

Catalyzing Content Business in the Middle East through Digital Transformation

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The Middle East is on the verge of a digital explosion, which is being driven by its high smartphone penetration, robust networks, and growing millennial population.

The growth of Digital Services especially video content in the region has been very phenomenal with consumers not only watching more video than ever before, but also choosing video over other content forms across access mediums and connected devices. More importantly, the Middle East internet user is willing to pay for premium content, with sports and latest movies being the key drivers.

With so much of content available to the consumer, it is extremely important for content providers, OTT and Telecom operators to stand out from the crowd. Therefore, content should be viewed as a service built around the end user's experiences.

Having said that, Are Master aggregators in the MENA region adopting the best techniques and content strategies to cater to this growing market? Are they offering the most relevant and best recommended content to the end consumers? Are their end user engaged in terms of consumption of digital service?

User Analytics is the key

User Analytic is the most critical action for Digital Business. From user insight such as demographic trends, content consumption pattern, past transitions, service behavior, data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and Recommendation Engine etc. technology become essential tools of Digital Business Management.

Operators have to onboard the right partner/ aggregator who can collate and slice & dice Big Data and data available in eco system to be able to deliver best user



experience and grow their digital business.

Planning the right content strategy

Given the paradigm shift in Content consumption from Big Screen to Small screen, the popularity of mobile content is growing in the region. People are cutting the cord and using their smartphone for viewing content. In the countries outside the GCC region, mobile devices have leapfrogged desktop as well as laptop as the primary device for viewing content.

The region has some of the highest concentrations of social media users in the world. Mobile Apps are also in great demand in MENA, with almost 85% of MENA's mobile internet users having downloaded an app. Top apps include email, social networking, news and weather, sports news and hobbies. In a demographic split, female mobile internet users were found more likely to use photo and video streaming websites, while their male counterparts favoured gaming websites.

Considering Middle East's rich cultural heritage, ethnic diversity, the Master Aggregator has an important role to play. The must leverage their knowledge of the markets to strike partnerships with content

service providers that provide music, video, games, images, and other multi-media content to Middle East's wide audience.

Personalizing Content

It is not enough to have the right content. The content has to be distilled further on the basis of local laws and customs. The use of AI for this purpose is growing in force. AI provides a deeper insight into the content that helps in following up on local laws and customs. AI based recommendation engines fine tunes content discovery according to each individual.

Creating an Omni-Channel Content Experience

Omni-channel experience is rapidly becoming an integral part of the content land-scape. A user should be able to shift from one device to another, starting off from where he left while he was using the last device.

Similarly, the user should have total control over the content they are viewing. Finally, the consumption of content should be seamless, with the highest possible QoS.

Bottom-line

The digital transformation of content business will lead to an overall increase of the Operator's Service Revenue Pie by introducing more relevant and contextual offering for the end user. It will help in improving content discovery for the Middle East's burgeoning base of smart-phone users. Seamless and omni-channel content services across channels will keep the end-user engaged throughout the service journey. And, finally, operators will be able to sell more data to customers which will help to bolster their bottom-line. ■