

# THEY HAVE RUMBLED US

Monday, 12 December 2005

## Important TV ingredient

THEY HAVE RUMBLED US! thoughts on public voting after X Factor & Record of the Year.

Just to bring you this history.

Back in 1997 I came up with an idea for a highly rating TV show which would make top record company executives attend an event, pay to do so and therefore raise the profile of The Tip Sheet.

It needed to get huge viewing figures and therefore a) be popular with TV executives who would devote a key prime time slot to it and b) sell bucketloads of music in the crucial fortnight before Xmas; therefore making it indispensable to TV executives.

This was essentially so they would buy tables (at Â£3000 a time) and attend the event, getting industry awards (and a great evening with gourmet dinner and cocktails) which would then mean much more than the Boring Brits or Monotonous Music Week ones.

It worked " because the evening was split into TWO " the main show and the phone in vote announcement.

I take no credit for the phone in vote idea (except that no dummy TV executive appeared to have noticed the obvious).

The OBVIOUS was spotted by me during my stint as boss of A SONG FOR EUROPE and Eurovision.

Examining the Eurovision ratings when I took over, I noticed they were adequate during the main show (though sinking fast " then Controller Alan Yentob was desperate to dump it) but massive for the announcement of votes (NUL points!).

In those days all votes were JURY votes " a twelve person panel in each territory.

I thought this was both absurd and missing a crucial asset " audience involvement.

So I slowly managed to turn it around to public phone in vote.

It took ages. I'm sure Love City Groove would have done far better with phone votes.

Ditto Gina G (virtually every country with public votes gave us 12 points that year but I'd only gotten a few countries on board by then).

When we won with Katrina and the Waves it was predominantly phone votes and we got 12 points from nearly everyone.

So, bemused that TV execs hadn't rumbled the interactive advantages, I started the Record of the Year Show including public voting and it caught on like wild fire.

A few years later Simon Cowell " seeing the advantage of public voting " utilised it as a key part of his Pop Idol concept.

But we now move to the present day.

EVERYBODY is doing it.

And, just as when everyone cottoned onto the use of videos in TV formats like Entertainment USA (I'd nicked that idea from MTV), we limited the amount of videos in the future series, so the time has come for the Record of the Year Show to come up with cleverer and more modern ways of attracting public interest and involvement every year.

We're all seeing through the "only 24 votes separated the contestants at one point" " rubbish.

We don't fall for it anymore (especially when delivered by brain dead dummies like Kate Thornton).

So it's wake up and smell the coffee time for TV executives.

The only problem is! are they still able to smell?