

## Change will only come by giving new voices a platform

27 October, 2016 | By Fraser Ayres

**ITV2's Fresh season is giving people what they want by diversifying content, says Fraser Ayres**

ITV2 is broadcasting four new pilots in the run-up to the MOBO awards on Friday 4 November. It's a diversity tsunami! Or is it?

Full disclosure: my company TriForce Productions is part of the channel's Fresh season – our first broadcast commission as one of the 'new breed' of indies.

We delivered a mainstream, high production value, non-apologetic, accessible to all, panel show. Sorry, I Didn't Know just so happens to be about black history, have two female team leaders and be 85% BAME, but it looks and feels like every other panel show. (Have you ever referred to QI as a 'white' panel show?)

The diverse makeup of our onscreen talent and production crew came about organically. Because they're people we've already been working with, 'diversity' came as standard rather than having to be tacked.

What's interesting in ITV's approach is that instead of insisting they know what audiences want, they reached out to 'fresh' voices to find out what different demographics actually want to see on screen – and most importantly, gave them a broadcast platform.

Many of these new indies bring authenticity; they reflect the people they aim to serve, and it is this variety in content and execution that we all so desperately seek. I've harped on about 'diversity of experience' in key roles before, and it's good to see that ITV's 'risky' Fresh season (led by the quite frankly reckless Asif Zubairy) is encouraging exactly that, as in these brave choices we find sustainable solutions.

It's way beyond quotas, and recognises that traditional content isn't serving the population to its full potential.

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Kevin Lygo has rightfully talked about engaging with 'key partnerships' and ITV is doing exactly that, to the extent of changing their own procedures to enable them to work with the 'little guys'.

We'll see how the season plays out, but whatever the outcome, here are four brand new indies, telling stories, at prime time, that we would never have seen otherwise.[op](#)

If a behemoth like ITV can be flexible and open to change when diversifying their content, it shouldn't be beyond the reach of anybody.

**Fraser Ayres is chief executive of TriForce Creative Network**

*Sorry, I Didn't Know* airs on 3 November on ITV2 at 8.30pm