

Nitesh Matai - GM at Nu Metro Cinemas



By [Louise Marsland](#)

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Nu Metro Cinemas has a new general manager in Nitesh Matai, who was promoted from marketing executive in December.



His appointment continues the implementation of Nu Metro's turnaround strategy to enhance the movie experience in South Africa.

Matai has just returned from a road trip to visit all 19 of his cinema complexes across South Africa, along with his Exco team. Nu Metro is busy with renovations at all cinemas and the expansion of new cinema formats.

Q: What is your business focus right now?

A: Nu Metro Cinemas was bought by One Fifty Capital just over two years ago, and since then the focus has been to improve efficiency on an operational level. At the moment, focus has now also shifted towards growth through enhanced customer engagement and constantly improving both the actual in-cinema experience and confectionary offering at all Nu Metro's locations nationwide.

Q: What is your main business challenge?

A: Content comes in waves, resulting in attendance trends being in constant flux. Our challenge is to remind audiences of the magic of cinema; and also to instil a culture of movie-going within new and younger markets. It is also about showing (and proving) to movie fans that cinema is not comparable to other forms of content-delivery. Movies are not made for the small screen. It is an art form, produced with the intention of being viewed on premium quality screens with the best sound and other digital projection technology available.

Q: Where does cinema fit into the broader digital-led media mix?

A: The focus of cinema has turned to enhancing the experience - screening films that are not yet available elsewhere through digital formats and illegal online portals; content exhibited in a manner which can't be duplicated on PCs, phones or

home theatre entertainment systems. In this regard, we introduced our large screen-format brand Scene Xtreme at select cinemas in 2014. These cinemas feature the best in 4K Ultra HD digital projection, RealD's Precision White Screens (delivering more crisp, brighter 3D visuals), as well as Auro 11.1/Dolby Atmos sound.

We also opened the first ever 4DX cinema in Africa at Nu Metro V&A Waterfront in December 2015. 4DX delivers a fully immersive cinema experience - involving all senses, giving cinemagoers an experience they have never felt, seen, heard or smelled before! Nu Metro Cinemas signed an agreement with CJ 4DPLEX, creator of 4DX last year - the world's first 4D cinema technology for feature films. 4DX uses motion, vibration, water, wind, lightning, scents, and other effects to provide moviegoers with a truly immersive experience

Q: Where is Nu Metro currently as regards its stated "turnaround strategy"?

A: We are currently in the midst of a "fixing stage" - improving the business through growth and innovation. In this regard, we have already delivered on major objectives during the past year. The next phase will see us optimising the above through enhanced experiences.

Q: The biggest trend to note in your industry?

A: The most significant trend is a movement towards enhancing the cinema experience. As per Scene Xtreme and 4DX mentioned above, Scene VIP upgrades the Nu Metro Cinemas experience with luxurious, recliner seating, a VIP lounge/bar and an à la carte menu. We are also working on an enhanced catering offer at all our other cinemas. Through our new loyalty programme, Scene Club, the focus is on segmented, customised communications with our customer base.

Q: What have you learned from your roadtrip to visit all your cinemas in SA?

A: Cinema is very much alive and kicking. People are still in cinemas and enjoying the experience. Kids still watch movies with bright-eyed wonder - the same sense of wonderment I experienced the first time I stepped into a cinema.

Q: Most important attribute needed to do your job?

A: The ability to juggle between the three main pillars of the cinema business: entertainment, service and retail. The secret is to be able to deliver on all three simultaneously, and synergise efforts across all levels to deliver effective results.

Q: What inspires you?

A: I've had a range of fantastic mentors throughout my career. The faith of our investors in the exec-team also inspires me to live up to that confidence. Apart from my career, my family has been a consistent inspiration.

Q: What are you currently reading for work?

A: *'The leader who had no title'* by Robin Sharma.

Q: At the top of my 'bucket list' is...

A: To get an invite to one of extravagant Microsoft billionaire and co-founder Paul Allen's infamous yacht parties at the Cannes Film Festival; and be flown onto the yacht in one of his on-board helicopters!

ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

Louise Burgers (previously Marsland) is Founder/Content Director: SOURCE Content Marketing Agency. Louise is a Writer, Publisher, Editor, Content Strategist, Content/Media Trainer. She has written about consumer trends, brands, branding, media, marketing and the advertising communications industry in SA and across Africa, for over 20 years, notably, as previous Africa Editor: Bizcommunity.com; Editor: Bizcommunity Media/Marketing SA; Editor-in-Chief: AdVantage magazine; Editor: Marketing Mx magazine; Editor: Progressive Retailing magazine; Editor: BusinessBrief magazine; Editor: FMOG Files newsletter. Web: www.sourceagency.co.za.

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