

What Primedia Outdoor got from FEPE

By [Terry Murphy](#)

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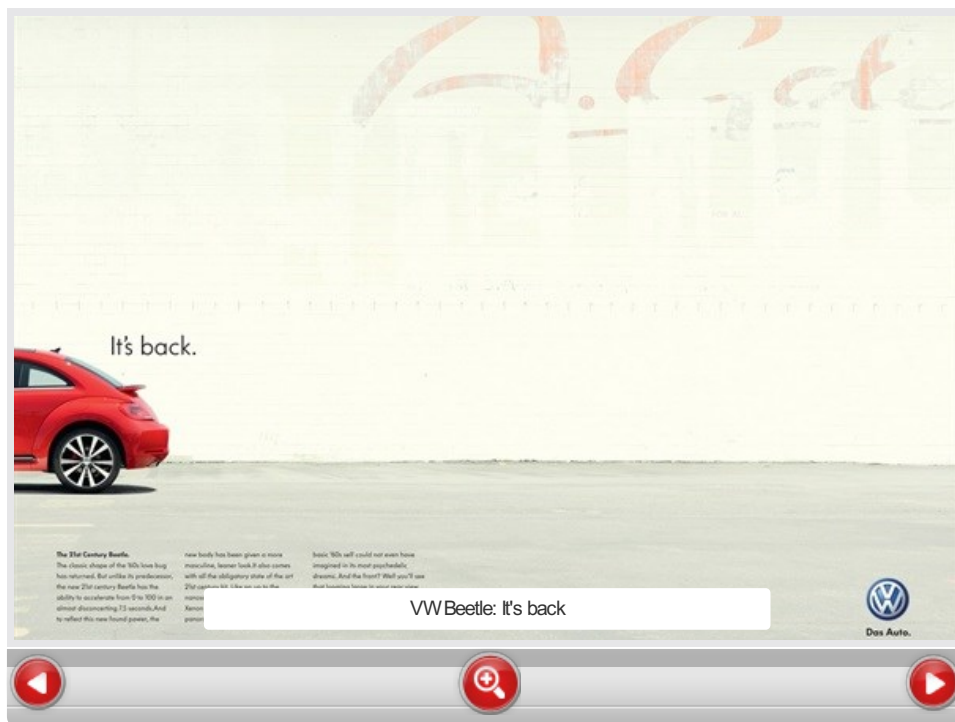
The OOH industry is in the midst of a sea-change - that much was apparent at this year's FEPE conference in Barcelona.

New ideas abound, but it will take a while before these settle into any kind of coherent whole. Here are four insights that Primedia Outdoor took away from the conference:

1. Making the most of the “Power of the Public Promise”

Matthew Dearden, the newly announced president of FEPE International, summed up one of OOH's strongest selling points as “the Power of the Public Promise”. Putting a brand up on a billboard is a bit like proclaiming your wedding vows in front of friends and family: in putting your message up in a public forum for all to see, you are making a “public promise”, and investing your brand with credibility and weight. This is arguably OOH's superpower.

To make the most of this platform, good OOH campaigns need to deliver three things: first, excitement, an appeal to the heart. This is delivered by inspired creative, and as James Murphy, CEO of UK creative agency adam&eve DDB noted, because OOH is so reductive, it can be an extremely challenging format. It takes a particular kind of creative genius to inspire, excite and inform within OOH's minimalist confines. While Murphy mentioned a couple of great campaigns from recent years, another delegate suggested that OOH's true heyday took place 25 years ago – so it's definitely time that OOH reclaimed its creative crown.



Second, after an appeal to the heart, OOH needs to educate and inform; and thirdly, it needs to appeal to the head – through being effective, and providing good ROI. From this perspective, the arrival of ROAD, SA's own measurement currency, is great news for the industry, as it demonstrates OOH's true value – at long last.

