

# More than just a TV company

As a major publicly owned business, we believe our social responsibility goes well beyond our core functions as a broadcast business. If Channel 4 is to flourish and also make its proper contribution to the quality of public life in the UK, it must live by the same values it demonstrates in its programmes: a commitment to innovation and experiment; the celebration of diversity; and an ability to think independently. These qualities cannot be extras for us; they have to be a central part of how we run our business.

## **Channel 4 is the biggest investor in independent creative businesses in Britain**

Channel 4 commissions programmes from more than 300 companies spread across every nation and region of the UK. In an industry dominated by a London-centric view, we invest £113 million per annum in production outside the London area and thereby provide employment for an estimated 7,000 skilled people. Over many years, Channel 4 has developed initiatives that help our programme suppliers to grow and prosper, from the smallest start-ups to the bigger, well-established companies whose creative energy and good management are essential to Channel 4's own fortunes. We run many of these initiatives in collaboration with other organisations, including the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT), the trade association to which most of our suppliers belong.

- Channel 4 is the major sponsor of the Research Centre for Television and Interactivity, hosted in our Glasgow offices. The Centre provides independent support for small and medium-sized television production companies based outside the London area, with a portfolio of services to help them become more competitive.
- our Researchers' Development Programme allows 12 non-London production companies to employ a full-time research and development worker for a year and gives them special access to senior commissioning editors across all television networks.
- in 2004 we invested more than £0.5 million pounds in schemes designed specifically to bring more young people from minority communities into the television industry. We provide a year's on-the-job training for young researchers and for trainee commissioning editors and production staff.
- our company development fund grants sums of up to £50,000 to small and medium sized production companies to help them realise their ambitions for business growth.
- we work with our suppliers to encourage inter-company collaboration, and the development of relevant post-graduate courses with local universities.
- in 2004, we took 11 independent producers to the US to meet key broadcasters and learn some of the secrets of operating in the international market-place.

Channel 4 also supports a broad range of initiatives that foster individual talent at every stage of its development, including:

- schemes for school-age children interested in making films and television.
- schemes that develop the skills of writers and film-makers from minority communities.
- schemes that give young film-makers their first chance to make a programme for network television.
- competitions, training workshops and on-going support for comedians, animators, actors, theatre directors, writers and production staff.
- special courses for film-makers working in war zones or areas of danger and conflict.
- special courses for actors and production staff with physical disabilities.

During 2004, Channel 4 supported or sponsored around 30 initiatives devoted to developing new talent and skills relevant to the TV industry. As with our company development schemes, many of these initiatives run in collaboration with other organisations and sponsors.

## **Channel 4 is committed to developing the talent and diversity of its own staff**

Channel 4 was the first major broadcaster to achieve Investors In People status four years ago. In 2004, we provided 476 different types of courses for our staff, ranging from a six-day MBA (developed in-house by our Human Resources department and subsequently franchised to other companies), to courses on creative thinking, deaf awareness, time management and business planning.

Channel 4 is a member of the Cultural Diversity Network which encourages all major broadcasters to achieve an appropriate diversity in their workforce and their on-screen representation. Channel 4 has set itself targets of 13% of its overall workforce and 9% of its senior management from black and ethnic minority communities. The current figures are 12% and 6% respectively. Each commissioning department has on-screen diversity targets, which are monitored, and production companies supplying programmes to Channel 4 are required to complete a form indicating the level of on-screen representation of ethnic diversity in each programme and setting out in what way the programme reflects Channel 4's commitment to promoting and celebrating cultural diversity.

Channel 4 is also a member of the Broadcasters and Creative Industries Disability Network and we maintain a web-based Disability Directory to enable more people with disabilities to find work in the television industry. In addition, we offer dedicated employment and training schemes, focusing particularly on people working for our magazine series for the deaf, Vee-TV.

In 2004, based on an organisation-wide staff survey, we have worked with staff to implement flexible working options and a flexible benefits scheme which allows individuals to tailor their benefits package to suit their personal priorities and stage of life.

We are in the process of implementing a new appraisal process to improve the quality of communication between staff, and new leadership training programmes.

