

GMM Z STRIKES DEAL WITH FOX

Content to be provided for 27 channels

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THENATION

GMM Grammy has entered a partnership with global content provider Fox International Channels for 27 television channels to be aired by GMM Z to cope with fierce competition in the pay-TV market.

Fox International Channels is a unit of News Corporation. Under this partnership, GMM Z hopes to lure new subscribers with a wide range of premium programmes. For example, it will air some Star World programmes on its GMM Movie Channel. These will include "Glee", "How I Met Your Mother", "Grey's Anatomy", "American Idol" and "MasterChef".

Rafah Damrongchaitham, chief executive officer for content management at GMM Z, the pay-TV unit of GMM Grammy, said that in the second half of this year, the Bt5-billion-plus pay-TV market was expected to see intense competition thanks to aggressive marketing efforts from both new players like CTH and current market leaders such as TrueVisions.

To prepare GMM Z for this tough situation, the company opted to offer its customers more choic-

es, he said. The Fox partnership is a part of an investment of more than Bt2.5 billion to acquire imported content.

Rafah said his company had set affordable prices with killer content from leading international production houses, not just from Fox, to attract almost a million subscribers by the end of next year. For this year, the target is 450,000-600,000 subscribers.

The entertainment package is priced at Bt200 per month, the sports package at Bt300, and the combo package at Bt400.

Apart from non-exclusive content from Fox International Channels, GMM Z's pay-TV service provides eight exclusive channels via its set-top boxes. Customers must use prepaid cards to access these.

The company is spending Bt200 million this year on marketing activities and sales promotions.

The difference between GMM Z and its rivals is that it mainly relies on satellite-based pay-TV service.

According to Nielsen (Thailand), of the country's total 22 million households, 49 per cent watch TV via antennas, 31 per cent via satellite, 11 per cent via cable and the remainder via TrueVisions.