Kenya's cinema business is about thinking without the box

By Carole Kimutai: @CaroleKimutai

14 Aug 2012

Like the films they show, the story of Kenya's cinema industry has very interesting story lines, complete with new characters, a beginning and an end. In 2010, one of Nairobi's landmarks - the Kenya Cinema, run by Fox Entertainment Group, was closed after it went out of business.

The closure was attributed to movie piracy, advancement in home entertainment systems, and improvements in broadband and the internet. In 2011, Nu Metro closed its five movie theatres also citing movie piracy and a dwindling market that preferred to rent movies and watch at home.

Technology seems to be cutting both ways. While some businesses are pushed out, others like Fox Theatres saw a gap and introduced the IMAX theatre system showing 3D movies. The 3D technology is expected to increase profit margins in a sector that is grappling to survive. Players like the latest entrant Planet Media Cinema have taken innovation seriously and now run a business model that is targeted to offering superior customer experiences.

Planet Media Cinema, a KSh 80million investment has opened its doors barely three months into the launch of Kenya's premier multimedia superstore - Planet Media.

Atul Shah, Nakumatt Holdings managing director says the company is doing a pilot roll out of Planet Media Stores and Entertainment Centres. "So far, we have made tremendous progress with the pilot project at Westgate Mall and the success proves that our strategic bid to provide all under one roof retail solutions including dedicated entertainment outlets".

Planet Media features one of the largest selection of books, toys and entertainment mediums such as music and movie CD's and DVD's alongside a fully-fledged interactive gaming section.

Planet Media's strategy is to grow the cinema business through strategic partnerships. The entertainment centre hosts electronic brands like Samsung, LG and Sony showcasing their range of home entertainment and gaming units. Consumers will also be allowed to try media products on sale.

"Retailing of entertainment media requires an environment where the consumer can conveniently sample the range of music, movies or gaming consoles on offer," reveals Shah.

The cinema business is big in other parts of the world that also face the challenges of piracy and new technology. Kenya has a growing middle class which presents a market that can be targeted by various cinema products. While they may

afford pay television or rent movies, the cinema culture has potential for growth and only needs a bit of innovation to succeed.

ABOUT CAROLE KIMUTAI: @CAROLEKIMUTAI

Carole Kimutai is a writer and editor based in Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently an MA student in New Media at the University of Leicester, UK. Follow her on Twitter at @CaroleKimutai.
- Brands fight for Kenya's electronic and phone market - 30 Nov 2012
- Kenya PR firm awarded for social media campaign - 16 Nov 2012
- *Nairobi Half Life* with Mugambi Nthinga - 2 Nov 2012
- *Nairobi Half Life* with Tosh Gitonga - 1 Nov 2012
- New appointments at Scanad Nigeria - 30 Oct 2012

View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com