

A father figure



Lovemore Mangwende

GM: MultiChoice Zimbabwe

To say family is important to Lovemore Mangwende is an understatement. This self-confessed family man relishes his role as a father of four as much as he does as head of the MultiChoice family in Zimbabwe. For that is really what he sees the company as – an extension of his family.

“It’s not often that one can say their company operates like a family, but at MultiChoice, we do. I love that; I love the way we work and the fact that our people are so friendly. It always feels good to associate yourself with friendly people, and here you never feel out of place. If I go to Kenya or Uganda, I feel like a Kenyan or a Ugandan. I don’t feel like a stranger. That’s the MultiChoice family for you,” says Lovemore.

It’s this same sense of family that has come to define Lovemore’s leadership style, which is characterised by an open-door policy and his willingness to step in when any of the teams encounter a seemingly insurmountable obstacle.

Lovemore is no stranger to being in this leadership position. He says his former role as a director of intelligence in the president’s office – a post he held for more than 20 years – prepared him well to assume his initial responsibilities as director of MultiChoice Zimbabwe overseeing corporate affairs.

His former government deployment also stood him in good stead to guide the company in its engagements with the country’s regulatory bodies and government departments in this position. Four years later, Lovemore was promoted to CEO, and head of the MultiChoice Zimbabwe family.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Just like any family that spreads beyond the immediate nucleus to include other members, so MultiChoice Zimbabwe considers its increasing number of subscribers as part of its extended family too.

Lovemore says the company recognises its commitment to its subscribers as well as the broader Zimbabwe community, and as such has implemented many initiatives over the years to assist Zimbabweans.

For one, the company has worked hard to lessen the financial burden experienced by citizens by offering significant price breaks. Last year this included

slashing its DStv subscription prices, and introducing a highly affordable new package called DStv Lite, which was designed specifically for the Zimbabwe market with a monthly subscription of just US\$7 per month.

Lovemore notes that MultiChoice has also continued to make significant socio-economic contributions in Zimbabwe through employment and small business creation, including promoting entrepreneurship, employment opportunities and the support of downstream industries through its existing agent and installer network. It also has a 20-year long track record of investing in local community upliftment projects.

In addition, MultiChoice Zimbabwe is involved in ongoing clean-up campaigns and decoder recycling initiatives. In 2017 the organisation was recognised by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate for these initiatives, and won the Green Ambassadors Guild Awards.

Within the broader social context, the company remains one of Zimbabwe’s biggest supporters of the entertainment and arts industries, and sponsors, among others, the Zimbabwe International Film Festival, The Shoko Festival, The DStv Ngoma Awards (showcasing the best in local advertising) and The Children Sports and Arts Festival.

INVESTING IN LOCAL PRODUCTIONS

In an effort to make great content more accessible to its customers, MultiChoice Zimbabwe offers an array of packages providing international, regional and local content. The latter is predominantly featured on Zambezi Magic channel – a dedicated channel for Southern African audiences outside of South Africa.

Since its launch in 2015, more than 10 new Zimbabwean shows have aired on the channel, significantly boosting the profile of the country’s top talent and kick-starting their careers. Lovemore adds that the channel has also commissioned a number of new TV shows, fully produced in Zimbabwe, over

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the last year and is constantly engaging local filmmakers to produce more local talent.

This has helped to grow the local TV production industry, as well as the careers of many up and coming directors and producers whose work has been showcased on the channel.

Together, these efforts have ensured that local viewers have been given the opportunity to see Zimbabwe’s stories, told from the local perspective, on their TV screens. This, he explains, is in line with MultiChoice Africa’s objective of telling Africa’s stories.

So where to from here for the MultiChoice Zimbabwe family? “Well, with a new administration installed, the creation of an investor-friendly environment currently underway, and the promise of many more exciting developments from MultiChoice Zimbabwe,” says Lovemore warmly, “the future looks bright.”