

Summer springs new opportunities for OOH

 By [Ingrid von Stein](#)

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It is with awe and amazement that I meet summer every year, and in my heart there is always a kind of reverence for the magnificence of nature's own marketing team. For two thirds of every year the West Coast region and Namaqualand remains under the radar, just long enough for the world to nearly forget it exists. Then Nature's professional marketing teams take the lead and the whole world stops to notice.

The canvass, stretching kilometre upon kilometre and spattered with every colour in the spectrum, reminds me of the many spaces and endless possibility around us. The colours are random and bold, but appear well balanced and synchronised. The impact is so effective that people from around the globe flock to the region to live the experience.

There are many open spaces around us that create the same rich and meaningful possibilities for advertising and communications. Throughout the inner cities, informal settlements, walled-in suburbs and vast rural environments, canvasses of all shapes and sizes appear, once again, stopping the world to notice and enticing consumers to connect, engage and interact with brands they represent. The key question here though is whether these canvases represent the same masterpieces as Mother Nature's marketing team? This is the real challenge for out-of-home-advertising.

Posterscope South Africa, part of the world's largest out-of-home communications agency, and a leader in innovative OOH research, statistics and solutions, understands the value these canvases present to brands.

A fundamental shift

In order to utilise such canvases, it is important to know that there has been a fundamental shift in out-of-home advertising in recent years. As the oldest communication medium in the world, totalling billions in revenue annually, it is no longer the medium for static broadcast message delivery through the likes of billboards, posters, street-poles, and Citilites. Out-of-home is now essentially the enabler of converged communications and is made up of over a 100 different advertising formats that reach consumers while outside the home.

The main ingredients driving this change in behaviour is that consumers are spending significantly more time out-of-home today than they did 10 years ago. Travelling seems to be the main culprit as commuting by taxi, bus, plane, train or automobile takes up a large part of our daily routines. Coupled to this is increased connectivity, thanks to 3G, 4G and Wi-Fi, technological advances like smart phones, tablets and laptops and consumers becoming comfortable with making online purchases via mobile phones and other digital devices.

According to *Posterscope SA's Out-of-Home Consumer Survey (OCS2)*, 58% of people travel the same route every day.

While on lunch, 45% of people think of what they need to buy later on and 41% think about their finances.

Over 80% of respondents notice street pole posters, billboards and bus advertising, 85% notice advertising outside a shopping mall and 76% are influenced by billboards.

Posterscope SA's managing directors Craig Page-Lee (Group) and Erik Warburg (Cape Town) say commuting has definite trends and phases and is highly influenced by technological developments. It is up to advertising agencies to capitalise on these to benefit their clients.

"Stand still; time is becoming shorter, mobile connectivity is on the increase and more commuters are resorting to public transport", says Page-Lee. "The media marketing sector has no option other than to observe trends and developments and adapt accordingly."

It's time to change the game plan

Increased travelling on among others, the Gautrain in Johannesburg and the MyCiti bus service in Cape Town, specifically by higher LSM groups, business and international travellers will have a long-term impact on the placements of OOH advertising.

Page-Lee believes this creates opportunities to start the brand conversation in different ways. He says by making it highly interactive, brands will capture attention at the 'pause' moments, delivering a clue, a price, a promise, and a prize! All of this is possible in a transient or a mobile state. Consumers do not want to be left waiting; they want the option of being fed with brand information and are entitled to make decisions on brand take-up or buy-in during the journey.

Posterscope SA has identified six themes that will define and shape how advertisers, agencies and media owners will approach the out-of-home medium in the future.

1. Integrated mobile out-of-home planning (MOOH)

Using interactive technologies and understanding the how, when and where people use their mobile phones will enable brands to plan exactly where and when the OOH media should run to influence brand behaviour.

2. Gateways to content and transactions

The introduction of NFC enabled handsets will drive a step-change in this area. Consumers will be able to interact directly with a brand by touching or tapping their phones against a small electronic tag embedded inside a sticker on a poster, bringing to life a world of content on that product or service. This technology will bring with it payment gateways or mobile wallets to South African shores.

3. Real-time content

Connecting digital out-of-home networks through a seamless technology interface will see much more data and live content being introduced, thereby allowing brand owners to shape and serve the content to consumer's specific needs.

4. Real-time optimisation and trading

This is by far the most exciting of all the OOH developments. Real-time optimisation and trading will create opportunity to serve advertisements, messages and specific price points in real-time to consumers at final point-of-sale, thanks to data gathered from previous buying patterns and access to real-time in-store inventory management.

5. Value through data

Access to a multitude of data sources enables much more effective and measurable campaign planning and implementation and allows mass customisation.

6. Utility through technology

Delivering consumer experience opportunities through technology as brand's shift from broadcast to engagement and

dialogue. In essence the opportunity exists for brands to install technology (Wi-Fi) to make people's lives easier or more fun in a broad range of public spaces.

As in nature it's important to understand the changing environment and utilise the opportunities with the future in mind.

It's clear that agencies, advertisers and media owners' alike need a solid understanding of consumer behaviour and the role that technology plays when planning out-of-home campaigns. Using bespoke tools and research methodologies, Posterscope truly understand what consumers are thinking and how they are spending their time out-of-home. This enables them to communicate with consumers at the right moments and in the best way, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of campaigns and increasing the overall media value for the advertisers or brand owners.

ABOUT INGRID VON STEIN

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