Interview
- Dhilin Mehta

"Even after the success of JAB WE MET, GOLMAAL and MAINE PYAAR KYUN KIYA, our strategy still remains to deliver more good quality entertainment to the audience which has become a necessity nowadays. The company has multiple releases lined up of over Rs. 900 crores which can be universally accepted. Commercial viability and value is of prime importance".

– **Dhilin Mehta**, Managing Director, Shree Ashtavinayak Cine Vision Ltd.

Pranav Adarsh finds out what drives this ambitious announcement.

First of all, is this announcement an attempt to keep up in the race corporate companies are having today?

Definitely not, this is an individualistic ambition, it is our sole discretion. We believe in our products. There is a lot of work and contemplation that has gone into each and every film to guarantee quality entertainment to the audience. Competition is healthy, but we have our own way of working and that does not revolve around the decisions of other companies.

Shree Ashtavinayak seems to have been media shy in the past as compared to the exposure you're seeking now.

I have been traveling a lot, and also our aim is to promote the company and not the directors individually. But I have been on CNN pretty often since the company is listed on the stock exchange. Also, we wait to make the announcements at the right time.

What's your strategy?

Well, we will make medium and higher medium budget films, that have sellable start cast, in a mixed doze of thrillers, comedies, action and light romantic movies. Since we have good holding power we intend to produce the films completely and sell it only at the right time.

At Shree Ashtavinayak, we aim to serve the audience quality entertainment, all the time, which is a factor of growing importance in the industry today. The story of a film is the engine that drives us, and once made, we pay great emphasis on the marketing of the film. I feel that along that the story and marketing are the two most important factors to be concentrated on.

You've hit a good note after JAB WE MET, any further plans with Studio 18?

Currently we have a 2 film deal with Studio 18, which includes KIDNAP and GOLMAAL RETURNS, where we sold the rights to them. Other than that, no plans with them so far.

What about the rest of your films, will you sell them or release them yourself?

Well, it first depends on the situation at the time. Also, we have a good holding power, so we might keep the films with us until the time is ripe. We prefer to play it safe. Approximately 70-75% of our revenues are from production, whereas 30-35% comes from distribution.

Don't you think a more aggressive strategy is more beneficial today?

We prefer a conservative strategy. We are happy with a 20-25% margin. Also, it would obviously not make sense to launch a big project with newcomers. Plans are made keeping in mind the credibility of the cast and crew.

Which are the 14 films?

There's Shivam Kumar's MAHARATHI starring Paresh Rawal, Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri. Sanjay Gadhvi's KIDNAP starring Sanjay Dutt and Imran Khan. The much awaited GOLMAAL RETURNS by Rohit Shetty. Neeraj Vora's RUN BHOLA RUN. The prolific action film BLUE starring Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif, Zayed Khan and directed by Anthony D'Souza. Soham Shah's action flick LUCK that marks Shruti Hassan's debut.

Himesh Reshammiya's MUDH MUDH KE NA DEKH MUDH MUDH KE. Also, we have signed Rumi Jaffery for an untitled love story with John Abraham and Kareena Kapoor. Vivek Sharma will helm a Govinda starrer. Rohit Shetty will direct Ajay Devgan in another comedy. Imtiaz Ali will role out his next film with us, an Akshay Kumar starrer.

We are also associated with directors like Priyadarshan, Aneez Bazmee, David Dhawan, Abbas Mustan, Vikram Singh and Rohit Jugraj. We have also signed artists like Saif Ali Khan, Arshad Warsi, Shreyas Talpade and Tusshar Kapoor other than those already mentioned. All the directors and artists are seasoned people and we are confident of their delivery.

What's the line up like?

MAHARATHI will be releasing in August. Later, KIDNAP and GOLMAAL RETURNS in October. RUN BHOLA RUN is scheduled for January next year. The rest are on floors or yet to go on floors, but all have been finalized.

What about the 4 Tamil and Telugu films? Will they be dubbed or originals?

One of them, a small budget Tamil film, was released recently. Being an alien to that industry we intend to lay low at first. We are still in the conceptual phase for the rest and all are original.

Your line up of films looks very optimistic. What is your aim? What's your mission statement?

Our strategy is to deliver more good quality entertainment to the audience which has become a necessity nowadays. The company has multiple releases lined up of over Rs. 900 crores which can be universally accepted. Commercial viability and value is of prime importance.