



## Fred Burcksen

ZDF Enterprises, the commercial arm of the German public broadcaster ZDF, had its most successful year ever in 2008. Since its founding in 1993, the division has overseen the distribution of ZDF's original content globally, from high-end, blue-chip documentary productions to kids' content, dramas and more. ZDF Enterprises has also built up its own strong catalogue of programming complementary to ZDF's output. Fred Burcksen has been on the front lines of the company's growth, having joined ZDF Enterprises just two years after its creation.

For Burcksen, a signature of ZDF Enterprises is its wealth of German crime dramas. "Those are probably what we are known for best," he says, "that's where it all started. We have such a great variety. If you go on holiday in Italy or France or Spain, you can see a crime series of ours every night."

On the back of successes like *Siska* and *Derrick*, ZDF Enterprises has expanded its crime-drama portfolio and is launching a new one at MIPTV, *Verdict Revised*. ZDF Enterprises came on as a co-producer and distribution partner on the show, produced for Sweden's TV4. On the drama front, also launching at MIPTV will be a package of romance TV

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movies, with the *Bastei-Collection*, and suspense thrillers with the *Marie Brand Collection*.

ZDF Enterprises has also become a key provider of documentary programming, and a frequent co-producer with the likes of AETN, NHK, Discovery Channel and National Geographic, among others. At MIPTV, ZDF Enterprises is presenting a broad slate, from science to wildlife to docudramas.

Co-productions are a huge part of Burcksen's mandate, be it looking for partners for in-house ZDF-led projects or coming on board properties initiated by broadcasters and producers internationally. "First and foremost [we look for something that] could be of use to the

network. We have a different mission compared to the network, but it's our first task to always look at their priorities."

If a project is not of interest to ZDF programmers, Burcksen looks for partners among other broadcasters in German-speaking territories. Alternatively, ZDF Enterprises can sign on to serve as a project's international distributor. "We're always looking for investment opportunities, if we see potential for the project to do a good job for the producer or the copyright holder, and make some money ourselves." ■

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