

A more 'bullish' view for 2009

By [Ken Varejes](#)

20 Jan 2009

Overall, I'm very bullish about this year. I predict the first few months of 2009 will determine how long the economic crisis will last and how we move forward.



1. **Traditional media trends:** most marketers and industry players I've interacted with over the past few months believe that the tough economic climate we're experiencing is not going to last beyond 2009, and I agree with these sentiments. The truth is that if you cut your adspend in the tough times, you're going to lose market share.

Right now, traditional media is being hit hard and all media owners are affected. As just two examples, print is feeling it hard and ADEX shows that TV is taking a knock. However, it shouldn't just be about price for the advertiser, it's about being in the right space and getting the most impact for your brand.

I predict that besides the motor vehicle, banking and property sectors, we can see the same adspend in the first few months of 2009, with marketers not cutting back.

2. **Below-the-line and out of home:** above-the-line and below-the-line concepts are gone. Advertisers spend money according to what works for them; it's as simple as that. I believe that ad agencies haven't given out of home concepts the attention it deserves, as they continue to focus more on traditional media. Over time, the agencies that realise the true value of out of home and pay more creative attention to these media, will come out the winners.
3. **Online and mobile media trends:** mobile will continue to grow in leaps and bounds over 2009 but there are still big issues with this medium. For instance, advertisers need to consider whether they'll be irritating the person they're dealing with by sending continuous advertising messages which may result in consumers having negative feelings towards the brand.

Having said that, I do believe that mobile will become far more sophisticated and more developed in the years ahead, especially as people are trading up their phones for more advanced versions. Internet access is coming off a small base but this medium is becoming more and more popular and, within time, I see huge possibilities online, especially combined with mobile as the Internet becomes cheaper and cheaper. There are massive opportunities, down the line, for both these media among all markets, especially the youth.

4. **Working smarter not harder:** we should all be working harder right now, but I do think this is going to be a prominent theme during 2009. Marketers, advertisers, media owners and agencies are going to need to be more aggressive this year, working smarter to stay in the market and hold prominent position.

I also think that we need to spend more time educating our sales people:

- Who is our targeted client wish list?
- Who are the clients we want to reach?
- Where are we going
- How do we get there?

We need clearer deliverables to assist the sales people to stay on course.

5. **Guerrilla marketing:** guerrilla marketing will always be around but especially in 2009 as people are forced to think even more out of the box. With events such as the Confederation Cup and the British and Irish Lions tour making its mark this year, companies can show their mettle through really clever marketing, while being careful to remain within the confines of the law.
6. **2009 is full of possibilities:** successful players in 2009 will be those who continue to innovate, especially in spaces that are considered non-traditional. Media owners need to attract more attention during this coming year and provide brands with innovative solutions to ensure maintained or growing market share. Shorter campaigns are another area where brands can make big impact by allowing advertisers to be more tactical, react quicker and defy conformity - use 2009 as the year to get noticed!
7. **Staff retention:** the economic risk we're in now just means that we have the opportunity to be more entrepreneurial when it comes to minimising risk and maximising staff retention. There's no doubt there will be some cutbacks in business - we've seen this prominently in the print and agency environment - but companies can focus on staff retention now by thinking out of the box more than ever. We must question what other revenue streams we can focus on to keep key staff. I believe we will weather the storm with minimum losses.
8. **Getting back to basics:** this year will see many companies reverting back to the ABCs of business. We need to be prudent in deciphering the 'nice to haves' versus the 'need to haves'. This means looking at your bottom line with a stronger and tougher eye without sacrificing share of voice or long-term profitability. Be more hungry and more determined than ever to succeed, which means putting in extra hours to get the results you want.
9. **Outdoor regulations and the alcohol advertising ban:** I don't believe the alcohol ban will come into effect over 2009; the industry will fight the cause aggressively because we want freedom of expression. I also don't understand why the Minister of Transport is taking on an area which should be handled by the Minister of Health.

This year, I think that outdoor is going to be more in the spotlight as we thrash these issues around. Our government needs to be more realistic; what is next on the 'things to be banned' list? Will toy advertising be banned because small pieces might be swallowed and therefore harmful to children or will it be fast food because junk food makes people fat?

Ken Varejes is CEO of Primedia Unlimited.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>