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Why OTT and TV are teaming up to share shows



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With exclusivity no longer the golden rule, television channels and streaming platforms are syndicating content freely across networks. The latest example: Amazon's free streaming service MX Player has tied up with Sony Entertainment Television (SET) for its reality series *Rise and Fall*. Episodes will air on SET the same day as the OTT release.

Earlier, Sony's iconic *CID* also began streaming on Netflix, while Bengali platform hoichoi now carries free-to-air (FTA) channels within its live TV app.

Industry experts say the push is about expanding distribution, reach, and monetization at a time when subscriptions have plateaued and ad growth remains patchy. With high production costs and long development cycles, partnerships are emerging as critical.

"Our original shows are high-value intellectual property. In today's fragmented media landscape, confining them to one screen is a missed opportunity. When a show builds momentum on OTT, taking it to broadcast unlocks a massive, ad-supported audience without additional content spend. Similarly, bringing a strong linear title to OTT renews its relevance for digital-first viewers who may never sample traditional TV," said a SET spokesperson.

This is not recycling; it's deliberate, multi-platform distribution to amplify reach, deepen cultural resonance and maximise return on every asset, the person added. Every window is an opportunity, and a smart IP strategy means capitalising on all of them.

Strategic reach

The spokesperson stressed that OTT and broadcast aren't interchangeable but complementary ecosystems with distinct audience habits. While OTT skews younger, urban, and mobile-first, broadcast still dominates mass, family co-viewing.

Cross-platform movement, they argued, is not dilution but amplification—helping shows gain momentum on a second platform, build broader fandoms, extend lifecycles, and strengthen brand equity.

"Partnering with Sony Entertainment Television for *Rise and Fall* reflects an ethos—recognizing that

television and digital audiences often engage with content differently. By extending an original show to TV, we expand its footprint to audiences who may not have discovered it otherwise," agreed Amogh Dusad, director and head of content, Amazon MX Player.

For advertisers, this creates a unique upside, Dusad added: the ability to reach customers across both television and digital through a single property. It delivers continuity of messaging, incremental reach, and impact at scale.

Revenue lifelines

Business sense lies in maximizing both reach and returns, said Dhruvin Shah, founder and CEO of JOJO app, a Gujarati language platform. Creating original shows requires significant investment, and syndication allows makers to extend the content's lifecycle by taking it to audiences who may not be present on the original platform.

By distributing content across multiple platforms, producers can tap into different revenue streams such as TV advertising, OTT subscription fees and licensing fees, besides creating new opportunities like spinoffs, merchandising, and so on, said Rajat Agrawal, chief operating officer and director of Ultra Media & Entertainment Group.

Additionally, syndication allows producers to reduce dependence on a single platform and mitigate risks associated with platform-specific challenges besides leading to new business opportunities like partnerships with other platforms or producers, co-productions and potential for international distribution.

To be sure, for several companies, bundling and syndication are a natural extension of the philosophy to unlock the full value of content by giving it multiple lives across platforms and time windows.

According to Soumya Mukherjee, chief operating officer of hoichoi, much like how cinema, satellite, and digital runs complement each other in the film industry, cross-platform syndication and bundling of content ensure that a show can generate fresh revenue streams, reach new audiences, and strengthen brand recall well beyond its first release. This isn't about giving away exclusivity; it's about maximizing lifecycle value and building cultural currency for stories across mediums.

Exclusivity redefined

Exclusivity is certainly reduced when content is syndicated in its original form, but this trade off can be managed strategically, Mahesh Sharma, president strategic partnerships, Chaupal, a platform specializing in Punjabi, Haryanvi and Bhojpuri content, pointed out.

A common approach is to maintain exclusivity for a fixed window on the parent platform, maximizing initial subscriber acquisition, and then extend availability to other platforms to capture broader value.

"For many players, TV and OTT audiences are largely separate segments. Restricting rights may just result in limiting the potential of a piece of content. The key reason is usually to drive subscription sales for the OTT but once content ages, it loses that capability. Hence, sharing content makes sense after it has aged," Ashish Pherwani, M&E sector leader, EY India said.

Further, exclusivity matters most at launch, when platforms are competing for subscriber attention, Charu Malhotra, managing director and co-founder, Primus Partners, a management consultancy firm said. Once that window is past, exclusivity has already done its job. Syndicating later doesn't really hurt the original platform, because the early adopters, the ones who signed up for it, have already watched it. On the contrary, wider distribution can help build the brand of the show itself.

"The deeper question is about the role exclusivity plays in the platform's overall strategy. Eventually, platforms must decide whether they want to build their business as content-first or consumer-first. When a direct-to-consumer approach is central to the strategy, exclusivity becomes the most important currency," said Saurabh Srivastava - chief operating officer - digital business at Shemaroo Entertainment

Ltd.

"Certain titles are deliberately kept within the platform's own ecosystem as they are the very reason consumers return. With a clear proposition and balanced approach, syndication can extend the life of content and keep the brand present in the audience's mind for longer," he added.