

# Banjay, Zodiak to Merge to Create \$1 Billion Production House

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LONDON — Leading international television production and distribution companies **Banjay Group** and **Zodiak Media** have agreed to unite their catalogs and production units.

With revenues of around \$1 billion, the merger creates one of the world's biggest independent production and distribution companies.

At the closing of the merger, Stephane Courbit will be named chairman and Marco Bassetti will be appointed CEO of the new company.

The new group will have a presence in more than 18 territories, producing entertainment, drama, factual, reality entertainment, docu-drama, children's and animation programming. An extensive sales arm will handle worldwide rights distribution and licensing for both in-house and third-party content.

The **Banjay/Zodiak Media** alliance underscores the growing consolidation of the global TV production landscape, following the tie-ups of Endemol, Shine Group and Core Media Group, as well as the acquisition of All3Media by Discovery and Liberty Global, and the buy-out of Talpa Media by ITV.

Banijay and Zodiac Media complement each other well. A top producer of non-scripted TV formats, Banijay owns leading production companies in more than a dozen territories. The group comprises Banijay Productions France, H2O and Air Productions in France; Cuarzo and DLO Producciones in Spain; Brainpool in Germany; Ambra Banijay in Italy; Nordisk Film TV in Denmark, Norway and Sweden; Pineapple Entertainment and Respirator in Denmark; Banijay Finland in Finland; Screentime in Australia, New Zealand and Ireland; and Bunim/Murray Productions ("Keeping up with the Kardashians," pictured above), Stephen David Entertainment ("The Men Who Built America") and Banijay Studios North America in the U.S.

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Banijay sells its own formats, shows, as well as third-party content through its global distribution arm, Banijay International.

Meanwhile, Zodiac, which has more than 45 local brands across 15 countries, thrives in both scripted and non-scripted formats. Its titles include "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," the Canal Plus skein "Braguo," the upcoming Canal Plus period drama "Versailles," "Wife Swap," "The Secret Millionaire," "The Inbetweeners," "Totally Spies," "Fort Boyard" and "Wallander."

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Zodiak Rights, the distribution arm of Zodiac Media, also boasts a catalog of around 20,000 hours of content, and reps both in-house programming and formats, as well as third-party pick-ups.

Banijay's lead shareholder is LOV Group, the family holding company of Courbit, alongside GroupeArnault, Exor, De Agostini and AMS Industries. Led by CEO Marc-Antoine d'Halluin, Zodiac Media is majority-owned by giant Italian conglomerate De Agostini.