



The 2008 Guide to
Primetime Strategies

.....

The Five Major U.S.
BROADCAST NETWORKS
What **Worked**, What **Didn't** & What
They're **Planning...**

.....

TVTRACKER.COM

816 N. Crescent Heights Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90046
Phone: +1 323 297 0150 | Fax: +1 323 297 0151
support@tvtracker.com

TVtracker.com is the television industry's premier online, on time source for what's happening in TV, Film and Broadband

FIND OUT FIRST™

Copyright 2008, Property of TVTracker.com, Inc.

Not for duplication or distribution without prior written consent from TVTracker.com, Inc



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies



Corporate History and Vertical Integration:

NBC is the oldest broadcast network in America. Begun as a subsidiary of the Radio Broadcasting Company of America, or RCA, NBC's original function was to help market the radios and television sets manufactured by its corporate parent. As NBC grew into a magnet for top talent, the network was able to transcend its founding premise and create compelling programming. NBC is credited with being the first network to broadcast regular television programming, starting in 1939, when NBC telecast the opening day ceremonies of the New York World's Fair. NBC was also at the forefront of color television technology. By adapting more broadly recognized technical standards for color television, the network won a critical early victory over CBS, which pushed hard to promote its own technology.

In the 1950's, NBC often found itself lagging behind CBS in the ratings. But an innovative network president and programmer, Sylvester "Pat" Weaver (and father of actor Sigourney Weaver) changed the face of television. Because television had begun as an outgrowth of radio, the business model remained virtually unchanged. Corporate sponsors owned, or sponsored, entire programs, such as Kraft Television Theater and the Texaco Star Theater. This gave sponsors an inordinate amount of control over television's content and revenue. Weaver adopted a different model – NBC became the producer of its own content and then sold commercial blocks of advertising to corporate sponsors, analogous to pages of advertising sold in a magazine. This revolutionized the television industry, allowing networks to control their own content and scheduling.

The other great programming innovation Weaver is credited with is pushing programming out of the boundaries of primetime and into the "fringes", early morning and late night. He created two shows that exist today in the same format in which they were created – The Today Show and The Tonight Show. He also pioneered the concept of specials as a way of creating must-see event programming.

Other shows that defined NBC in the 1950's were Milton Berle, Your Shows Of Shows and Dragnet. One of the longest-running dramas in television as well as one of the first shows broadcast in color was Bonanza. In the '70's NBC redefined late night again with Saturday Night Live, which is also still airing in its original form. However, it was a low point for scripted comedies and dramas.

In 1981, a new Chairman, Grant Tinker and President, Brandon Tartikoff came aboard. This creatively revived the network, leading to acclaimed dramas Hill St. Blues and St. Elsewhere and the comedies The Cosby Show and Family Ties. In 1985 General Electric purchased RCA, NBC's parent company, which began another era in NBC's Bob Wright took over as Chairman from Tinker. Wright remains Chairman and CEO today. In the early '90's, legendary comedy



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies



Cheers was the show that NBC had in the top ten. As the decade went on, NBC fully hit its stride with new President Warren Littlefield with shows such as Cheers spinoff Frasier, Friends, Seinfeld and the blockbuster drama ER.

In May of 2004, NBC announced its most ambitious move yet with the acquisition of Universal and its television assets. Where previously NBC had few inroads in cable television and none in feature films and theme parks, with one fell swoop the network was able to redefine itself. NBC's assets now include the cable networks Bravo, USA network, and Sci-Fi Channel, in addition to Universal Studios feature film, distribution and theme park properties and the Telemundo Spanish language broadcaster. In late 2007, NBC Universal showed its commitment to female audiences by acquiring the Oxygen network.

2007-08 Season: What's Working, What's Not & Why:

NBC began this season desperate to build on the buzz it started creating last season with shows like HEROES and 30 ROCK and implement its new programming plans. The first change began shortly after the upfront presentation, when network President Kevin Reilly was usurped by producer Ben Silverman. As the principal of Reveille and as an agent at William Morris, Silverman created a signature of innovative international format deals and unscripted programming. He was the architect of two of NBC's hits, THE OFFICE and THE BIGGEST LOSER. These credentials combined with the belt-tightening at NBC Universal made him a viable choice. Like Jeff Zucker, Silverman has taken an atypical career path to get to a top programming job, that is, he hasn't previously worked in a network development job. Silverman soon created a controversy in an *Esquire* magazine article calling ABC's Stephen MacPherson a "D-Girl." Once the furor died down, Silverman got down to business, getting a jump on pilot and series orders prior to the strike, resurrecting THE APPRENTICE with a celebrity edition and looking for creative financing models. The development and current programming departments were merged into one. The sole new comedy series announced in May, THE IT CROWD, was deep-sixed.

