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29 March 2005.

BBC Charter Review.

Dept. for Culture, Media & Sport  
2-4, Cockspur St., London SW1Y 5DH.

Dear Sir/Madam.

I'm very concerned about value for money. Whenever the BBC advertises for a presenter or similar, queues are literally "round the block". Even programmes such as "The Apprentice" produces an enormous number of people wishing to get into T.V., in this case risking considerable income.

Maybe I'm wrong, but the lure of becoming a 'celebrity' (whatever that means), is overwhelming, and the implication is that once on the ladder, the rewards will be forthcoming. I am mindful of Patrick McGovern, who started from a very low level at the local Playhouse, & worked for peanuts. It is not necessary to make large initial salaries part of the deal: there will be no shortage of contenders!

The established figures at the BBC are not always particularly good at their jobs. The presenter of 'Mastermind' is infinitely better than Magnusson, and usually the stand-in on "Any Questions" is a much better chairperson than the incumbent. Contracts of all staff should be open to scrutiny, & published. [We know the salaries & pensions of M.P's. From parliament, and so on - and not all these people are employed by what is public subscription.]

Communication quality is important. As the population ages, and the present generation will doubtless have a high percentage

of hearing problems, the ability to speak clearly is of paramount importance. The BBC employ quite a number of gabblers! No doubt brilliant people think & speak very quickly, but this is not good Radio or TV. [To take a case in point, from another channel, compare the delivery of Richard Maddy with that of Judy, his co-presenter.]

This aspect is made even worse when 2 or three people are arguing at the same time. This often happens, and is seldom stopped by presenter or compare. The viewers or listeners desire to hear coherent arguments, well explained: they are not interested in a shouting match. It would not be beyond the wit of man to deny air-time to offenders, & to make the rules of the game clear from the start.

Background music often spoils communication, and sound-engineers should be subordinated to the requirements of the programme they are supposedly enhancing.

In the same way, communication is spoiled by intrusive mannerisms. The "Flay 16" programme's presenter seems unable to speak without the open hand jerking in a vertical plane, a habit now apparent in the 'Round the Wall' in '80 Treasures' confection. Do producers or whatever ever see their own programmes in a critical way?

Along with poor sound-engineering, the "zip-pan" system of filming leads to confusion (and even nausea). Again, do producers really watch critically - and is their work ever criticised by those ultimately responsible.

Please give us more Hilary Kay's and Fred Dibnah equivalents. They are worth their money!

Confidentially.

Tom Taulman