



Broadsystem helps Millionaire pave the way in participation TV

Objective

Broadsystem has been actively involved in the operation of Who Wants to be a Millionaire (Millionaire) since its launch in August 1998.

Millionaire receives more calls than any other game show and there is no restriction on the number of times that a prospective contestant can call in. Such high call volumes presented both the programme makers and Broadsystem with major technical challenges.

Also, when the programme was conceived, no precedents existed for guaranteeing complete fair and random selection of participants when dealing with such a high numbers of callers. Using our knowledge of broadcast game shows, we predicted levels and time loading of calls and developed appropriate screening and selection methods that both met the agreed criteria and would also appear completely fair to callers. At the same time, we had to ensure that callers' interests were protected by keeping call-time as short as possible.

Solution

Broadsystem spent eight months prior to the launch of Millionaire devising competitor-selection procedures that met all requirements for fairness and randomness. We then built a bespoke network of with over 4,000 automated response lines.

Every caller has to answer a simple question from a vast pool of potential questions. Using interactive voice recognition (IVR), they are immediately told whether they have been successful or not. Successful respondents are asked to nominate which particular show that they wish to appear on and, of these, 100 are randomly selected for each show.

The procedure for selecting the 100 callers is based on extremely complex and comprehensive analysis of drawdown ratios to ensure that every correct response has an equal chance of selection. Each of the 100 successful callers is then required to complete a test of skill which narrows the number of contestants to 12. Ten appear on the show and two are reserves.

Results

- Calls into this mass-capacity platform exceeded three million over the four weeks of Series one. This level of call traffic ranks as one of the highest direct response events in history.
- Millionaire is renowned as the most successful game show ever and has been rolled out to over 100 further countries which, in every instance, use the procedures devised by Broadsystem.