

Why reality shows are so popular

Business



Starting over a decade with shows like Big Brother, Survivor and The Osbournes, the genre of reality television has, it would be fair to say, taken over the mainstream entertainment industry in such a way that it could be described as the number one form of television programming in the world today. With shows like Keeping Up With The Kardashians, the Real Housewives franchise, Duck Dynasty and The Bachelorette being some of the most watched and most talked about shows in the world, the question that needs to be answered is what exactly makes these shows so popular with a wide range of viewers, and why do they continue to be successful? When it comes to celebrity reality shows and how popular they can be, it would be fair to argue that the root cause of the success is that ‘normal people’ like to be given a glimpse in to what they believe to be the inner lives of celebrities that they admire or are fans of. The format of a show like Keeping Up With The Kardashians is such that the viewer can almost get lost in the narrative and feel like they are spending some time in the inner circles of the like of Kim, Khloe, Kendall and Kylie. This type of show looks to bridge the gap between the rich Hollywood lifestyle and the viewer’s normal everyday life, simultaneously letting them see the glitz and glamour whilst also feeling a kind of kinship with regards to the everyday situations that the stars are shown to be in.

Having said that, the fact of the matter is that something that is totally ‘normal’ isn’t going to have as much of an attention grabbing element it, and it is for this reason that the majority of successfully ‘reality’ shows are in fact much more scripted than the casual viewer would like to admit or perhaps doesn’t even realize. The sheer amount of drama that takes place

during a single episode of any of these shows is a huge indicator of just how scripted they are, as nobody's normal everyday life is as action packed as a day in the Kardashian household. Sure, the people and the places are certainly real, but a lot of the situations that arise during episodes are actually incredibly planned out, scripted and executed in such a way that the show runners will best appeal to the audiences. Overall, the question of why exactly reality shows are so popular in 2016 comes down to the fact that the show creators are doing something extremely clever: they are packaging a scripted show in the guise of 'reality' to make viewers think they are getting something different, when in fact they may as well be watching an episode of a traditional soap opera instead. These insights in to the lives of celebrities, no matter how orchestrated they might be, are still a huge draw and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.