

Trusov

INTERVIEW

Trusov
Director of Program Policy
(Program Allocation)

We have ten time zones in the Soviet Union, but only five broadcast zones so we cannot broadcast exactly at the same time in each zone. There are two main channels, and in each broadcast zone, we broadcast for two hours. Central television has fourteen channels. There are 132 local channels in the Soviet Union.

Our 120 minutes starts at 6:30 in Moscow. We try to relay that at approximately the same time in all time zones, but there is a difference in some time zones because of the difference between the broadcast zone and the time zones.

The principles of programming do not differ from those of other countries. The most interesting and important programs are broadcast at the most convenient times, when the largest audience is available. That is immediately before and after the evening news and later in the evening. After midnight we broadcast mostly to young people.

When a program time is fixed, it gains about a 12% - 18% share of the available audience. But it is difficult to have most programs at the same time. Sports events often interfere. Also, we need to make time available for special documentaries, and other programs of socio-political importance.

We have several mini-series, each episode lasting usually one hour and five minutes. Even the mini-series do not always come on at the same time. We have to account for different shifts of people and other circumstances.

A popular series was "The Experts Investigate," a police detective show. It was running for a long time. About seven years ago the authors of the program said they did not want to write for it any more. We tried to persuade them. They had made more than forty programs. But they said the "creative moment" has passed and they did not enjoy writing for the program any more so they refused. (There was no answer to the question whether they received enough pay.)

That program began in 1972 and ran for 22 episodes. But you have to depend on the creative moment. We will never do it every week.

Children's programs are broadcast in the morning, during the day, and in the afternoon, 2 1/2 hours on two channels. On the second channel, these are mostly educational programs, from 8:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m., broadcast to schools for teachers to use. Sports and music programs are also mostly on the second channel. We have recently created a letters and sociology of the audience department. We have given them the task of long-range development, distribution of audiences in Moscow and throughout the region. They also give us results on short-range audiences for particular films, and programs.

The results are interesting but they did not influence our program policy. They may effect general planning for the future.

Why did we discontinue a popular program such as "The Experts Investigate?" Because the creative people declined to continue, and other programs had small staffs and needed to hold on to them. Last year we redistributed budgets and staff and technical facilities to favor the

more popular programs. But some managers resist giving up talented people. However, I make the final decision.

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