2. Planning, buying and delivery need to be much easier

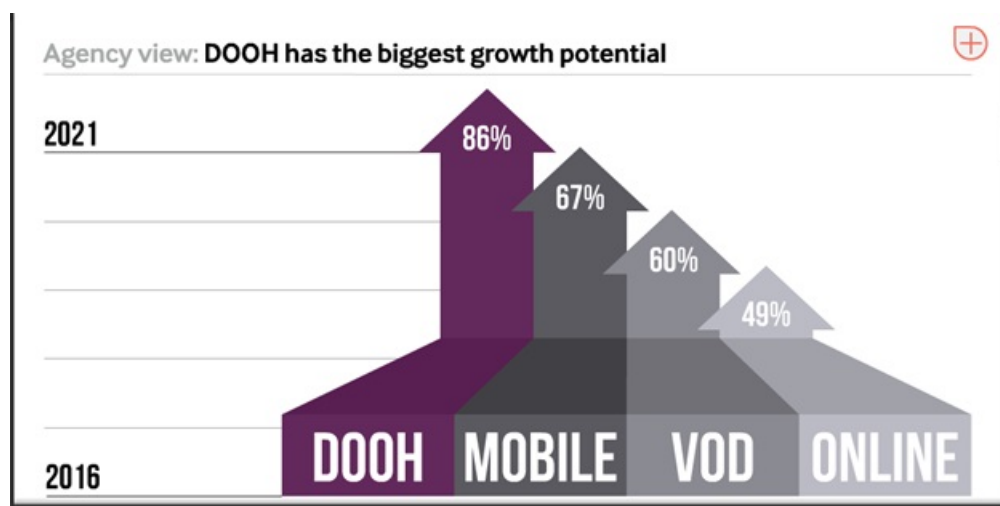
If the key idea underlining successful OOH creative is “keep it simple”, then a major theme for the planning, buying and delivery of OOH is “make it simpler” – much, much simpler. Up till now, the laboriousness of the process has dampened

OOH's sales potential, but big steps are being made in improving on this. The choice of methodologies currently favoured seesaw between a programmatic and automated approach. "Programmatic buying" is currently all the rage, but it's not clear that this is really the best way for OOH to go. A programmatic approach is based on the infinite inventory provided by the internet, while OOH inventory is limited – just for starters.

The alternative is automated trading, and this seems to me to be the best option for South Africa. In fact, with the arrival of Quantum Software, we're halfway there already. While Quantum is not a trading platform *per se*, for the first time ever in SA it makes all inventory and rates available and transparent, virtually in real time, on one platform. This should dramatically change the ease of planning, evaluating and buying OOH.

3. Notes from the digital revolution

"It's not about digital media, it's about media in a digital world", was a quote that I thought put things neatly in perspective. Obviously, all things digital grabbed a big chunk of the limelight at the conference, from the increasing lack of trust in online advertising due to fraud, ad blocking etc. on the one hand, to the phenomenal growth of digital OOH (DOOH) on the other. (In the UK, according to Tim Bleakly, Ocean Groups CEO, DOOH's growth is outstripping that of radio and television, which is good news for Primedia Outdoor, and other OOH media owners). Some interesting points regarding DOOH that came up were the following:



- OOH: The medium that could be king

First, desktop changed the nature of marketing; now, it's all about mobile. Next up, argued Dearden, could be OOH: Its inherent synergy with mobile technology and a spate of exciting developments make it a strong contender for the crown. The phenomenal capabilities of digital OOH mean that it can now answer any client brief, effectively allowing it to nab a growing share of the pie from other visual media. Meanwhile traditional OOH formats can calmly keep on doing what they do best – maintaining awareness and establishing big brand status. So OOH and DOOH arguably follow an additive model, rather than DOOH simply cannibalising traditional OOH formats.

This echoed a general view that the OOH industry is in a healthy state:



- Real world vs my world

One of the presentations noted “a flip from the ‘real world’ into ‘my world’”, drawing a distinction between the real, public world and the private, online world. OOH reaches people in the “real world”, where they are on the lookout for information, and therefore open and ready to engage. Target them in their own world – via their phones, for example – and you risk being intrusive and annoying. So DOOH brings all the brilliance of digital into a public forum, where it’s more welcome than when invading people’s personal space, be this their phone or computer.

4. Measuring up

The adage had it that “no-one ever got fired for putting money on TV”. That’s no longer true; now it should say, “no-one ever got fired for putting money into accountable media”. And thanks to advances in technology, South African OOH can now compete with the best when it comes to accountability.

And, as one speaker argued, all great campaigns have been “main media” campaigns. It’s through spillover that a campaign becomes famous. Good OOH can be a route to campaign fame, and it’s a powerful medium for getting to hard to reach audiences.

Now that’s *really* measuring up.

ABOUT TERRY MURPHY

Since 2011, Terry has been with Primedia Outdoor, where she is currently marketing and marketing services executive.

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