

It's a rosy picture for Out of Home post-pandemic

Mark Read, CEO of WPP, shares insight into how WPP sees the world of marketing, advertising and media developing in the years ahead.



Speaking at the World Out of Home Organisation's virtual European Forum in an interview with WOO President Tom Goddard, Read predicted a strong recovery for Out of Home in the UK and US, with rises of 31% this year and 41% next year for the UK and 22% and 20% respectively for the US.

He pointed to the importance of digital OOH, which has grown by 15% at a time when OOH overall declined by 30%.

"The key question is where OOH fits in an e-commerce dominated business world" he said. "OOH builds brands, raises awareness and gives brands stature, and with OOH now being increasingly digitised, this adds the strengths of giving campaigns more relevance and speed and the ability to be tailored to time of day, different audiences and updated messages. Continuing digitisation should enable the medium to move up from its 7 per cent share of global ad revenue.

“If I were running a campaign for WPP I’d probably put it on OOH in major airports. I’d certainly much rather be running an OOH media company than a magazine or newspaper these days.”



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Read also warned of the danger of clients putting greater investment into performance media than brand building media and was sceptical of the trend for client “Inhousing”, where agency teams work from their clients’ offices. “A number of WPP firms provide this service, notably The & Partnership and Hogarth, and we can make our offerings faster, more agile, more responsive and reduce the volume and cost of content.

“But when everyone is working remotely I don’t know why clients want to obsess about in-housing when there is no house for them to be in. We’ve been working remotely and our revenues and client satisfaction scores have still gone up. I think it’s challenging enough for our clients to run their businesses as it is without running creative organisations.”

Under Read WPP’s sees its main activity as ideas and creativity, helping clients connect with consumers, build relationships and drive sales in an increasing number of ways, including social media, influencers and other channels.

“We have provided a mobile app for Delta Airlines and commerce sites for Sainsburys and Net-a Porter and do a lot of tech and CRM work for other clients. If we are just tied to pure media advertising, we don’t have the same growth prospects. We have to broaden the offer.”

WPP is pledged to eliminate its carbon emissions in the supply chain, Read said. “We’ll use the power of our \$60bn billings to drive change in the industry in the next nine years.”

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