

KAUN BANEGA CROREPATI

The Return of the Original

The fourth season of KBC will air on Sony. Will the channel's fortune change? By Sapna Nair

The biggest non-fiction show on Indian television, *Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)*, is returning along with its original host, Amitabh Bachchan. *KBC Season 4* will be aired on Sony.

In 2008, Sony Pictures bought the rights to the UK format show, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, from 2waytraffic. Earlier, STAR acquired the rights to the show for eight years through an agreement with Celador.

Big Synergy, which has been producing the show since the beginning, will continue to do so. *KBC* on Sony is slated to go on air by the end of the year.

Currently, the most watched property on Sony, *CID*, gets an average TVR of 2.5 (C&S, 4+, HSM); while *Comedy Circus* records an average TVR of 2.1 and *Indian Idol*, in its fifth season, gets an average TVR of 1.9. The fiction shows *Godh Bharaai*, *Maan Rahe Tera Pitaah* and *Baat Hamari Pakki Hai* garner average TVRs of about 0.25.

Will Sony 'lock' in record viewers with this one? Media planners are sceptical about the runaway success of the fourth season of *KBC*.

Sudha Natrajan, president and chief operating officer, Lintas Media Group has her doubts. "Being the fourth season, the format is a bit tired

and has run its course. Today, viewers get fatigued very easily," she says. Bachchan will attract eyeballs but she doubts if it will be comparable to the earlier seasons.

Manas Mishra, executive vice-president and country head, Mudra Connex also says that it won't be the same. "Any property, whether it is

IPL, *Dance India Dance* or *Indian Idol*, is hugely dependent on huge innovations because consumers have to be offered a new meaning each time," he says.

With regard to the format of the program me Mishra adds that Sony will have to breathe life into the format, keeping the costs in check at the same time.

The first season of *KBC* in 2000 met with roaring success. The average TVR recorded by the game show across the 270 episodes was 14 (C&S, 4+, HSM). The opening TVR of the first season, however, was only 9.

Season 2 started on a very high note. The opening TVR garnered by the show was 20. The average TVR recorded was 11.

The third season, with Shah Rukh Khan as the host, met with a lukewarm response. The opening TVR of *KBC* Season 3 was 9.6 and the average TVR recorded over the season was only 6.8.

Following *Indian Idol*, the channel has lined up the new season of *Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega*. *KBC* will go on the floors only after that. In the past, Sony has experimented with various new format shows such as *Deal Ya No Deal*, *Iss Jungle Se Mujhe Bachao* and *Jhalak Dikhla Jaa*. ■

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