

Deezer prepares for battle in competitive music streaming sector

May 19 2015, by Lucie Godeau



Deezer CEO Hans-Holger Albrecht at the music streaming company's office in London on May 19, 2015

French music-streaming service Deezer is preparing for a "decisive" battle as it faces off against big names like Spotify and American rapper Jay-Z's new venture Tidal, its CEO said.

"I think there is going to be four or five big players in the future. Deezer

is going to be one of them," said Hans-Holger Albrecht, the new German CEO of the company who replaced Axel Dauchez in February.

Albrecht said Deezer's strategy is different from giants like Apple, which is due to come out with its own streaming offer.

"Apple will be a strong competitor for sure," Albrecht told AFP in an interview.

Much of Deezer's strategy is focused on global expansion, and it has already invested in 180 countries.

"Our strategy is to develop more in terms of geography, so we have more emerging markets, we have more telecom partnerships and we go more diversified in terms of products," said Albrecht.

"Our product is top class. We've been very efficient at building a customer base with limited capital resources, so there is a high degree of efficiency."

Video not a priority

Deezer unveiled on Tuesday a podcast option for customers in France, Britain and Sweden, hoping to enrich its content offerings.

"We have to demonstrate to the consumer that there is more than just music on Deezer. We know people have different kinds of tastes and needs," said Albrecht.



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Even with these new features, Deezer does not plan to change its monthly premium price of 9.99 euros (\$11.12).

The company entered the American market last year when it partnered with Sonos, a California based wireless headphone manufacturer. It also acquired Stitcher, the independent American supplier of podcasts.

The company counted six million paid subscribers last year, and 16 million unique users, still small compared to Swedish streaming giant Spotify's 60 million. Deezer has yet to release its subscriber numbers for the last several months.

While strengthening its key markets in France, Germany and Britain,

Deezer is also trying to lock in more global partnerships, especially in developing countries.

Albrecht is familiar with emerging markets. He is former CEO of media and telecommunications group Millicom, which counted 50 million clients in Africa and Latin America.



Deezer CEO Hans-Holger Albrecht poses for a portrait in London on May 19, 2015

In terms of user experience, Deezer wants to continue investing in technology and algorithms to improve its musical recommendations so listeners can have customised experiences.

"There is nothing more individual in entertainment than music. Around

the world you don't have two people creating the same playlist. Music is very personal," said Albrecht.

As far as adding video to its service, which Spotify has started to do, Albrecht says it is not high on the company's to-do list.

"Maybe we will do it later. It's not a key focus."

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