

STEADFAST HIRES PARADISE MAN

Senior appointment heralds recruitment phase

(London Thursday 5th January) Steadfast Television, the new indie set up by former Mentorn boss Charles Thompson, has hired its first senior executive, Phil Roberts – the co-creator of the hit FOX reality show *Paradise Hotel* and Mentorn’s former Head of International Formats. The appointment, alongside that of Rachele Dryden-Smith (ex-Mentorn) as a Development Executive, heralds a major recruitment phase for the company.

Phil Roberts joins Steadfast, part of Apace Media plc, as Development Director and will run the division of the company charged with creating Intellectual Property on a global basis. Roberts, who was previously Head of Mentorn’s International Formats Unit, will report to Steadfast Chief Executive, Charles Thompson.

Roberts also worked on many other of Mentorn’s successful factual entertainment shows during his four years at the company – including *Britain’s Worst Driver* (FIVE), *Take My Mother-in-Law* (ITV1), *America’s Worst Driver* (NBC), *Masters of Combat* (BBC Two), *Sex Bomb* (Trouble) and *Forever Eden* (FOX). *Paradise Hotel* was a \$26 million order and *Forever Eden* resulted in 25 hours of reality programming.

Says Thompson: *“Phil is one of those rare people from whom ideas simply pour out. When I heard he had left Mentorn, he became top of my list. He is also unique in that he co-created a paper format – Paradise Hotel – which was piloted by an American network (FOX) and became a huge hit. We are looking forward to his Midas touch taking Steadfast to paradise.”*

Roberts was also responsible for reformatting *Paradise Hotel* for its local language productions in Denmark, Sweden, Belgium and Holland. The Swedish and Danish language versions of *Paradise*, filmed in Mexico, were ratings successes.

Says Roberts: “*Joining a new company where creativity and content creation is absolutely paramount, is an incredibly exciting opportunity.*”

Steadfast also announces the hiring of Rachele Dryden-Smith as a Development Executive, reporting to Roberts. She was previously with Mentorn and before that ITV1. Her production credits include: *Britain’s Worst Celebrity Driver LIVE!* and the live FIVE Tsunami charity concert at Cardiff’s Millennium Stadium, starring Eric Clapton – *Tsunami Relief Concert*. Rachele also devised two *Real Crime* specials for Mentorn (and ITV1).

(Ends)

Background on Steadfast

Steadfast Television was set up by Charles Thompson and Chris Rowlands to develop factual entertainment programming in July 2005 focussing on three genres: popular factual, science and international formats. The company already has a first-look and development deal with Channel 4 International (C4I).

Background on Apace

Apace Media plc was founded in 2002 and admitted to AIM in April this year. The business specialises in:

- the creation, distribution + exploitation of intellectual property in television and recorded music;
- the development and distribution of advertiser funded programming.

In November, Apace announced a successful £7 million fundraising and the acquisition of Diema, the leading Bulgarian satellite and cable broadcaster. Funds from the fundraising will also be used to develop Steadfast programming. In addition to Steadfast Television and the Bulgarian broadcasting assets, the Apace group of companies include, Apace Sports, SET (Sports & Entertainment Television), Apace Music and Proactive Television.

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