

Programmatic video - the real-time future of visual brand storytelling has arrived

By [Andre Steenekamp](#)

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The revolution of the future may continue to be televised, but more and more consumers will be watching it unfold on their mobile devices rather than on their TVs. As marketers, we need to be preparing ourselves for a profound shift in consumer behaviour as our customers stream more video and watch less linear television.

With the shift to streaming, video-on-demand and catch-up viewing, TV advertising's role as the premier place for visual brand storytelling is under growing threat. Many consumers are ingesting video on their smartphones or tablets rather than on a television screen, often alone rather than in the family room. Our storytelling via video can thus become increasingly personalised, targeted and measurable.

The good news for brands is that digital video is better at grabbing consumers' attention, provoking engagement and driving purchase intent than traditional banner formats. The result is that many advertisers and agencies are already shooting television and movie commercials with the consideration of repurposing the content for digital use at the front of their minds.



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Digital video advertising and marketing is increasingly intersecting with the other trend that defines the zeitgeist in digital marketing – the rapid rise of programmatic buying. As automation eats the rest of the digital advertising market, it will eat video, too. If video is about visual storytelling and creating compelling brand experiences, programmatic video buys are about targeting the right video content to the right person at the right time, and with minimal wastage

Looking at the international market, the massive move away from linear TV to streamed media is already well underway. In turn, it is causing a massive surge in programmatic video advertising, which is emerging as one of the most powerful solutions in the digital marketer's toolbox. According to eMarketer, US advertisers will spend \$5.5bn on programmatic video this year – more than half of total digital video ad spending.

Two trends of the moment

In Europe, meanwhile, IHS expects programmatic video to grow from €375m in 2015 to more than €2bn in 2020. South Africa is lagging in the global trend, but forward-thinking agencies and advertisers are looking at how they can unleash the

value of programmatic video in their marketing mix.

Of course, the relatively high cost of bandwidth is an obstacle for digital video in South Africa, but continued drops in mobile broadband prices and a proliferation of fibre will change that faster than many marketers imagine. Already, we've seeing many consumers – and especially younger people – turn away from TV in favour of digital media.

What makes programmatic video such a great opportunity is the way it creates efficiencies through the automation of the media buying process. The value of each ad purchase is calculated individually, offering advertisers the ability to target their ad impressions to specific audience segments rather than needing to buy large numbers of impressions at the same time.

The result is that advertisers can buy inventory across multiple websites, mobile sites, and mobile apps from a single automated platform. This saves them time and money, while allowing them to take advantage of a diverse selection of low-cost and premium advertising inventory from a range of publishers.

It's all about the data

In addition, programmatic video offers us access to rich, actionable data about the consumers they are targeting. For example, we can look at behavioural data (anonymised data about which other sites customers have visited, the devices they are using etc.) and demographic data (like age, gender, location). With mobile, we can leverage richer and more contextual data for even more accurate targeting.

That means we can advertise in more effective ways by targeting messages to consumers, depending on who they are, their behaviour and where they are in the purchase funnel. The result is less wastage and better performance as a result of targeting customers more efficiently and effectively.

And the more a brand uses programmatic video, the better it will get at using the data sets to target customers in the right environment and with the right message. Brands can use the data to sharpen creative messaging, focus on high-performing placements, and move away from placements that are not delivering results.

Right, now programmatic video is about reaching a select market in South Africa, but video will become more prevalent as data costs fall. Digital natives – the customers of the future – are setting the pace for video and marketers can't afford to fall behind. By embracing programmatic buys, South African advertisers can get ready for the future, using the same programmatic platforms they use to manage their display buys.

ABOUT ANDRE STEENEKAMP

As CEO of 25AM, Andre Steenekamp leads the company's expansion in South Africa's fast-growing digital marketing and advertising space. His 25-year career has seen him work in a range of sales, marketing and management positions for leading traditional and digital publishers and agencies. Steenekamp was appointed to his current role following the acquisition of a 50%-stake in Acceleration Media by Times Media Limited.

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