

Rewind Networks goes live with Hits *Himatsinghani intros 'best of TV' channel on StarHub*



Lost



Avi Himatsinghani

Former Fox International Channels' Southeast Asia boss, Avi Himatsinghani, launches his first indie pay-TV channel, Hits, in Asia on 9 December.

The regional channel debuts on Singapore platform StarHub's basic entertainment package, giving it the same reach as WarnerTV, Lifetime, AXN, Fox and Diva Universal, among others.

Hits, operated by Himatsinghani's Re-

wind Networks out of Singapore, is being offered in both standard definition and HD, and will also be available on StarHub's TV Anywhere service.

On-demand service, Hits Replay, will launch in early 2014 on both StarHub's cable and TV Anywhere platforms.

Hits' tag line is "television's greatest hits all in one destination", and the schedule has cherry-picked the best-performing comedy and drama in Asia over the past two decades.

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MediaCorp misses out & Nat Geo People on its way

MediaCorp misses out: Oooh, drama in Singapore over national broadcaster MediaCorp's failure to air the Golden Horse Awards from Taiwan this past weekend, leaving half the nation (at best) able to see the country's biggest film win in, like, ever.

Anthony Chen's *Ilo Ilo* – the story of a Singaporean family and its newly arrived domestic helper – won four awards: best feature film, best original screenplay, best new director and best supporting actress.

Facebook discussion is pretty fierce. Words and phrases like "embarrassing" and "why don't they show some initiative" are being used in the public discussion, along with a bit of sympathy about MediaCorp not being able to tell in advance that a Singapore film would do so well.

Lots of likes and thumbs-up for StarHub though. The pay-TV platform bought Sin-

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Who was at... *Rewind Networks' new office drinks*



Yvonne Tay, Fox International Channels; Avi Himatsinghani, Rewind Networks; Basil Chua, StarHub



Sandie Lee, Rewind Networks; Arjan Hoekstra, Discovery



Lynn Huang, Carolyn So, Endah Evryana, Rewind Networks

From page 1: Hits

The launch schedule includes iconic titles such as *Seinfeld*, *Lost*, *The Cosby Show*, *Diff'rent Strokes*, *Golden Girls*, *Moonlighting* and *Criminal Minds*.

Other comedy and drama titles acquired so far include *Cheers*, *The A-Team*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Mad About You*, *Married With Children*, *Taxi* and *Star Trek – The Next Generation*.

"There's so much general entertainment out there, the challenge is to find a unique space to add value to the offering," Himatsinghani says.

Himatsinghani has so far acquired series from Disney/ABC, 20th Century Fox, Sony Pictures Television, CBS Studios, NBC Universal and Carsey Werner.

"We basically looked at the shows that won awards," says Rewind Networks' vice president and channel head, Sandie Lee.

Lee also looked at series that did well in Asia. These included *The Cosby Show*, which was Singapore's top-rated series and the most expensive show ever ac-



Seow Si Chin, Julie Petersen, Discovery



Kevin Dickie, Theresa Ong, Discovery



Sandie Lee

quired by the then Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (now MediaCorp) at the time.

"We have two sets of audiences – the first timers and people who remember these shows from the past and want to see them for the second time,"

Himatsinghani adds.

The programming grid mirrors Hits branding – simple and intuitive. Series are stripped across weekdays on the hour or half hour, with omnibus back-to-back episodes at

weekends.

"We have put together a simple and intuitive viewing schedule," Lee says, adding: "Audiences can catch their favourite shows at the same time every weekday or binge view back-to-back episodes during the weekend".

Himatsinghani says about 50% of the schedule at launch will be HD upconverted from standard definition and the rest has been acquired in HD from the studios, which have remastered and upgraded their libraries. "Over time, everything will be in HD," he says.



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