

MCOT budgets Bt800m for producing own TV shows

FIRM MIGHT RETURN ITS FAMILY CHANNEL LICENCE AMID TOUGH COMPETITION

WATCHIRANONT THONGTEP
THE NATION

TO RETAIN its TV audience base in the face of intense competition, MCOT is focusing more on producing its own content, investing Bt800 million on TV-show production as well as regrouping its content and marketing business units.

The state media enterprise has also shown interest in returning its licence to run a family channel if the broadcasting regulator amends relevant laws to allow this.

"Content is our core. Self-sustainability in content creation is a new direction for this 38-year-old state media enterprise.

"So we have to set a clear vision for producing our own shows to fill 65 per cent of total time slots, from the current 50 per cent," president Sivaporn Chomsuwan said yesterday.

To turn this vision into reality, MCOT has regrouped its key departments to work together in the right direction by integrating ideas and execution.

After formerly being run independently, the TV, radio, new-media and event businesses are now all under the content management group, overseen by chief con-

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tent officer Setthavut Janwongwam, a former executive of the TV production house Kantana Group.

Thai News Agency, Nine Entertainment and the production department will be managed by Soonthorn Areerak, who serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Soonthorn is highly experienced in media and advertising agency. Before joining MCOT, he worked for Dentsu Media Thailand and GroupM Entertainment.

To tap into emerging digital media, MCOT now has Wirote Trabwongwitaya as chief technology officer, formerly of True Corporation.

Sivaporn said these experts would help MCOT's staff make a difference with strong and creative content and marketing.

He stressed that the three keys to making MCOT a highly creative media company are quality content, creativity, and multi-platform service.

Expecting fierce competition in the digital-television business this year, MCOT has earmarked about Bt800 million for TV production, which will highlight dramas, situation comedies and game shows.

Besides creating unique TV programmes to serve local demand, the company also has an ambitious plan to create its own TV formats for distribution abroad in the near future.

"ID Lucky Number" is a good example of this. The game show will be aired next month, and the pro-

grammes will belong to MCOT, while the format is owned by the content creator.

This year, TV business will remain a key growth engine for MCOT, with revenue targeted at Bt2.043 billion.

Total revenue is expected to reach Bt4.2 billion, up 14 per cent from last year.

With the arrival of new digital-TV broadcasters, MCOT's Channel 9 has lost its long-time content partners, so its ranking among the top players has dropped from number three to number eight or nine.