

Digital Out of Home: Key medium influencing the media landscape

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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In the next year, DOOH will be well-positioned to attract spend from other media channels. This is the opinion of Jacques du Preez, MD: Provantage Media Group who believes that Digital Out of Home (DOOH) is going to revolutionise the OOH media landscape in South Africa.

This is not just bravo talk, as anyone who knows du Preez will testify - it is based on facts and these facts stem from his personal observations made at the Digital Signage Expo 2015, Las Vegas, in the United States (US) that he visited in March this year as well as his own take on what is happening in South Africa and where we are in comparison to the rest of the world in this space.

His words for the largest expo of its type in the world: "Mind-blowing". He says what is happening in the DOOH space overseas is unbelievable. In the US, DOOH is in office blocks, lifts, apartment blocks and amusement parks as well as at most points of purchase.

"We are at the mere tip of the iceberg in South Africa when it comes to DOOH, but, saying this, the same issues, problems and key drivers in the DOOH space overseas are mirrored locally."

Based on this, he is predicting the next trend will be more sophisticated digital placed networks as well as a number of digital billboard networks. "It is the future and what it does is place OOH in an environment where it can compete. It is instant, and it can be updated at the touch of a button."

But it will take more than the touch of a button for the medium to compete successfully with the other mediums out there.



Research is one of them, he says. It has been no secret that OOH has struggled in this regard. Static roadside research has been commissioned, he says and he believes that in the next two years OOH is going to take a significantly larger portion of media budgets because it will have its efficacy research in order. "In the US, Nielsen is already reading this, and we can use their learnings."

Apart from this, he says that OOH media owners are going to marry big data with classical research methodology and this will add huge value to media planners and buyers. OOH, he says is one of the only categories with significant big data and we have not used this strategically. This includes ticket sales, mall footfall figures, shopping transaction figures, etc. - the list is endless. "By marrying this information with traditional research methodology in the next 18 months we will be able to give marketers and media planners what they need."

Content is the next crucial element, not so much for digital billboards, but for placed networks. Globally it has been found that viewers have found the content too safe and boring he says. "Without irritating your audience we need to give them content they cannot find anywhere else. We need to start pushing the envelope and have a very deep understanding as to who is viewing our DOOH platforms."

A very exciting opportunity for OOH but especially DOOH mediums is linking consumer's smartphones and social media platforms with DOOH. He says that when this is successfully done the synergy is going to be incredible. "Once we crack this, it is going to signal interesting times for campaigns as the two mediums synergise and work hand-in-hand offering fantastic exposure and target marketing abilities.

"A very core part of the modern media mix is going to pivot around digital elements. Why? Because of one thing - the smartphone. Consumers will increasingly be consuming media and information using their phones."

DOOH is also now moving faster because the cost of hardware has been dramatically reduced and as the cost of technology continues to drop we will see more and more static formats being transformed to digital. The advantage that technology offers is immediacy and the ability to update the screens and networks at the drop of a hat is a huge strategic advantage. This has the added benefit that DOOH can now be bought programmatically as well as offering specific day part exposure to brands that require this. If you are a media owner in the OOH space without any digital properties then you are going to struggle he says and should seriously consider your position in the market.



Helping OOH and specifically DOOH along is the role of big infrastructure development in Africa, such as the expanding BRT systems, airports, rail projects and malls.

"These factors, plus the fragmentation we are seeing in traditional mass media, new OOH research coming together, the fact that our media is undervalued - will lead to DOOH attracting significant spend from other channels over the next few years," he states.

Yes, online research works, we know that, he says. "But the rest of the online advertising industry has issues and advertising on these platforms is a huge irritation factor, which places a question mark around the efficiency of online ads."

Numbers is one thing; efficiency and impact another, he adds.

"Consumers can still switch your advert off on other media channels and they do; they cannot "channel hop" with OOH. Our environment has no remote control and no off button."

DOOH is already here and it is moving fast. "We have our airport.tv® and TRANSIT.TV™ networks that are performing exceptionally well. We are making significant investments in our DOOH platforms and we are, as an example, re-launching TRANSIT.TV™ soon and adding significant additional viewers, as we roll it out to new stations and ranks."

DOOH media is set to take a far more prominent position in the South African media landscape and we believe it will offer a very attractive alternative replacement for print media to advertisers.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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