

## Why *The Agenda*?

By Steve Paikin

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Those of us who went to journalism school had it drummed into our heads that politicians have agendas, journalists don't. And so there is a sense that we're breaking some unwritten rules at TVO by calling our new nightly current affairs offering *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*.

But the fact is, we DO have a new agenda, in large measure because our viewers have demanded it. Starting in 1994, *Studio 2* created an appetite at 8 p.m. for a current affairs program that offered more depth than most other programs on the dial. Even so, whether I was walking along the streets of Toronto, or on the road across Ontario, or responding to

the myriad emails, faxes, phone calls, and letters I receive daily, the message was frequently the same: we enjoy what you're doing, but we want more. We want more intelligent, civilized discourse. We want more time devoted to discussing ideas and issues. We want more of the distinctive debates TVO is renowned for across the province and country.

*The Agenda* is our response to those desires.

On *The Agenda*, we will engage viewers as citizens of this province and country on a range of issues, focusing on who we are and how we live our lives at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*The Agenda* will debate the most significant social, political, cultural, and economic ideas of our time. We will not be a newsmagazine show. We will not be looking to answer the

question “what,” but rather “why?” So we’ll focus on doing that which you’ve told us over the years we do best: robust, thought provoking debate and discussion.

I want *The Agenda* to provide the smartest content available, both on the air and on line. I want people to watch our program, or download some of its content and say, “Hmmm, that was smart. I get it now. I haven’t seen or heard that discussion anywhere else.” I want viewers to make a regular appointment to see *The Agenda*. And even more, I want our program to be in your iPod as much as possible.

Some people have asked me, “Won’t you miss doing *Studio 2*?” The answer is, of course. *Studio 2* has been the best job of my career. I thought it would last two seasons. Thanks to you, it lasted twelve. It was on the air longer than CBC-TV’s *The Journal*, perhaps the best current affairs program ever. So it’s hard to feel short-changed under those circumstances.

I have worked as a newspaper reporter. I have worked as a radio reporter. I have worked in private television. I have done more than a thousand news stories and anchored another thousand newscasts for CBC-TV. And now, having worked at TVO for almost a decade and a half, I can tell you with confidence that there is no other content provider like it in the country. There is something about the culture of the place that has spawned marvelous programs such as:

*Saturday Night at the Movies, Between the Lines, Studio 2, Diplomatic Immunity, Human Edge, The View from Here, Gregg & Company, Person to Person and TVOkids.*

*The Agenda with Steve Paikin* is, we hope, TVO's next significant contribution to a better understanding of our province, our country, and our world.

I can't wait to get started. See you again soon, live, at 8 p.m.  
on TVO.