

# Premium Pickings

by subhash chandra

**I**F one looks at the entire TV broadcast industry, the paradigm shift in entertainment consumption patterns is apparent. With rising mobile and Internet penetration in the country, and with the successful implementation of the first phase of digitisation, the expectations of audiences are increasing by the day, and it is extremely crucial for the industry to cater to them. Especially the premium audience, which is ready to pay more. Here are some trends that will play out in the coming years.

### Digitisation And Interactivity

Premium audiences will expect an enhanced level of interactivity with entertainment media. So content distribution platforms need to be geared up for the same, giving users the ability to interact with the medium. In the coming years, unlike the pre-digitisation era, wherein there was just a monologue between the consumer and broadcaster, a more circular relationship is expected, with real-time communication, enabling consumers to express their feedback instantaneously. In fact, advanced set-top boxes, in some locations across the world, have reached a point wherein they can tell the actual number of people viewing a given show. On the other hand, social media integration is another area of enhancing interactivity. To cite an example, if a viewer is watching an interesting Champions League match on Ten Action, he would want to share the same with his friends on social media. So a basic social media integration on the content distribution platform will bring in a whole new perspective to the viewing experience.

### Catch Up TV

When it comes to premium audiences, the concept of appointment viewing is bound to change. Considering the daily hectic schedules and frequent travel plans, it gets extremely difficult for one to keep up with favourite shows. This is where, I believe, the concept of Catch Up TV will play a vital role, where the viewer would not miss the selected shows, since they are replayed for a certain additional period. The Indian market is ready for this concept.



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entertainment consumption screens will become smaller and slimmer as the ecosystem evolves, and audiences become increasingly tech-savvy.

The shift from broadcasting to narrowcasting is surely the way forward. India's first and only Over The Top (OTT) television platform — Ditto TV, launched by ZEE — has turned in a positive performance over the past year.

To summarise, I would say that the times ahead are challenging yet filled with immense opportunities. Broadcasters and content providers will have to be on their toes when it comes to catering to the entertainment preferences of premium audiences. One has to constantly react to their ever-changing tastes and devise solutions to cater to the same. The entertainment canvas is changing and a new landscape is on the verge of making its appearance.

### Influx Of Niche Content

Niche content is another way to cater to premium audiences. The content is customised as per viewers' preferences. Such offerings from ZEE have received a positive response. Channels such as Ten Golf, Zee Khana Khazana and ZeeQ are seeing good results, in terms of subscription value. Viewers also like to watch content that is fresh. English entertainment shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, which Zee Café airs just 24 hours after the original telecast in the US, is one example. Information-based programming is also a rising need. ZEE, with the launch of ZeeQ, caters to this need. The channel is targeted at kids and addresses their educational needs.

### Video On Demand

The shift from live TV to video-on-demand is expected in the coming year. Distribution platforms are evolving at a faster pace. Payment gateway integrations with these platforms are in place. The only missing component is the library of on-demand content, which can be offered to the viewer for his consumption. Content providers' biggest concerns are piracy and monetisation, which I believe these robust and secure distribution platforms will address.

### Broadcasting To Narrowcasting

The ecosystem of the entertainment industry is not restricted to a television set today. With the proliferation of 3G and smart devices, television content can be easily accessed on the go. Accessing live television on one's smart device gives one a sense of mobility and comfort. I believe that the enter-

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