

Assemblage Entertainment co-produces 'Blinky Bill – The Movie', set to grab large pie in animation industry

Aparajita Choudhury | September 03, 2015 at 6:12 pm

AK Madhavan, alias Madmax or Max, has spent 16 long years in the animation industry and is internationally recognized in the fields of media, film and entertainment.

At the age of 55, he has added another feather to his hat; and that is of an entrepreneur with the launch of Assemblage Entertainment — a full-service 3D animation and development studio for interactive content development.

AK Madhavan, along with Upen Desai, a technocrat, laid the foundation of Assemblage Entertainment in the year 2014 in Mumbai. Later on, Milind D. Shinde and Arjun Madhavan joined hands with them to form the startup. This combination provided the company with the right team, which had the right production capabilities and ethos.

Assemblage Entertainment has completed its first full-length animated feature, 'Blinky Bill – The Movie', with the CGI (Computer Generated Imaging) being co-produced out of its studio in Mumbai. It will be released on September, 17, 2015, in Australia.



'Blinky Bill – The Movie' is an Australian feature film produced by Flying Bark Productions (Australia) in co-production with Assemblage and Telegael Teoranta (Ireland). The total budget of the movie is USD 12.5 million. Assemblage not only works as a service provider but also as an IP partner that owns a back-end stake to the copyright and recoupment schedule.

AK Madhavan says,

“ In a span of 18 months, we have grown sizably into a studio of over 280 people, and are working on two-large scale full-length features for global audiences. Although we're still at the beginning, the entrepreneurial Journey has been very rewarding so far.

Building the studio

Starting an animation studio involves a series of challenges, primarily in terms of technology and finance. Assemblage Entertainment, which is funded through its own cash flows, requires acute sense of capital discipline, cash management creative solutions in terms of deploying people and technology.

Upen Desai says,

“ Film production schedules are tight and the clients' demand for delivery is unwavering. Our challenge was to set up the studio, its technical infrastructure, hire the right talent, and start delivering high-quality content based on a tight production calendar. Setting up the studio infrastructure in a cost-effective yet efficient way with the limited capital at hand was a feat by itself.

Animation becoming a mode of entertainment

In India, people are gradually accepting animation as a viable, alternative form of entertainment. This has triggered growth in the quantum and nature

of domestic consumption. As a hub for animation and production services, India is likely to play a dominant role in the global markets. Moreover, with the political fraternity extending a supportive hand to encourage the use of CGI and technology in various sectors, the huge size of the business opportunity in India is waiting to be explored.

According to a report by Animation Boss, the current size of the industry is estimated at \$247 million and is expected to grow at 15-20 per cent per annum. The industry has seen the arrival of many such companies who possess high-tech studios, equipment and skilled engineers. India is becoming the outsourcing hub for animation due to the low cost of production, compared to the other developing countries.

Milind avers,

“With its low-cost yet high-quality capabilities (state of the art hardware, software and human capital), convergence of technology and creative sensibilities, it’s growing track record of delivery, and strengthening relationships with global producers, India remains a valuable partner in such productions across the value chain (TV commercials, DVDs, Feature Films).”

Meeting the deadline

Accomplishing the production work and delivering the movie to the clients on time, without compromising on the quality, is one of the biggest challenges facing the year-old startup.

According to Madhavan, the industry also broadly faces similar challenges: meeting quality thresholds and delivery timelines of an international clientele, financing, honing the right creative sensibilities, and developing the required talent and skill sets.

Production Services

Assemblage Entertainment offers production services for interactive content development, visual imagery, and production of high-quality CGI animation content for full-length feature films, TV shows and DTH DVDs.

The Mumbai-based startup has generated revenues of Rs. 9 crores in 2014-15. And in 2015-16, it expects a 100 per cent increase in revenue owing to the strong order book of projects. Currently, it is working on a second full length feature called “Norm of the North”, which is a US-wide theatrical release, scheduled for January 2016, by Lionsgate.

To stay competitive

Animation is a capital intensive industry, and therefore, managing finances and allocating resources prudently is quintessential. Madhavan believes that Assemblage’s success rests on its strong international relationships, talented team and a reliable delivery model.

Open adds,

“We’re also exploring new business avenues in the space of gamification, where we’re using our existing competencies to create products for education or the skill development markets.”