

Taking activations to the next level in 2016

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ProActive's Vaughan Berry, Director at Provantage Media Group, outlines his top activations trends for 2016.



This year we'll see a significant shift in approach to marketing. We have witnessed a mindshift in the way brands approach marketing and go to market and this will have a very positive impact on experiential marketing and activations. Brands will allocate substantially more budget to activations as they have seen and experienced the benefits of targeting consumers in this manner. And as media and consumer groups continue to fragment, the effectiveness of OOH and activations in particular will only increase. Below are some trends that are key for 2016.

1. Activations will keep getting better

Brands and consumers can expect to see better quality activations that make better use of environment, innovation and time period. Technology, engagement and social media will be intrinsic to activations; this is a direct reflection of consumer-driven needs and interests as well as a larger portion of budget being placed in OOH and activations. Brands are realising the impact of OOH, especially with an ever-fragmenting media and consumer landscape and the glaringly obvious fact that people are spending more time out of home.



2. Activations will continue to integrate sales

At the end of the day marketing is about sales. It's about keeping a brand, product or service top of mind so that the consumer wants it. Brands want to know "what will I get out of this" and results need to be brought to the table -be it an increase in sales, an expansion of a database or brand affinity. Unlike traditional TV, radio and to an extent print media to which no direct ROI can be attributed, activations campaign can effectively report ROI. As an integral part of a campaign brand ambassadors have supportive tools such as tablets to capture data and they can also capture feedback from consumers directly and in real time. Furthermore, brand ambassadors are in close proximity to point of sale, so their influence piques interest and desire in the perfect environment. A well-planned and well-executed activation should always culminate in optimal results.

3. Environment knowledge is key

What works dazzlingly well in one place can fail dismally in another. The key to effective activations is ensuring that the campaign is a perfect fit to environment, consumer and consumer's state of mind. Don't do your homework and you'll have a campaign that annoys, irritates and/or doesn't neatly nail objectives. We need to constantly have our finger on the pulse of the various OOH environments that people move through and dwell in. We need to do our homework, explore, observe and analyse.



4. Consumers want the new

Over the years, the consumer quest for the new has become insatiable. Audiences want technology, they want innovation and they want clever. Within the activations arena, these elements bring engagement, interaction and memorability to a campaign. Variety is also top of the list and it is in this space where a different kind of innovation is taking place. Pop up stores from shipping containers, commuter shelters transformed into barber shops and other creative means of engaging with the targeted consumer are ensuring that brands illicit the right kind of interest and connect with their audience in a manner that comes across as less corporate, less planned and more hip. Activations that are innovative and clever not only create talkability but also the opportunity to extend reach organically through social media and PR.

5. Brand ambassadors will become brand advocates

Gone are the days where brand ambassadors were given a quick brief and a uniform. Today's Brand Ambassador is a representative and a representation of the brand. He is professional, has an unwavering knowledge of what he is representing and why and knows how to entice and communicate with his target audience. Provantage Media Group is at the helm of brand ambassadorship with the creation of a school especially for this vocation - the PMG Training Academy. Effectively, Brand Ambassadors need to become Brand Advocates.

For 2016, activations will be a key element in any good marketing plan. Regardless of how far technology is taking marketing, face to face interaction is still a vital, and growing, part of the mix.

For more information on how ProActive™ can take your brand to the right consumer in the right environment contact Vaughan Berry on 0861 776 826 or go to www.provantage.co.za or connect with us [@ProvantageSA](https://twitter.com/ProvantageSA)

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