



Techtonic Shift

UFO Moviez, among the largest satellite networked cinema chains with over 19.6 million shows, 7332 films in 36 languages across 3518 screens has played a major role in growing the film business exponentially.

Founder and MD
SANJAY GAIKWAD speaks of the milestones, success mantra and roadmap for the future



By Priyanka Sinha Jha

For those who watch out for such news, of late, a constant mention in news related to film releases is that of UFO Moviez. The intriguing name coupled with its association with several famous productions in the capacity of a digital broadcasting technology company has put the company firmly in the top rung. Well, suffice to say that the company has had a big role, to play in several movies mopping up over ₹100-500 crore within the first week itself. Sample the data—*Om Shanti Om* that released with 1400 prints (most of them analogue) had a net box-office collection of ₹79 crore. *Dhoom 3* that released with 4500 prints, almost entirely in the digital format had an NBOC of ₹280 crore (as per moneycontrol.com). The impressive collections have been enabled in a big way, due to the release by digital technology which has exponentially reduced the cost of releasing films in physical print (approximately 70,000), not to mention a wider, quicker reach with no damage to the print which was earlier a common phenomenon.

Sanjay Gaikwad, the man who saw the future, has been quite the frontrunner on the distribution technology front. An engineer with a business management degree from Mumbai University, Gaikwad cut his teeth in the entertainment business during his tenure at Zee. Responsible for projects like Broadband access to residential users, he then went on to operationalise India's first online lottery—Playwin. By his own admission, he worked like an entrepreneur within the company and got a taste of virtual power with Playwin, the online lottery which was a rage. "It had a corpus of ₹1000 crore and I knew it would only go up."

He also had a brief stint at Apollo Tyres but that didn't quite work out what with a shift to Delhi and the widely varied work cultures in both cities.

In 2004, he started the Valuable Group. The company now boasts of a clutch of companies across media, entertainment, technology and infrastructure. The Valuable Group, says Gaikwad, does not believe in value shifting business that needs a huge capital. Instead, it is invested in the value creation business. "We imagine and innovate, and UFO Moviez is an example of that. In the movies business, there was demand but not enough supply due to a staggered release model, and piracy bridged that gap. At a time during the eighties when the quality of movies was not particularly good and the audience was staying away from the single screens which gave rise to greater demand for home viewing and thus emerged the opportunity for digital cinema, one that Gaikwad built his business on."

Over the last 10 years, UFO Moviez has emerged a leading name in digitising film distribution, contributing to the growth

story that has been witnessed in the industry over the last decade. It has contributed to a larger number of film screenings across the country with minimum time lapse, thus reducing piracy. It has also resulted in the growth of theatres around the country in unexpected regions like Chattisgarh and helped the business get concentrated within the first week. UFO Moviez developed a business model wherein they encouraged theatres to adopt the new technology by paying a small installation fee, and thereafter both the service and infrastructure (installation, finance and maintenance) was provided by the company. Another advantage they had over competitor Real Image (a South based company) was their ability to deliver via satellite besides features like Real Time Satellite

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Sanjay Gaikwad at work in his studio

Delivery, Smart card based licensing and high end Management Information System.

This year, so far, they have already been part of major films big and small—*Dedh Ishqiya*, *Jai Ho*, *Gunday*, *2 States*, *Hasee Toh Phasee*, *Shaadi Ke Side-effects*, *Revolver Rani* and *Mastram*. In a major consolidation move, they even tied up with several

theatre chains across the country the major one being Pyramid Saimira with 1000 theatres in South India.

Quiz him whether the company could replicate the success with Hollywood films, and he says, "When people in India saw the benefits, they started subscribing. One has to remember that movies are also about an experience. We have always looked at it as a platform business with an emphasis on quality, security and reliability. Hollywood was already in widespread mode but their budget was high too. For them, cost of

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print was never an issue. They wanted to digitise for quality and cost arbitrage."

In order to add value to services they offer a premium edge. UFO Moviez, also uses its digital relay platform for a high-end white glove service called Club X which boasts of the crème-de-la-crème as its clientele with Aamir Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Sachin Tendulkar among its members. Membership is very exclusive with just about 160 members and the price of showcasing a movie at their private screening facilities is akin to that of booking an entire show in a theater.

Gaikwad is clearly the man who delights in the nuts and bolts part of the business. Seated in his air-conditioned, modern, glass and chrome office, the kind that marks the new age IT hubs, he is not half as enthused about the fact that his work gives him an opportunity to hobnob with the biggest films stars; what pushes the buttons for him, is the idea of the endless possibilities generated by technology such as the one propagated by his company.

Having come so far, he is already excited about future innovations—one of them being IMPACT, a software aimed at 'ensuring transparency, efficiency and accountability in the media & entertainment business.' IMPACT exchange operates in real time and is connected to the back-end via satellite. Its integrated online computerised ticketing and concession has been deployed in around 400 screens in India. Given the present scenario wherein the ticket sales are hugely underwritten, this would certainly be a masterstroke and a yeoman's service to industry stakeholders. Value addition, indeed.

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brand wagon

Saif Ali Khan, brand ambassador for Denver deos

Saif Ali Khan has been roped in as the brand ambassador for Denver deodorant. The tagline of the campaign is, 'being cool during the hottest', which the brand thought goes in sync with Khan's image. The campaign's protagonist also needed to be confident with a magnetic appeal.



Amit Sadh and Taapsee Pannu in the Wildstone commercial

Actors Amit Sadh and Taapsee Pannu are seen together in the Wildstone deodorant commercial. Incidentally, the actors are paired together in Shoojit Sircar's production venture *Running shadi.com*, and the commercial

has been directed by Sircar as well. Just as most deo commercials, this one also, shows some sizzling chemistry between the two actors, albeit, in a very subtle way. Interestingly, Sadh had shot for the commercial while he was injured.



Adlabs Imagica launches The Grand Imagica Parade

Actors Rana Daggubati and Pallavi Joshi flagged off The Grand Imagica Parade at Adlabs Imagica last week along



with creative director, Aarti Shetty. The parade, which will come out on the streets of the park every evening, promises to be nothing short of a spectacular experience for the visitors with its perfectly choreographed parade, thus creating whole new levels of fun and excitement. The parade will include 100 performers accompanied by popular Imagica characters like Tubby, Roberto, Rajasaurus and Mogambo

among others, apart from extraordinary performances by enthusiastic dancers, stilt walkers, magicians and jugglers.