

GMM GRAMMY EARMARKS BT3 BN FOR STRATEGIES TO ENSURE PAY-TV INCOME

WATCHIRANONT THONGTEP
THE NATION

GMM Grammy plans to spend Bt3 billion on exclusive imported content and dealer-incentive programmes to secure its 2013 sales target of 1.5 million satellite TV set-top boxes and revenue from pay TV.

Fahmai Damrongchaitham, chief operating officer for the platform business of GMM Z, the satellite TV arm of the music and entertainment giant, said yesterday that the company's main focus this year would still be on satellite-television platform development.

This month, GMM Z is set to launch its pay-TV service with eight exclusive channels, including three in high definition (HD), via a GMM Z box.

Rafah Damrongchaitham, chief operating officer for content management, said the company would add three pay-TV channels this year to lure more subscribers.

The company reportedly sold 1.5 million set-top boxes last year and is targeting 1.5 million more this year, including HD boxes,

which are scheduled to launch soon.

Of the 3 million set-top boxes sold, 600,000 are expected to be for pay TV. Set-top boxes and pay TV are expected to contribute evenly to total revenue of at least Bt3 billion.

Fahmai said his company would underline incentives for dealers and distributors to boost sales of satellite-TV set-top boxes.

GMM Z currently has strong distribution channels, particularly traditional traders and local installers, and is in talks with 400 local cable-TV operators to carry its pay-TV channels, said Dew Waratangoon, managing director for platform strategy at GMM Z.

Satellite TV is expected to play a key role in five years, rising from 20 percent of GMM Grammy's business now to about 50 per cent.

To prepare for the auction of commercial digital TV channels, GMM Grammy plans to establish a company to join the bidding as it hopes to win three licences for children's, news and variety channels, Fahmai said.