A positive development is that through the first 28 weeks of this season, NBC is the only network to have grown younger in primetime, and NBC is now tussling with ABC for second place in the demo behind FOX. NBC's median age has moved to 47.9 years this season from 48.1 years at this point last season.

On every day save for Thursday, NBC has made good on its promise to schedule unscripted programs at 8:00. This strategy paid off this season, particularly with the scarcity of original scripted episodes. DEAL OR NO DEAL has remained a trusty filler on Monday, Wednesday



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies



and Friday. AMERICAN GLADIATORS became a saving grace during the strike. THE APPRENTICE found new life this season. CLASH OF THE CHOIRS worked well as a holiday programming stunt. The BIGGEST LOSER has emerged as a franchise. MY DAD IS BETTER THAN YOUR DAD has been a rare misstep for Mark Burnett.

On the scripted side, things haven't looked as bright. HEROES still delivers the young demos for the network, but its heavily serialized storylines make reruns difficult. It's the number one show on the network in total viewers, but, tellingly, it's the twenty-second ranked series across the networks. BIONIC WOMAN is the latest casualty on Wednesdays at 9:00. While the heavily promoted series started well, its rapid decline in viewers and expense have prevented its renewal. JOURNEYMAN also failed to resonate with audiences.

The strike created opportunities for some series and spelled the demise of others. LAS VEGAS was deemed too expensive to revive, and died with a whimper. New series LIFE and CHUCK received a tepid response in the fall, but have been given a chance to re-launch next season. ER and LAW & ORDER have both found new life next season. Midseason series LIPSTICK JUNGLE has also been renewed against the odds. An ill-advised response to the strike was the series order for QUARTERLIFE, a project from Ed Zwick & Marshall Herskovitz that was developed at ABC before landed as an original broadband series on MySpace. Acquired by NBC, it aired twice in February before getting benched.

A benefit of the strike for NBC was the opportunity to opt out of the annual upfront presentation in May. This presentation has become an increasing source of embarrassment for the network as it stays stuck in fourth place. On April 2nd, NBC gave the first of a series of presentations to key advertisers and unveiled Winter and Summer schedules for the 2008-09 broadcast year, allowing the advertisers to plan their media strategies for the upcoming year based on a 52-week schedule.

This summer, NBC will give a broadcast window to three USA network series, MONK, PSYCH and NASHVILLE STAR. AMERICA'S GOT TALENT will go into its third cycle and LAST COMIC STANDING will return for a sixth cycle. The new reality series CELEBRITY CIRCUS and THE BABY BORROWERS will debut this summer. Also, a new dramatic anthology series FEAR ITSELF will join the schedule in late May. Of course, the most highly anticipated event for NBC this year will be the Summer Olympics in Beijing, which begin in August and will be broadcast throughout primetime and across all of the NBC Universal platforms.

2006-07 Season: Past Accomplishments & Failures:

NBC started to put together the building blocks of success last season. As Jeff Zucker has ascended to the position of president and chief executive officer of NBC Universal, NBC Entertainment President Kevin Reilly's contact was renewed. There was a sense of stability in



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies



the upper ranks that had been lacking over the past few seasons. The other defining issue for NBC last season was its "NBCU 2.0," strategic initiative that is expected to reduce the company's annual administrative and operating expenses by \$750 million by the end of 2008. As a result, the network started looking at a wide range of digital distribution models and cost effective programming. Also, there was an effort to remove scripted programming from the 8:00 hour to make way for lower cost alternative programming. Returning series had to tighten their belts to assure renewal. One example is LAS VEGAS, which was forced to cut its cast to secure its place on the schedule. Dick Wolf had similar talks to renew LAW & ORDER and LAW & ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT. However, the fact remains that NBC remained in fourth position in total viewers as well as viewers in the 18-49 and 25-54 demographics. It was a long haul to reclaim the enviable position the network held just a few seasons ago.

It was another disappointing year for NBC in drama. The network launched several strong series that have failed to resonate with audiences. The most spectacular example of this is Aaron Sorkin's STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP. After a season's worth of episodes, the numbers were not there and it wasn't renewed. FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS is another example of a quality show searching for ratings. The enthusiasm of executives and critics earned it a second season. The new drama THE BLACK DONNELLYS struggled and was quickly cancelled. RAINES, KIDNAPPED and CROSSING JORDAN were other casualties. MEDIUM was able to hold on.

The sole bright spot was HEROES, which catapulted itself to NBC's number one series. "Heroes" was the #1 new scripted series of the 2006-2007 television season among adults 18-49, adults 25-54, adults 18-34 and total viewers across the networks. This was an impressive achievement given that the show aired Mondays at 9:00 against CBS' TWO AND A HALF MEN.

