



dear john

Q  
A

## How can I combine the roles of television presenter and programme-maker and should I even aim to do so?

Being a quick thinker and keeping your eye on the ball are among the many talents essential to the task of being a successful presenter. In that spirit the more eagle-eyed among us may have noticed that the two guests who are responding to this week's query are one and the same person.

The reason for inviting very experienced TV and radio presenter and equally successful format and development producer Trish Adudu to share some insights gained from wearing each of those hats is an increasingly pertinent one in the

modern broadcast industry. Presenting is one of the careers for which having an awareness of other roles one may need to play is essential. Yet many aspiring presenters are so focused on getting in front of the camera that they lose sight of the fact that their ability to achieve their aims is a direct result of how much they understand and play a part in what is going on behind the scenes.

Here is Trish's take on how she made the journey from programme-making to presenting and how she balances doing both.

what the experts say...



Trish Adudu (left) in the Real Talk studio with guests David Akinsanya, Natalie Galloway and DJ Abass

### Trish Adudu - presenter

Trish Adudu made her debut as a presenter on BBC2's *Reportage*, going on to become Channel 5's main sports presenter for six years, and regularly appearing on *Loose Women* (including hosting the pilot) and *Inside Out*. She currently presents the weekend morning radio show on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire, as well as presenting the discussion show *Real Talk* on OHTV.

"When I was younger I would watch the likes of Phillip Schofield and Sarah Greene on kids morning television and think, 'I can do that'. So I kept that as my goal and when the opportunity came via *Reportage* I jumped at it. I also had a great love of sport, having done a master's in sport and media and I got a job as a trainee assistant producer on *Grandstand* and *Match of the Day*, but I was never going to get opportunities to do on screen

work. Crikey, female sports presenters were non-existent back then, let alone people like me. It took the insightful Chris Shaw at ITN to give me the chance to become Britain's first black terrestrial sports presenter. I left my safe, secure staff job in Sport to look at other onscreen opportunities and found them at the feisty and fun environment of BBC Manchester under Janet Street-Porter.

"I started to report and learnt to perfect my craft, always watching other presenters and seeing how they interacted with studio guests, the camera and under live studio audience settings. When I went on to present ITV1's *Loose Women*, this became invaluable. Years ago, you would start at the bottom and keep your head down. You wouldn't tell anyone your real aspirations were to become a TV presenter. This was seen as slightly cocksure, and being British we so love knocking overt enthusiasm out of youngsters.

"Nowadays young people can openly go on reality TV with a direct route to TV presenting – shouting to all and sundry that they intend to present – which I suppose

is wonderfully refreshing in many ways. The best show I have ever presented is *Real Talk* on OHT. It's not scared to tackle real issues that mainstream channels shy away from and is the first show where I have been allowed to host, chair and talk to live callers – and most of all be myself."

### Trish Adudu - producer

As a producer Trish has worked on *Grandstand* and *Match of the Day* as well as developing her formats for broadcasters ranging from ITV1 and Channel 5 to *Living TV* and BBC2 for whom one of her documentary ideas won a Royal Television Society award.

"I decided to start developing ideas as a means initially to create control. I was losing out on loads of jobs because I didn't have the right look, so I thought if I could come up with ideas, then if they liked the

idea they would have to take me too. Then I began selling ideas and thought I actually make more money developing formats than getting paid a presenter fee. It was a real eye opener and very liberating as it proved I was actually more than an 'autocutie'.

"The major challenges have been trying to stop your TV and format ideas getting stolen. I have had that happen a fair few times. You just learn to be a lot more savvy – getting people to sign non-disclosure agreements when you are discussing ideas with them, recording meetings and not to taking people at face value.

"Always remember that your brain and your ideas can make you money and you gain a lot more kudos from being someone that has a brain and has good ideas. It is not good by starting and finishing with the notion that you want to be a presenter. You have to be so much more multi-skilled now. We have great ideas around us all the time. Stop and think, look and listen. There are a million and one stories to tell."

dear john sums up...

Trish has very generously offered to give specific advice on any TV or radio proposals readers may want to run by her via [trishadudu@btinternet.com](mailto:trishadudu@btinternet.com). For the reasons already mentioned above, she will of course need these ideas to be accompanied by a non-disclosure agreement before she takes a look. I'd support that by saying that if you are not clear what a non-disclosure agreement is and don't already know how to prepare one, or haven't given any serious thought to protecting your ideas, you probably shouldn't be sending your work to anybody just yet. If you'd like to start correcting that state of affairs, BECTU has some very useful and detailed online information about the Code of Practice for Submission of Programme Proposals which is a good place to start your research.

John Byrne is an entertainment industry career adviser. Details of career advice sessions, workshops and copies of *The Right Agent Right Now* ebook are available from [www.adviceforperformers.com](http://www.adviceforperformers.com). *Real Talk* with Trish Adudu airs at Sky Channel 199, OHTV, every Thursday. Details from [www.ohtv.co.uk](http://www.ohtv.co.uk). Her BBC Radio Show airs on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire on Saturdays at 9am with a listen again facility at the E website. BECTU's website, with a wide variety of useful information and resources, is at [www.bectu.org.uk](http://www.bectu.org.uk)