

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

By Paul Gibson



The sweeping craze seems to be endless... Originally created in 1998 by a team of three "marketing gurus" for promotional purposes, this English conglomerate has racked up its own "millions" for the past eight years in a row... So the question really is: "*Qui sera millionaire*" or ("*Koi iska da stane bogat*") ("*who wants to Be rich*")?

Many of you have probably not heard of David Briggs, along with Steve Knight or Mike Whitehill, but whether you live in Japan, Australia, Africa, Asia, Europe or the Americas...you have most likely heard, seen or might even have participated in one of the most popular television game shows of the millenium. The popular game first started out in the United Kingdom, and immediately traveled to other countries as its popularity spread throughout the airwaves.

Eligible contestants are asked to phone a special "900" or "800" number and answer a question. If they guess the answer correctly, they are entered into a pool of names which undergo a random selection process consisting in general test questions among other things.

Once they have been chosen, they form part of a 10-person group of contestants that are asked a "fastest finger" question, normally placing events, people or things in a particular order. The person who answers correctly in the least amount of time gets to play the game.

The game rules are universal:

Each player is asked a series of questions of varying difficulty and is given four choices, A, B, C and D for each of them. If the player does not know or is not sure of an answer, he can use what they call a "lifeline".

They have three different kinds of lifelines: 1) Poll the Audience 2) Phone A Friend or 3) 50/50. Contestants are asked up to 15 questions. If they answer all 15 questions correctly, they win a million pounds! Or a million dollars! Or a million yen???...ha ha! Of course, the quantity varies from country to country... The value of a million yen and a million pounds are quite different you know...

In Armenia, the prize is 5,000,000 drams.. (that's roughly 8,470 euros). In Columbia, the prize is 210,000,000 (210 million) Columbian pesos, and winners are known to change their identities to avoid possible kidnapping... UNBELIEVABLE! How about Cyprus, ringing in with a 50,000,000 drachma jackpot. My personal favourite is the Indonesian version: the highest prize there is 1,000,000,000 rupiah (one billion rupiah). I mean, who wants to win a million, when you can win a billion!

But for even more curious names and prizes, Kazakhstan certainly takes the cake! They call it: "*Кто возмет миллион?*" ("*Who will take the million?*") Sounds like they are already planning on having the prize stolen by somebody...talk about paranoia! Or the more philosophical title in Slovenia: "*Lepo je biti milijonar*" ("*It's good to be a Millionaire*") Well, yeah!!!! Did Confucius say that somewhere?

The company which produces Millionaire is called Celador Productions and they presently earn annual sales of \$32.5 million. But what you may not know, is that the actual worldwide sales rights owner is a company called **Complete Communications Corporation Ltd.** (limited). One thing is for sure, it seems like the "Millionaire" phenomenon will continue to grow... board games, video games, and now interactive cable games as well.

So now you can tell all your friends that when they see Carlos Sobera on Antena 3, there has never been a "Spanish" millionaire till now...

For more information on Celador:
<http://www.celador.co.uk/factsheet.php>