In comedy, NBC made the decision to try to reclaim its Thursday night position, and things moved along. MY NAME IS EARL and THE OFFICE led the charge. 30 ROCK and SCRUBS earned renewals. ANDY BARKER, P.I. performed better with critics than audiences and was let go. 20 GOOD YEARS was a blink-or-you'll-miss-it show. SINGLES TABLE, a comedy announced at last season's upfronts never saw the light of day. The season ended with NBC's comedy future very much in question.

Unscripted series were also kind to NBC last season. The game show DEAL OR NO DEAL was a hit leading off Monday nights. IDENTITY worked well as a five-night stunt in December and was renewed. THE BIGGEST LOSER continued performing. Sunday nights were tougher. GREASE: YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT was low impact and THE APPRENTICE had its lowest-rated season. 1 VS. 100 was middling.



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies



In April, the network rolled out two short lived unscripted series. THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE was the U.S. version of the Australian comedic improvisational reality format in which celebrities walk through a door into an unknown and interesting situation. THE REAL WEDDING CRASHERS, based on the feature film that featured hidden cameras that recorded improvisational actors who go undercover at real weddings. NBC ordered six episodes of POSH: COMING TO AMERICA, a comedic unscripted peek inside the life of Victoria Beckham, former Spice Girl and wife of soccer great David Beckham, as she moves to America. It was downgraded to a primetime special that aired in July 2007.

Future Development:

NBC has set a goal to deliver almost twice as much original entertainment in 2008-09 than it did 10 years ago. There will be year-round original programming on five nights a week at 10-11 p.m. Additionally, NBC has committed to a scheduling flow of family shows at 8:00, what they call "blockbusters" at 9:00 and dramas or mature-themed programs at 10:00. The network has also promised advertisers that if a series is cancelled, it will be replaced with a comparable series in the same time slot, to minimize surprises.

The roll-out of NBC's 52-week lineup begins in the Fall, as the debuting drama series MY OWN WORST ENEMY, starring Christian Slater, will air MONDAYS with CHUCK and HEROES. KATH & KIM a new comedy starring Molly Shannon and Selma Blair, based on the hit Australian series, teams with THE BIGGEST LOSER: FAMILIES on Tuesdays; and on Wednesdays, KNIGHT RIDER goes to series, building on the success of last February's movie, the highest-rated movie telecast on any network in three years in adults 18-49. Drama series CRUSOE, based on the classic tale, will air on Fridays. In addition, NBC will introduce "SNL THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE, which will share time on Thursdays with THE OFFICE at 9:30.

Through the winter months, NBC plans to add to its Sunday lineup KINGS (starring Golden Globe winner Ian McShane) the ambitious new drama from the producer of "Heroes." This will be one of two projects aired as part of an advertising partnership with Liberty Mutual. MEDIUM and the acquired fantasy series MERLIN will roll out as well. On Mondays, NBC adds THE PHILANTHROPIST, a drama concerning a renegade billionaire who uses his wealth to help people. Tuesdays introduces a brand new cycle of THE BIGGEST LOST: COUPLES. LAW & ORDER returns to Wednesdays for the series unparalleled 19th season. On Thursdays, comedy reigns with the addition of a new series spinning off the NBC hit THE OFFICE. THE CELEBRITY APPRENTICE returns in its popular new format on Thursdays.

In Summer 2009, NBC is slated to introduce THE LISTENER a new Thursday drama acquired from CTV in Canada, as well as two new reality series from executive producer Thom Beers ("Ice Road Truckers") – AMERICA'S TOUGHEST JOBS, an action-reality series on Mondays



2008 Guide To Primetime Strategies




and SHARK TAGGERS, an action-adventure reality series on Wednesdays. CHOPPING BLOCK will premiere on Fridays to work with its slate of original summer programming. Returning shows that Summer will include AMERICAN GLADIATORS, AMERICA'S GOT TALENT, LAST COMIC STANDING and NASHVILLE STAR.

