

# Raising awareness of rural enterprises in Cambodia through comedy

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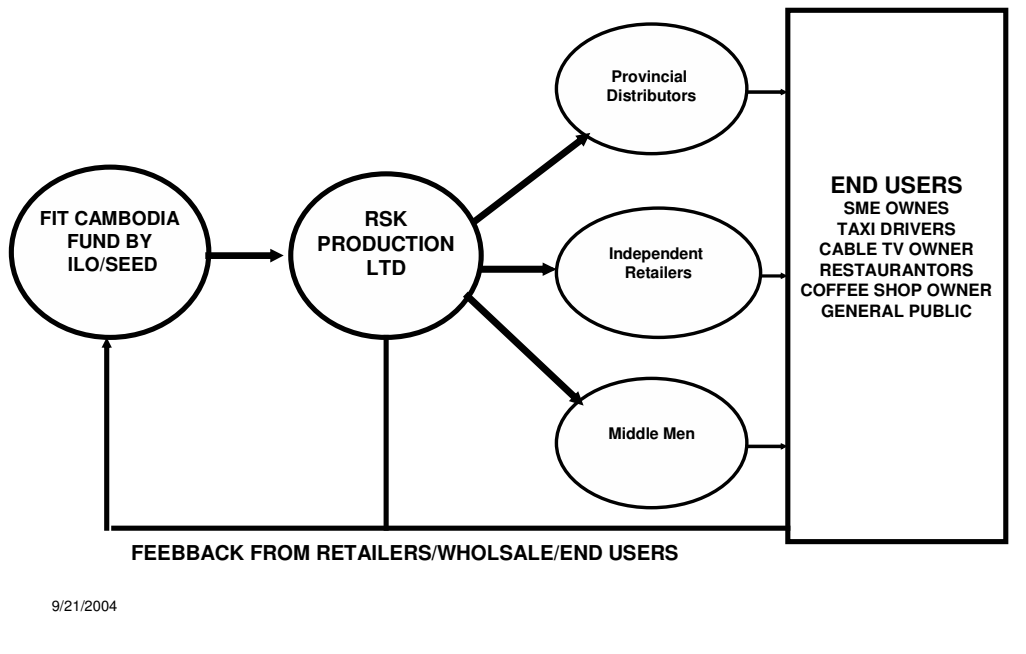
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## Distribution Networks In Cambodia

- **TV ( 7 stations)**
- **Radio ( 9 stations)**
- **Press ( fewer than 10 regular publications)**
- **But most can not reach rural community (except CTN television)**
- **10 production houses in Cambodia (Karaoke / movies)**
- **All have their own distribution networks in the two major cities Phnom Penh and Siem Reap**
- **Different distribution networks exhibit different strengths; some are strong in the north west, others in eastern Cambodia**
- **All production company share their rural networks, due to high cost involved**

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## The Model of Operation



## Why RSK over other distributors?

- Strong distribution networks in North Western Province
- Willingness to share some of the cost
- Relatively small and receptive to the idea of partnering with a non-for-profit organization and the idea of developmental messages
- Willingness to risk and to test new concept
- Accessibility for FIT Cambodia to conduct feedback mechanism

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## Why Comedy about business issues?

- Majority of people who purchase VCD materials preferred to buy Karaoke and Comedy
- The ability of the distribution network to reach remote and rural communities
- The characters were played by well known comedian/popular comedians
- Willingness on the part of the MSE owners to pay for the products
- Traditional formats for presenting development messages were considered tiring and not fun
- Visual content enhances the educational and informational aspects of the program.

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## Program content

- **Primarily two business are competing for the same customers**
- **Led by audience and the unscripted nature of the comedy**
- **Actors and comedian were give the opportunity to be free from control**
- **However they had to stay clear from crudeness**

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## What has the program achieved?

- **Sale figure of about 10,000 copies nationwide**
- **40% of the MSE survey had seen the comedy**
- **Comedy reaches rather remote areas and themes are understood by the audiences**
- **Audience commitment to purchase new episodes**
- **Introduce the concept of MSE to the realm of mainstream entertainment (comedy)**
- **Commercialization of MSE issues, thus assisting in the long term sustainability of the theme**

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## What has the program achieved?

- **Benefits to the MSE audience:**
  - Concept of customer cares**
  - Retaining customers and finding new ones**
  - Concept of Competition/staff treatment**
  - Management Skills**
- **Direct Benefits to the MSEs:**
  - Selling of VCD**
  - Charging people to see the comedy (rural cinema/coffee shops)**

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## Lessons learned from pilot programme

- **The sustainability challenge can be overcome under the right market environment**
  - Market research must be conducted by agency not private sector due to cost
  - Demand led by the end user
- **Personality clashes**
  - between the comedians
  - Retailers/wholesalers
- **Attitude and operational changes**
  - Reacts as quickly to market condition as possibly can
  - Choose the most effective partner (no perfect partner)
  - Do not expect private sector partner (local) to have a sense of developmental idealism (profit only)

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## Concept of developmental messages can be fun to learn for MSEs

- **The concept can work and be sustainable as VCD/comedy stay on the market for a long time, it does not have a use-by date.**
- **The commercial distribution networks can be used by developmental agency to present developmental ideas at market prices**
- **Cultural differences between rural and urban viewers exist but can be overcome**

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## Future Development of “ I, the Boss ”

- **Allowing the comedy to be played over cable TV in the provinces of Cambodia to have maximum reach**
- **Consolidating sponsorship which means product placement in the storyline**
- **Establishing effective audience feedback mechanisms as well to further understand the distribution networks for VCD/DVD**
- **Selling new episodes as well as past comedy to oversea Cambodians in Australia, Canada, USA and France to help reduce costs for productions**
- **Testing new content and features (such HIV/AIDS, workplace discriminations and Child labor)**

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