

Targeted OOH reaches its market

Despite the reach that broadcast mediums such as radio and television provide, none can compete with out of home (OOH) media in terms of frequency and cost efficiency. This is according to Les Holley, executive director of Out of Home Media South Africa (OHMSA).

Because society is dynamic and constantly on the move, the need for media 'on the go' is growing too. Some parts of cities, like Newtown in Johannesburg, undergo a revamping process and because OOH is easily adaptable to all types of environments and surroundings, it makes the ideal medium to communicate with diverse markets.

"Globally, OOH media follows progress, both commercially and industrially, and in South Africa it is no different. It serves as an ideal broad-based commercial medium, as well as providing advertisers and planners with a tool to capture specific markets," he says.

De-cluttering roadsides

There are restrictions and laws that come into play. For example, every legal site location is determined by municipal bylaws that ensure a minimum distance between OOH advertising sites, based on speed. For example, in a 60 km/h zone, sites have to have a distance of 200m between them and this distance increases with higher speed zones.

"At times, OOH has been accused of clutter in certain areas. However, this is mainly due to outdoor operators who are not compliant with OHMSA and its constitution nor with the applicable regulators' bylaws and are often found to be unapproved.

"The industry needs to realise that areas with cluttered spaces means that media owners, clients and landlords all lose out." Media owners cannot charge premium rates in a cluttered environment; which in turn affects the property owner who loses on site rental. Clients also miss exposure and impact as their brand message is competing with other OOH messages in the same area.

Responsible outdoor operators remove excess OOH infrastructure in dying areas, but still allow for a certain number of sites in the locality to reach these markets. For example, in the early 1990s, the route to Sun City had more than 200 OOH sites; today visitors can expect to see only 40.

"In the past 15 years, OOH in general has cut back on the number of sites," adds Holley.

Media owners are taking pride in their sites, by beautifying the environment around the sites and replacing outdated structures with more stable and aesthetically pleasing versions. These sites not only add value to the advertiser and brand, but also to the community.

"OHMSA and its members have in the past worked closely with regulators to designate certain areas as sign alleys," explains Holley. "These areas, for example Queen Elizabeth Bridge in Johannesburg and the Airport precinct, are subject to a high volume of slow moving traffic. In these cases, the normal spacing areas are relaxed.

"The biggest challenge that remains is to get the media owner to adhere to the regulations and approval processes. It is invariably this non-adherence to regulations that overpopulate certain areas with outdoor signage," he concludes.

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