

GMM Z wants content

Allots B3bn to upgrade programmes

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GMM Z, the satellite unit of GMM Grammy, will spend 3 billion baht to enhance its content and import foreign programmes in a bid to expand its set-top box customer base to 3 million by the end of this year.

The budget is for content production and purchasing, set-top box manufacturing and marketing activities.

Fahmai Damrongchaitham, the chief operating officer for platforms at GMM Z, said after the launch of smart and mini set-top boxes last year, it hopes

sell 1.5 million new boxes this year, bringing the total to 3 million. The high-definition (HD) box is set to launch next month for premium customers, but a price has not been finalised.

Only 3% of the market has set-top boxes to receive an HD signal, so there is a big opportunity for GMM Z, said Mr Fahmai.

The smart set-top box with signal encryption remains a key driver to boost box sales, while the old version without encryption will gradually decline due to black-screen problems.

Mr Fahmai said the company will launch its pay-TV service on Feb 16 with eight channels of entertainment and sports. It wants platform subscribers to grow 20-30% to 400,000-600,000 this year.

GMM Z plans to launch three new pay-TV channels with entertainment content later this year.

He projects the company's revenue will exceed 3 billion baht this year, of which 50% will come from set-top box sales, 40% from pay-TV service and the remaining 10% from advertising.

Dew Waratantagoon, COO for platform strategy & sponsorships, said GMM Z is willing to partner with other cable TV operators on a revenue-sharing basis. It will offer them several content packages and free set-top boxes.

"We will channel the 7 billion baht reserved for our English Premier League bid into digital TV," he said.

GMM Z broadcasting contributes 20% of total revenue for Grammy, and is expected to rise to 50% in five years.



Fahmai Damrongchaitham (seated right), chief operating officer for platforms at GMM Z, together with the company's executives, including his brother Rafah Damrongchaitham (seated left), Dew Waratantagoon, and Vilasinee Jiwanon are on the search for new content for their satellite TV business.