

ODM coming in May with 55 TV channels

Newly-licensed pay TV broadcaster On Digital Media (to trade as TopTV) is ready to enter the market and launching in May 2010, offering 55 channels - for now - at a subscription fee ranging between R99 and R249, CEO Vino Govender announced this morning, Thursday 18 March, in Johannesburg. "We intend to make pay TV accessible for all and as a right and a necessity for South Africans, not only for the wealthy," Govender told journalists at the company's offices in Woodmead.

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva 18 Mar 2010



Govender said a for "a little" R99 per month, subscribers will have access to over 20 channels, providing comprehensive coverage of genres, including general entertainment, news, sport, movies and gospel, to name a few.

TopTV channels will include BBC News, Top One, Fox News, Current TV, Top Gospel, Hi Nolly (Nigerian movies), MSNBC, Al Jazeera, Eurosport News, Baby TV, Afro-Music, Smash Hits, Fox Entertainment, Natura, France24, Top Movies 1, 2 and 24, SABC 1, 2 and 3, three sports channels, e.tv, and many more.

No plans for porn

Asked when the channel plans to launch a porn channel, Govender said: "We are running our business with strong Christian ethical codes and we are not planning to introduce a porn channel. Besides, we don't want to poison the minds of millions of SA children out there."

ODM is a black economic empowerment company with 68% black equity ownership. Its equity fund now stands at R1 billion, R800 000 of which was raised by shareholders and the rest was borrowed.

TopTV said it will use the latest state-of-the-art technology, with an excellent quality coverage that won't blur the picture during the rainy season, and its decoders won't need any restarting.

"With our differentiated multi-channel subscription TV service we will expand the viewing choices for a large portion of the population in South Africa," Govender said. "TopTV subscribers will be able to select packages to suit their viewing needs according to their budgets. Market research has confirmed that TopTV's product offering and positioning will be well-received within the South African TV landscape."

Key drivers

Gugu Sibeko, TopTV GM in charge of local channels, said: "We will offer quality and powerful programmes never seen before in this country, and our nine local branded channels will be our key drivers."

Sibeko is a former employee of SABC Africa and the now-defunct Telkom Media.

She also said TopTV wants to create new brands in SA, adding that her company will be working with local independent producers to produce excellent local content to 'fully entertain' their local audiences.

"We want to create new brands in SA, and under the TopTV brand we are able to combine quality international programming with popular local shows, creating channels with SA appeal," she added.

Furthermore, Govender said ODM has partnered with operating media companies from various countries, including Germany, Scandinavia, Spain and the UK. In addition to this, it has secured programming and channels from household names such as Fox, Warner, Disney, CBS, and Discovery, and many more.

For more:

- On Digital Media: www.ondigitalmedia.co.za
- The Daily Maverick: [DStv versus TopTV: a price war cometh?](#)
- The Daily Maverick: [New DStv competitor to launch Christian-heavy, cheap service in May](#)
- TechCentral: [ODM takes the fight to DStv](#)
- Marklives: [TopTV launches in SA](#)

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.
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