

## The Africa Channel Raise Stakes in Africa with Key Appointment

Brendan Gabriel joined The Africa Channel (TAC) senior management team in early 2017 as VP, Production and Creative Director. His portfolio in this role is extensive, and critical to the company's growth on the continent.

Specifically, Gabriel has taken on an executive role in production and creative, with a particular focus on building TAC Studios, the network's production and creative development division. He also is playing an instrumental role in building TAC's development of shows and finished programming slate for global distribution.

Fred Paccone, TAC's Chief Financial Officer said, "We are so fortunate to have Brendan on our TAC team. His deep domain expertise in format creation and sales, coupled with his knowledge of production patterns and players, is unprecedented. He is playing a key role in our plans to evolve TAC Studios into a global content production entity."

Gabriel's track record in television format development, creative direction and results-driven content for both traditional television and digital platforms across Africa is noteworthy. He has achieved significant national and international recognition for his achievements in these areas. His experience includes both scripted and non-scripted production development, including award-winning dramas like *Tempy Pushas* on SABC 1 to Pan African hit adaptations such as *Big Brother Africa* and *Survivor South Africa*.

Gabriel said the TAC opportunity came at a perfect time.

"I had been at Endemol Shine Africa for almost eight years by the end of 2016 and as a creative I was starting to look for a new challenge," he revealed. "It just so happened that I had a meeting with The Africa Channel at DISCOP Africa which evolved into a discussion about how we might work together. I was particularly excited to bring my expertise to an organization that values my contribution to their growth as a studio and television network."

Narendra Reddy, TAC's EVP and General Manager, and his team were also excited to begin conversations with Gabriel based on his achievements in the television industry in Africa. Reddy said, "We were particularly excited to engage in discussions with having Brendan join TAC. He has achieved remarkable success with television format development, creative direction and original and scripted content for traditional and digital platforms in Africa. We also recognized that Brendan was a heavy hitter in the industry, having been selected to speak at DISCOP Africa as a panelist."

Gabriel said the opportunity was particularly exciting because "TAC Studios finally gives African producers a Hollywood outlet to realize local ideas on a global scale." As lead Creative Producer on television hits such as *Clash of the Choirs South Africa*, Gabriel

has his eye on African content that can travel with relevance and success internationally.

Gabriel said that “Pan-African success is achievable with our shared aspirations as proud African people with an appetite for big international shows that represent us. *Big Brother Africa* is one of the shows which proves this in its successful nine-season run. I’ve had the opportunity to be part of its successful re-launch in South Africa and Nigeria, and its first-ever Portuguese versions in Angola and Mozambique. As lead Creative Producer on these re-launches, I managed to tap into key aspirational trends which led to the development of unique themes. This helped keep the hit Endemol Shine format fresh and relevant for African audiences. TAC Studios hopes to identify its own *Big Brother Africa* -- with my help— a series whose format we can export to developed markets.”

Gabriel reported that TAC Studios has several projects in the works. One of those is a scripted mockumentary series called *The Samaritans* that was originally penned by two young producers in Kenya. The series centers around the absurdities of the staff at Aid for Aid™, a dysfunctional, fictitious non-profit.

"The Pan-African appeal of the series as well as the Hollywood connect with talent has all of a sudden taken a local project onto a global platform and has been met with a fantastic reaction from broadcasters in North America and Africa," Gabriel said. "I am excited to be instrumental in the link between the two continents in the hope of bringing African stories and concepts to the fore."

Gabriel summed up his TAC experience to date: "This is a dream job and I am incredibly energized coming to work every day to help build TAC Studios into a leader in the production of global content."