

HGTV's Freddy James shares the secret to the channel's success

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Last year, Discovery marked its 24th anniversary in South Africa with the launch of *Home and Garden Television*. Six months since the channel went live in South Africa, we followed up with Freddy James, SVP Integrated Programming for HGTV and *Food Network*, during a recent visit, about its overall performance thus far.

Here, he shares HGTV's recipe for success and future partnerships and opportunities.

■ ***Comment on the success of HGTV in the South African market since its launch last year. What is your recipe for success and how do you plan to stay relevant in South Africa?***

Our many real estate, home renovation and competition series ignite such a passionate audience. Home is our DNA and our audience can't get enough. The HGTV success is grounded in three important principles.

- We hyper-focus on home content and nothing else.
- We feature homeowners who are very relatable and share their home buying, selling, renovating and decorating experiences and how those transformations have impacted their lives.
- And most importantly, we have a stable of talented and engaging home expert talent who are passionate about their crafts and whom our audience trusts dearly.

■ ***Talk us through the partnerships Food Network has made locally and how this will benefit both parties.***

“ The focus of my visit to the South African market is about helping the local Discovery team and their advertising representatives DMS (DStv Media Sales) understand how we integrate commercial clients into our on-air shows on HGTV in America. ”

This ranges from in-show product placement to on-screen graphics, and is really customised to meet the clients' requirements, but in a way, that doesn't affect viewer enjoyment of our shows. It's a fine balance and one I navigate every day!

While I have been here, we have had a series of very exciting one-to-one meetings with some key endemic clients for HGTV South Africa, and I'm looking forward to hearing about successes that come from these meetings.

■ ***What can we look forward to in 2020? Any exciting plans you can share with us?***

In 2020, our transformations will be bigger than ever and that's not just our big renovations, but how those renovations transform the lives of our homeowners.



Freddy James, SVP Integrated Programming for HGTV & Food Network. Image supplied.



HGTV is putting its own spin on the world's biggest, most transformative, inspirational and aspirational home show ever. We are debuting *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* in the United States in January. This epic relaunch involved more than 10,000 volunteers, sharing countless hours to improve the lives of 10 special families.

We think America is ready for some more heartwarming television. This epic series will be followed by several other tentpole events throughout the year.

HGTV is on DStv channel 177. Follow the channel on the following social media platforms: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Pinterest](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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