Mackie will make her D360 market debut at Asia Television Forum this month.

“D360 is poised for growth across all channels and genres and it’s the perfect time to bring in the expertise and network that Jodi possesses,” said Diane Rankin, senior VP for international at D360.

In related news, Foxtel in Australia has pre-bought D360 factual series *WW2 Treasure Hunters* (8x60’), from Emporium Productions. BYUtv in the US has picked up Marblemedia’s *Splatalot* (52x30’), while *George & Paul* (26x5’) has been sold to YLE in Finland and Hop! In Israel.