

## GMM Z WIDENS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK TO LIFT SALES

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THE NATION

In order to achieve its ambitious target of selling 2 million set-top boxes by year end, GMM Z has decided to focus on strengthening its distribution network nationwide.

"After completing a deal to put GMM Z set-top boxes on the shelves at 7-Eleven and Big C Supercentres, we are planning to set up GMM Z display corners at Tesco Lotus, PowerBuy and PowerMall outlets soon," chief executive officer Thana Thienachariya said.

At present, CP All operates more than 6,400 7-Eleven outlets, while there are more than 660 Tesco Lotus stores, 108 Big C Supercentres and 80 Power Buy branches across the nation.

Thana explained that the GMM Z set-top box was easy to use and compatible with all television models and satellite dishes, so customers could have access to 200 satellite channels along with three special channels from GMM Grammy.

The company is also relying on traditional trade channels such as shops selling satellite dishes and receivers and other distributors across the country. It has also started taking on local technicians to help boost sales and improve after-sales service.

Thana explained that once the company had covered all modern trade channels, it would set a standard price for its set-top box in the market. However, before that, he said, traditional traders can make more profit from selling GMM Z set-top boxes. In reality, satellite dish traders earn a very thin margin from set-top boxes.

"Though our sales target of 2 million set-top boxes this year seems difficult to achieve, we believe it is possible," the CEO said.

Apart from strengthening its distribution network, GMM Grammy's subsidiaries are also planning to form a partnership with local television production houses, satellite TV operators, free-TV broadcasters and other broadcast

operators to promote their TV programmes to a mass audience.

For instance, "News TV" – a joint venture between GMM Grammy and Santi Viriyarangsarit, editor-in-chief of the *Money & Banking* magazine – will produce a news talk show for a free-TV channel. The MCOT channel Modernine TV and the Army's Channel 5 are considering the proposal.

The show would also be run on GMM's satellite TV channels.

Meanwhile, GMM Grammy's chairman Paiboon Damrongchaitam is also keen on becoming a strategic partner with Cable Thai Holding (CTH) company, which is formed by 200 local cable-TV operators. In the next couple of weeks, GMM Z will join forces with DTV Service, operator and distributor of DTV satellite dish set, to launch a trial period of high-definition broadcasting service.

To have a greater impact now it has acquired major broadcast rights for the German Bundesliga and the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship, GMM Z has formed a partnership with key free TV stations. For example, BEC's ThaiTV3 will become an official broadcaster of the Bundesliga soccer tournament, while ThaiTV3, Modernine and TV5 will be official broadcasters of the UEFA matches.

To keep up with its reputation as the "king of entertainment content", the company will soon start offering pay-TV services as well, Thana added.

Meanwhile, the company is also planning launch mini set-top boxes to capture the mass market, which represents 70 to 80 per cent of local viewers.

Thana said in the second half of this year, the company would launch a prepaid service for registered customers who want to access pay-TV shows via the GMM Z set-top box.