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Entertainment company Participant Media has tapped former Universal Pictures co-chairman David Linde as its new chief executive as it looks to accelerate its business.

Linde's appointment comes six months after Participant's previous CEO Jim Berk abruptly resigned. The Beverly Hills firm's billionaire founder Jeff Skoll has been running the company during its search for a replacement.

Participant, which aims to develop and fund socially conscious films and wage campaigns for the public good, is looking to Linde to fuel growth, particularly overseas.

Linde, who takes the helm at Participant on Nov. 1, has robust business ties in countries such as China and India, where the movie business is growing. Variety first reported that Linde is moving to Participant.

In 2011 his independent production company, Lava Bear Films, secured funding from India's Reliance Entertainment. He served as co-chairman of Universal Pictures from 2006 to 2009, when he was ousted along with Marc Shmuger.

Participant, founded in 2004, has a hand in high-profile films such as Netflix's "Beasts of No Nation," Steven Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies" and the Sandra Bullock film "Our Brand Is Crisis."

Its nonfilm ventures have included the digital magazine TakePart and cable network Pivot.
– **LA Times**

HBO is staying in business with Lena Dunham.

The premium cabler has ordered "Max," a half-hour comedy pilot from Dunham and the "Girls" team, set in the magazine world of the 1960s, Variety has learned.

The pilot, which Dunham will direct, is described as a comedy set in 1963 and revolving around the stirrings of second-wave feminism, as seen through the eyes of an ambitious

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magazine writer who stumbles her way into the women's movement. Lisa Joyce (pictured above with Dunham) has been tapped to star.

Marking her first major leading role, Joyce's credits include series "Billy & Billie" on DirecTV's Audience Network, plus recurring gigs on "Boardwalk Empire," "The Good Wife," "SVU" and "The Following."

The pilot was written by Murray Miller, a writer/exec producer on "Girls." Dunham will serve as director and exec producer, along with Miller, Jenni Konner and Ilene Landress. The project has been in development for a while, but insiders say the network was awaiting the lead being cast, until making a decision on the formal pilot order.

"Max" is one of many female-centric comedies in the works at HBO. Sarah Silverman is set to star in and exec produce an untitled series about a pathologically honest woman having a modern mid-life crisis; Whitney Cummings has also landed an untitled pilot, inspired by Maureen Dowd's book "Are Men Necessary?" focusing on modern relationships; and YouTube star Issa Rae landed a pilot "Insecure," which is about the awkward experiences and racy tribulations of a modern-day African-American woman.

Dunham, who created "Girls," previously alluded that the critically-acclaimed breakout may not extend past a sixth season, telling Variety, "I think America has a tendency to push shows past their due dates...I like the British model -- in and out." Meanwhile, "Max" will keep Dunham busy at HBO where the fifth season of "Girls" is set for a 2016 debut.

Dunham is repped by UTA. Joyce is repped by Gersh, Siren Song and Peikoff/Mahan. - **Variety**



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