

OOH breaking down barriers

 By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

28 Aug 2013

The Out of Home Media South Africa (OHMSA) held a feedback session on the recent FEPE Congress, which was held in Berlin, Germany. Sarel du Plessis, executive director of OHMSA, presented the feedback.

The Congress' overall theme was "breaking down barriers" and was attended by 11 South Africans both members and non-members of OHMSA representing six companies.

The biggest trend/issues in the Out of Home (OOH) sector that came out of the Congress are:

- Digital Out of Home (DOOH)
- Convergence
- Audience data and measurement
- Self-regulation
- The Creative

DOOH

While OOH is advertisements, DOOH is content and this allows OOH companies to enter into the world of television and radio. DOOH is already the fastest growing medium in OOH and is the future of OOH. The top three DOOH markets for 2012 were the USA, China and Japan - all showed massive growth; all focused on small screens.

Overseas 90% of big screens have been converted to small screens. The reason, says William Eccleshare, CEO, Clear Channel Outdoor, is because the consumer has become a skilful advertising avoider. It is already happening in South Africa with high-end users. "Outdoor is well placed to be a more relevant and integral part of the conversation that advertisers will increasingly seek to have with potential customers."

Convergence

Convergence was a golden thread through all the presentations. Tom Kerr, Aegis Global Director, addressed convergence in his presentation, "Getting the most OOH". OOH plays an integral role in driving traffic and social media. It influences digital behaviour. This might not be so in South Africa yet, but it is very prevalent in Europe. For example, in Europe consumers only have to tap a board with their phone and it picks up all the information. "The fact is that convergence impacts marketing budgets and cannot be ignored so make convergence what you do."

Audience data and measurement

The Congress agreed that OOH needs to measure more and measure differently. Unfortunately South African companies are not doing either of these and are also not working together enough. To be fair, most South African OOH media owners do "own research" to illustrate impact and effectiveness of their own stock says Du Plessis.

"And this is important for the sector in the glaring non-existence of an independent audience study such as RAMS and TAMS. At present there are only two questions in the AMPS survey, and this is simply not sufficient to help OOH media owners to sell the sector to marketers and media agencies. However, and this is merely an observation - markets such as the USA, Australia and the UK where comprehensive audience studies have been rolled out (MOVE in Australia; ROUTE in the UK; etc.) still boast market share of between 4.5% and 5.2% very much comparable to the SA SOM of 4.6%."

Most countries, including the USA and Australia, where there are strong sophisticated measurement systems in place, have shown strong growth in the OOH sector. In Europe OOH spend has dropped but this has more to do with the European Crisis than the medium itself.

Self-regulation

Regulation is an essential part of the OOH world, but the Congress felt that self-regulation works best. In context of South Africa, Du Plessis explains that one must understand the intricate structure of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and its role in the media and marketing industry. "The impression we get is two-fold: consumers complaining about advertisements that are offending or misleading.

Firstly, the ASA will deal effectively with these complaints and sanction according to the Code, regardless of the sector of platform where these ads appeared, including OOH, i.e. regardless of whether the media owner involved was a member of OHMSA or not. OHMSA does not get involved in these cases."

However, he says OHMSA members sign a "Code of Practice and Standards" that includes the following rule:

- Be in its content objectionable, indecent or insensitive to any section of the public or to any religious or cultural groupings or the like, and must comply with the rules as set down by the Advertising Standards Authority.

"Secondly, the ASA deal often with competitor vs. competitor complaints and these are dealt with through a complaints resolution mechanism and many expensive lawyers. OHMSA endorses self regulation."

Creative

There is a fundamental change taking place, with marketers perceiving OOH moving into high quality positioning, video and interaction. For example in a presentation by Giovanni Perosino, Head of Marketing Communication, Volkswagen AG, where he focused on the creative, a company was not just wrapping a building, but broadcasting on it.

Yet, it was felt that many agencies are still not set up to deliver or sell truly integrated marketing plan, and therefore direct dealings between marketers and advertisers is set to increase. Media owners not set up to deliver new media to consumers.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

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