NBC's Top 10 Shows in Total Viewers, Season-To-Date, from 09/24/07 through 04/06/08 (excluding news & sports):

- 1) Heroes
- 2) Deal or No Deal
- 3) Law & Order
- 4) Law & Order: SVU
- 5) Medium
- 6) American Gladiators
- 7) Bionic Woman
- 8) The Apprentice
- 9) ER
- 10) Chuck

NBC 2007-2008 Primetime Schedule

 NBC	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM
Monday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)							
			CHUCK 09-24-2007 (Series Premiere)		DEAL OR NO DEAL 01-07-2008 (Time Period Premiere)		MEDIUM 01-07-2008 (Season Premiere)	
			CLASH OF THE CHOIRS 12-17-2007 (Series Premiere)					
			AMERICAN GLADIATORS 01-07-2008 (Time Period Premiere)		MY DAD IS BETTER THAN YOUR DAD 02-18-2008		JOURNEYMAN 09-24-2007 (Series Premiere)	
			AMERICAN GLADIATORS 2 05-12-2008 (Season Premiere)					
			AMERICAN GLADIATORS 2 05-19-2008			NASHVILLE STAR 6 06-09-2008 (Season Premiere)		
			DEAL OR NO DEAL 09-17-2007 (Season Premiere)		HEROES 09-24-2007 (Season Premiere)			
Tuesday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)							
			BIGGEST LOSER 5, THE 09-25-2007 (Time Period Premiere)			SINGING BEE, THE 09-25-2007 (Season Premiere)	QUARTERLIFE 02-26-2008 (Series Premiere)	
			AMERICA'S GOT TALENT 3 06-24-2008 (Season Premiere)				LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT AKA SVU 04-15-2008	
		BIGGEST LOSER 5, THE 09-11-2007 (Season Premiere)						

		AMERICA'S GOT TALENT 3 07-08-2008 (Time Period Premiere)		LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT AKA SVU 09-25-2007 (Season Premiere)		
		AMERICA'S GOT TALENT 3 06-17-2008 (Time Period Premiere)				
Wednesday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)					
		PHENOMENON 10-24-2007 (Series Premiere)		LAW & ORDER 01-02-2008 (Season Premiere)		
		DEAL OR NO DEAL 01-02-2008		LAW & ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT 01-09-2008 (Season Premiere)	LAW & ORDER 01-09-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	
		CELEBRITY CIRCUS 06-11-2008 (Series Premiere)			LAW & ORDER 04-23-2008	
		BABY BORROWERS, THE 06-25-2008 (Series Premiere)		57TH ANNUAL MISS USA COMPETITION 04-11-2008 (Series Premiere)		
		DEAL OR NO DEAL 09-26-2007 (Time Period Premiere)		CELEBRITY CIRCUS 06-18-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	LIFE 09-26-2007 (Series Premiere)	
					BIONIC WOMAN 09-26-2007 (Series Premiere)	
Thursday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)					
		MY NAME IS EARL 10-04-2007 (Time Period Premiere)	30 ROCK 10-04-2007 (Season Premiere)	CELEBRITY APPRENTICE 01-03-2008 (Season Premiere)		LIPSTICK JUNGLE 02-07-2008 (Series Premiere)
	MY NAME IS EARL 04-03-2008	SCRUBS 01-17-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	OFFICE, THE 04-10-2008	SCRUBS 10-25-2007 (Season Premiere)	ER AKA E.R. AKA E R 04-10-2008	

		LAST COMIC STANDING 6, THE 05-29-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	SCRUBS 04-10-2008	ER AKA E.R. AKA E R 09-27-2007 (Season Premiere)
		MY NAME IS EARL 09-27-2007 (Season Premiere)	OFFICE, THE 09-27-2007 (Season Premiere)	FEAR ITSELF 05-29-2008 (Series Premiere)
		30 ROCK 04-10-2008		LAST COMIC STANDING 6, THE 05-22-2008 (Season Premiere)
Friday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)			
		SINGING BEE, THE 12-21-2007 (Time Period Premiere)	FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS 10-05-2007 (Season Premiere)	LAS VEGAS 10-05-2007 (Time Period Premiere)
		1 VS. 100 01-04-2008 (Season Premiere)	AMNESIA 02-22-2008	FEAR ITSELF 05-29-2008 (Series Premiere)
		DEAL OR NO DEAL 09-28-2007 (Time Period Premiere)	LAS VEGAS 09-28-2007 (Season Premiere)	
Saturday	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)			
		DATeline NBC 09-29-2007 (Season Premiere)	DRAMA SERIES ENCORES 09-29-2007 (Repeat)	LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT AKA SVU 09-29-2007 (Repeat)
Sunday	FOOTBALL NIGHT IN AMERICA (Season Premiere)	SUNDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL (Season Premiere)		
	DATeline NBC (Season Premiere)	AMERICAN GLADIATORS 01-06-2007 (Series Premiere)		LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT AKA SVU 03-02-2008
	2008 SUMMER OLYMPICS 08-13-2008 (Season Premiere)			
		MONK (NBC) 04-06-2008 (Season Premiere)	LAW & ORDER 03-09-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	

		PSYCH (NBC) 04-06-2008 (Season Premiere)	
		DEAL OR NO DEAL 03-02-2008 (Time Period Premiere)	