

DISCOP Markets

(Continued from Cover)

But the main questions still are: Is DISCOP cost efficient? Are these markets effective? And, what can a company do differently at DISCOP than at other larger, more encompassing markets?

Considering that DISCOP Africa serves 47 territories out of 52 countries that form the continent, the market is certainly cost efficient if one compares an investment of U.S.\$6,400 for a basic stand, travel and accommodation (less for just a viewing box), versus an estimated \$21,400 for a 15-day tour to visit the key 12 countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ethiopia, Congo, Angola, Cameroon and Burkina Faso. This is considering that, as a general rule of thumb for key Sub-Saharan markets, program prices would be in the range of \$250-\$350 per hour.

Similarly, in a region as large as Eastern Europe with some 22 countries, most of which pay as little as \$100 per hour, markets such as DISCOP East become very valuable in terms of cost efficiency. Where cost effectiveness is concerned, some distributors are complaining that full-fledged participation at DISCOP East is becoming expensive, however the organizers offer many lower-cost opportunities.

Dutch producer/distributor FCCE is one company that attends all markets and Sales director Alan Green, who also attends all believes, “the DISCOP markets are a very efficient and cost effective way of reaching the emerging markets in Africa and the Middle East.” Although he would, “like to see the timing of the markets spread more evenly away from major markets such as MIP and MIPCOM.”

Power’s vice president International Sales, Eric Muller in London, is another who attends all DISCOP markets. He acknowledged that, “the DISCOP markets are important and are very much a part of our business plans, as they enable us to meet clients we would otherwise find it difficult to meet.” But he is also concerned that, “Basic Lead (the DISCOP organizers) are spreading their



Deutsche Welle's Petra Schneider

resources too thinly,” and “the service at the last DISCOP Africa suffered as a result.”

Since its inception in 2009, DISCOP Africa has been held twice annually, and Muller is one of many who believes that Sub-Saharan Africa cannot support two markets. There are strong indications that next year DISCOP Africa will be just one event in Nairobi in September. While it is true that these rumors have been around for a while, it is also true that no event is shown on the DISCOP website for next February.

Germany’s Deutsche Welle is another company present at all DISCOP events, although director of Distribution, Petra Schneider sends different sales managers to each of the events, and, she said Deutsche Welle finds the DISCOP markets, “a very efficient way to meet with smaller regional buyers,” and further, “the events also offer real insight into regional media landscapes.” Indeed, describing the inaugural DISCOP Istanbul as, “very well organized, and showing a lot of potential in the Arab broadcast market,”

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she admitted that, “the real allure was the introduction DISCOP Istanbul provided to the Turkish broadcast market, which is very dynamic, very important, and a market we want to expand into in the near future.” Another expansion Schneider would like to see is the creation of a DISCOP market for Latin America, since, as she explained, “the region offers a range of interesting markets, but no central conference to meet with buyers.”

Al Jazeera is an example of a company only attending one DISCOP market, although, interestingly, that market is DISCOP Africa, which Al Jazeera has attended since its launch in 2009 and not, as might be supposed, DISCOP Istanbul. Head of Distribution, Al Jazeera Networks, Martin Ryan enthused, “DISCOP Africa is the number one market for the TV content business in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the sales centric nature of these events facilitates a fantastic opportunity for Al Jazeera to do business with a large number of the regional operators and channels.” Like Deutsche Welle’s Schneider, Ryan also appreciated, “the great platform DISCOP Africa provides to learn about market conditions, and, more importantly, to network with key decision makers in this diverse and rapidly changing media landscape.”

Nordic World’s COO and Sales director, Jan Salling, also only attends one DISCOP market, in his case it is DISCOP Budapest, although it must be remembered that Nordic World is less than a year old, and Salling said that the company, “is considering attending DISCOP Istanbul.” In answer to the question “are there too many DISCOP markets?” Salling was very direct, “as long as the markets keep attracting enough buyers and sellers, they are relevant for us to attend.” He is another who also appreciates the time the smaller DISCOP markets allow him and his sales team to spend with the regional buyers. Complaining that, “the MIP and MIPCOM markets never allow time for anything other than hectic 30-minute back to back meetings,” Salling noted that, “at DISCOP we have time to get a proper update on client needs, changes in structure and new market conditions,



all of which are very important, not least because it stops you from wasting your time, and that of your clients pitching irrelevant products.” Given the nature of Nordic World’s business, this extra time with clients is also important because, as Salling explained, “selling formats will always be a matter of trust and so getting to know your clients well on a personal level is crucial, and DISCOP allows you the time to do this.”

British producer/distributor Cineflix is another that only attends DISCOP Budapest, and newly appointed Sales manager, German Speaking Europe, CIS Territories and North East Europe, Caroline Schroeter, will be attending for the first time, although the company has exhibited in Budapest for many years. Schroeter insisted, “The importance we attach to DISCOP Budapest is evident from the fact that this year we will be taking a suite and sending two sales managers.” She went on to emphasize this, pointing out, “There are great business opportunities in the region, especially in terms of selling TV formats. We have had a lot of interest; for example, in *Eat Yourself Sexy* and our new hit shows, *In-Law Wedding Wars* and *My Dream Home*. I have recently noticed a huge production boom in the region, which is an opportunity for Cineflix International and our expanding format business.” ●



Zed's Dany Ithaxoum, TV France Int'l's Mathieu Bejot