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We routinely measure air quality, energy, water use and the volume of waste in our office areas. We make practical provision for recycling and for the conservation of energy by automatically shutting down lighting and equipment whenever practical.

#### **Channel 4 sponsors and supports events that contribute to the quality of Britain's cultural life**

In 2004, Channel 4 contributed £1.3 million to registered charities, primarily to organisations that contribute to industry related training. Our wider cultural sponsorship ranges from the Hay-on-Wye literary festival to the So You Think You're Funny comedy awards which, from regional heats to the final event at the Edinburgh Festival, have become one of the recognised routes for young comedians to come to public notice. Our Animators in Residence scheme at the National Museum of Photograph, Film and Television in Bradford is an inspiration to young animators and a source of award-winning animations at national and international level. On-air, we support such major events in the arts calendar as the Turner Prize and the Stirling Prize; off-air, we support a wide range of initiatives which in 2004 included a season of Tarantino films at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, a series of live music events to celebrate the West Indian cricket tour of the UK, the development of our own in-house art collection, Art 4, which focuses on the work of emerging artists in the UK, a newly established Asian Women's Film Festival and a variety of live debates and seminars prompted by some of our own programme output.

#### **Channel 4 supports charitable giving and community action**

Our programme support and online services offer information on volunteering opportunities which, in 2004, included an on-air competition inviting young people to propose projects to benefit communities in the developing world. The three best proposals were each given £10,000 and the realisation of the projects in Gambia, Cambodia and Bolivia was shown as part of a television series on social entrepreneurialism. Our Brilliant Career and IDEASfactory websites promote involvement in voluntary organisations as an effective means for young people to find both personal and career development opportunities. Channel 4 is a core sponsor of the Media Trust and of its Community Channel. We support local and national charities and not-for-profit organisations by making our own facilities and expert staff available, as well as by providing financial assistance. Channel 4 staff are encouraged to offer their services as volunteers and mentors and to take part in fund-raising activities for local and national charities. Staff are also encouraged to contribute to charities through a GAYE scheme.

Channel 4 is required to enrich at least eight hours of TV programming each week with telephone help-lines, publications and online information and advice. In practice, we provided programme support for more than 12 hours a week during 2004. We also offer online discussion forums, many related to particular television programmes, while others, such as our 4Health website which attracted 1.2 million visits in 2004, provide services of more general interest to our viewers. The Time Team Club, based on Channel 4's long-running and popular archaeology programme, is one of the biggest and most active history societies in the UK.

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#### **Developing corporate social responsibility**

In 2004, Channel 4 decided to review what it was already doing as a good employer and a good corporate citizen with a view to developing a more formal corporate social responsibility strategy. We joined the CSR Media Forum, an informal organisation to which many leading broadcasters and telcos belong. A working group was established within the Corporation, with expert support from the organisation Forum for the Future, to review the Corporation's activities, consult staff and stakeholders and identify a programme for change, with appropriate targets and priorities, to be overseen by the Channel 4 Board. This resulted in the adoption of the following statement:

**"Channel 4's role goes beyond creating powerful television. In terms of corporate responsibility our mission is to inspire and challenge the behaviour of our people, producers and suppliers and audiences to promote positive social, environmental and personal change."**

To begin to give this statement practical expression, we have identified five objectives for the year ahead:

- we will encourage a step-change in leadership and organisational effectiveness through the introduction of an improved appraisal process and the implementation of a new leadership training programme designed to support and strengthen the capabilities of our managers.
- we will establish a group to draw up and oversee the Corporation's charitable policy, establishing a range of action-oriented ways to support not-for-profit organisations in our chosen fields.
- we will assign formal responsibility for the setting and management of environmental policies and targets, audit our current practice and set ourselves stretching targets for improvement. We will publish and communicate this environmental policy.
- we will communicate our corporate responsibility activities more systematically, to internal and external audiences, and will set up dedicated sites on our intranet and on channel4.com.
- we will adopt stretching and comprehensive diversity targets, and a well-communicated strategy for achieving them.