

BROADCASTING

MCOT revamps, earmarks B2.5bn for expansion

PITSINEE JITPLEECHEEP

SET-listed MCOT Plc, the state-owned broadcaster of Channel 9, will spend 2.5 billion baht to expand its broadcasting business next year.

Of the total, 1.2 to 1.5 billion baht will be spent on TV content and the rest used to pay for digital TV licence fees and maintenance costs.

The funds will come from its own cash flow.

In the fourth quarter, MCOT will spend 300-400 million baht on TV content and raise the proportion of its own content to 70% of the total from 55% now.

It will hire professional production companies to make programmes for Channel 9.

Yesterday, the company officially launched the new image of Chanel 9 HD in a bid to expand its viewer base to tap audiences aged 25-35.

Channel 9 has been in the TV business for 63 years. More than 60% of its viewers are aged 40 and above.

"From now, the image of Channel 9 HD will totally change. We'll create TV programmes to bring two generations together to watch them together,"

president Sivaporn Chomsuwan said.

Channel 9 HD's image will be more modern with a new station identity, but the corporate logo will remain the same.

It has a new line-up, with more game shows and reality programmes to attract young audiences. At least 10 new programmes will appear on Channel 9 HD from this month.

Channel 9 has transformed itself from an analogue station and is now operating under a digital TV licence for variety with high definition. It is also a digital-TV network provider.

MCOT will join hands with pay TV operator TrueVisions to produce a singing contest show, a reality programme for food, miniseries and home video.

The new shows under the cooperation with TrueVisions will start broadcasting from next January.

With the cooperation with TrueVisions, Channel 9 HD has moved to air on the No.4 channel under the TrueVisions platform, moving from No.40. Its accessibility to audiences will increase, as the channel number is easier to remember.

Mr Sivaporn said after being a broadcaster for a long time, MCOT would expand

its role to become a content creator.

It will soon kick off the Creator project to promote Thai creativity and find creative people for the broadcasting industry.

"The best creative ideas will be produced as TV programmes and air on the MCOT network. If some programmes are popular, we'll sell them to broadcasters abroad," Mr Sivaporn said.

The Creator project is a collaboration between MCOT and Entertainment Lab, a Los Angeles talent management and production company.

MCOT shares closed yesterday on the SET at 10.30 baht, unchanged, in trade worth 1.6 million baht.



Sivaporn: Image to change completely