

Need to go beyond cricket for sports TV to grow: Punit Goenka

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As managing director and CEO of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL), Punit Goenka leads one of India's most successful and profitable television networks. He is also the chairman of the Broadcast Audience Research Council, the joint industry body formed to design, commission, supervise and own a television broadcast audience measurement system. He was awarded the coveted Media Person of the Year award by the IAA India Chapter.

Your thoughts on winning the Mediaperson of the Year award at IAA Leadership Awards?

It is a great honour to be chosen the Media Person of the Year. I accept this award with great humility on behalf of the entire Zee family. The award is a result of the valuable lessons learnt from our chairman Subhash Chandra and of the innovative approach taken by the entire team at Zee. My kudos to other winners and nominees as well.

The Hindi General Entertainment Channel (GEC) landscape is currently witnessing a lot of action among the top 4-5 players. How would you assess the evolution of content in the entertainment genre?

Yes, the content genre in the Hindi GEC landscape has been evolving a lot of late. We have seen many experiments happening on television and you will see the content genre evolving much faster in the near future. I cannot talk about specifics but at Zee, there will be a lot happening going forward.

Has the digitisation exercise benefited Zee in any way?

Just by putting set-top boxes doesn't mean that a home is digitised. I think the industry has to work together to make digitisation happen.

Sports has been a focus area for broadcasters in the recent past. How do you view the performance by the sports channels in the Zee stable?

We do not create content for sports, we only aggregate content. As you know, our country is not a sporting country, it is a cricketing country. The cricket rights for the next 6-8 years have been divided between 2-3 players today in the space. I hope that the country becomes a sporting nation rather than a cricketing nation in the future. This will lead to sports networks having a bright future, going forward. Also, the sports business in the country isn't providing good returns as the costs continue to go up. The revenues have been stagnant for the longest time but hopefully that will change one day.

How do you see 2014 panning out for your network?

2014 would definitely be tougher than 2013 and we look forward to the challenges this year. The general elections scheduled in April-May are very important. – MxMIndia.com

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