

Nakim Uddin's Inspiring Journey of Building Cinema Empire in Nepal

Kathmandu, 9 August, 2017: A self-made entrepreneur with creative production ideas, Nakim Uddin, has been able to make the cinema experience for Nepalese people on par with the international standards with his QFX Cinemas ventures.

The third edition of The Kathmandu Post Venture Talk, hosted by M&S NEXT Venture Corp on Tuesday saw Mr. Uddin, Director of Team Quest Pvt. Ltd. and Chairman of Nepal Motion Pictures Association sharing his story.

In the auditorium of Nepal Tourism Board, houseful with aspiring young entrepreneurs, he shared his personal journey of being an entrepreneur, reflecting on the need of catering good customer experience. He discussed how he established QFX Cinemas at the forefront of Nepal's entertainment industry by 'Building the Best Customer Experience'.

The Journey from 'Pote' to 'Quest'

After graduating from Taiwan, he was initially involved in his father's Pote business (Glass Beads, as translated in English). But, later, he wanted to free himself from the business and convinced his father to let him travel and explore instead. He then travelled to Europe, Asia-Pacific and Australia.

His journey of entrepreneurship began when he came back to Nepal and opened up a travel agency in 1991. The business went smooth initially but the Maoist insurgency in the nation made that business fall flat so, he had to shut it down. Adhering to his indefinite passion for movies, he then thought to partner with his brother-in-law Bhaskar Dhungana and producer Rajesh Siddhi, whose love and passion for movies matched with his. That way, they collaboratively established Quest Entertainment in 2001.

The Story Behind QFX

Back then, Nepali cinema used to run on celluloid and the cinema halls had creaky seats with unmanaged crowds. Being a religious movie watcher, he didn't quite like the movie watching experience here at Nepal and wanted to change it. So, he pitched the idea of cinema digitization using the emerging technology but doing this at the time of insurgency was a huge challenge for his team. Instead of tying up with an international brand, they decided to make their own brand and take it to an international level.

It was the time when investors would back out every file of the cinema industry due to the crunch of investment; that was when the team decided to invest a huge sum to launch QFX. "We analyzed that majority of the youths who came for movies were bikers mesmerized with short and catchy brand names of bikes. That was how we decided to make a captivating name with catchy initials. SFX and VFX were common terminologies in the cinema industry and we belonged to Quest; that's how the name QFX was derived," shared Nakim Uddin.

The team launched comfortable seats, hi-tech projectors and sound systems, clean interiors and high customer service experience initially in Jai Nepal followed by Kumari Hall, contributing to the shift of Nepali cinema from analog to digital projection. After the overwhelming response from the audience, they realized that it was time then to brand their venture. Hence, 'QFX cinemas' came into existence, luring thousands of Nepali hearts into the world of movies.

Importance of Quality Customer Experience

"Customers pay a price for services and if the services are not worth the price, they won't trust the brand again. Hence, the business falls flat. We realized the need of bringing high-quality customer experience in any business, so, we used to put ourselves in the shoes of customers and brainstorm what would we expect if we were customers. Then, we executed the ideas at QFX to bring world-class experiences for our customers," recalled Uddin.

Learning from his experiences, Uddin believes that in the world of cinemas, the first thing customers want is a first-class movie, and then comes evaluation of services, hygiene and the worth of the ticket price. "Our focus has always been in customer service and will always be. It gives me immense pleasure to notice the growth of digitization in Nepali cinemas. 15 years of our vision is finally molding into real shape and I couldn't be happier," he exclaimed.

For the Wannabe Entrepreneurs

According to Uddin, it is outright easy to become a pioneer, but continuing to it with consistency and patience is challenging. He stressed on the need to identify the ample opportunities present in Nepali market. "A degree alone won't make a business and remember, there is no shortcut in business. The result doesn't come overnight; you have to work hard on your passion day and night. It is mandatory to understand that everything happened in the past is a phase of learning and there is no use sticking to grudges of the past. The only way to success is to move forward and stay focused," suggested Uddin for all the aspiring entrepreneurs.

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