

The commuter's media journey - Transit Ads launches Commuter Chronicles Project

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[Transit AdsTM](#) - South Africa's largest transit media company - has launched the Commuter Chronicles Project. The project is a qualitative and quantitative study of commuters within the South African transit environment. The revealing study demonstrates the relevance and importance of transit media in daily urban lives, highlighting real passenger perceptions of the transit environment and the advertising they are exposed to.

To develop an in-depth understanding of effective advertising communication within a transit environment, the Commuter Chronicles Project adopted a “design thinking” approach. This involved real commuters via focus group investigations of their daily journeys and audience journey mapping methodology, culminating in a quantitative segmentation of commuters.

The project followed a modular approach in gathering and collating data. First, commuters discussed the relevance and importance of transit media in their lives in focus group sessions. Next, in the semiotics module, a thorough investigation of transit environments, culture and media interaction within the environments was conducted.

In the measurement phase, dwell times, mindsets and emotions were unpacked to better understand the real-life experiences commuters face. And finally, all the data was translated into video production and segmented commuter journey mapping. This provided an in-depth understanding of commuter experiences, goals, needs and pain points.

Each commuter shared insight into their daily routine. Personal photos and discussions underscored the actual emotions the commuters experienced over an average week. These intimate portraits of the journeys South African commuters travel daily provided faithful measurements of their complex psyches.

Following the quantitative study, a real “*Day in the Life*” video was professionally filmed for each participant. The videos showcase how the daily commute unfolds, incidentally showcasing media touchpoints along the journey.

One commuter's story

Sbongile is a 32-year-old mother and office assistant from Midrand. Her daily journey begins as she contemplates how best to get to work. She wants to travel as comfortably as possible, but the budget must also be considered. On a typical day, Sbongile will browse e-hailing apps to see if any specials are available. Today, she's out of luck and disappointed that she must take a taxi instead.

She walks her daughter to the school bus and goes to the nearest shelter to catch a taxi. The first taxi makes its way to the taxi rank, where Sbongile quickly takes in a Transit TV news update and catches another taxi to get to Randburg. She experiences discomfort on her long journey to work but is happy to arrive at the office on time after she gets out of the taxi and walks the rest of the way.

When she arrives at work, the WiFi connects to her phone, and she starts receiving messages and notifications. She makes her way home after a long day at the office, where a Transit TV advertisement for a pretty dress at a nearby store catches her eye. Having seen it and thought of her daughter, she makes an impulse purchase at the store and is happy to be home with a gift for her beloved child. Even though she's frugal, Sbongile sometimes loves to spoil her daughter and herself.

Meaningful connections with real people

Sbongile's is a typical journey for a "*Sharp Shopper*". Sharp Shoppers are bargain hunters, generally aged between 25 and 34 years old. People like Sbongile look for opportunities to make their Rands stretch further to provide for their families, but they also occasionally spoil themselves or their loved ones. And appearances are important.

"Sbongile fits into one of four key commuter segments we came to know in the Commuter Chronicles study. The other segments that were identified are "The Business Tripper", "The Trend Setter" and "Thrifty and Thriving". We needed to get to know each commuter personally, unpacking their basic demographics, routine, desires and goals.

"When we know who we are speaking to on a personal level, as the Study facilitated, we can formulate a communication plan with the right tonality and customer relationship management tools. We can then speak to commuters with respect and relevance," says Thulani Dumakude, [Transit Ads](#) general manager.

Ruchelle Mouton, Group Head: Marketing Services at [Provantage](#), adds, *"The Commuter Chronicles Project was eye-opening for us as communicators in many ways. Transit environments are dynamic and ever-evolving. But one constant is that media and advertising enrich daily journeys and offer meaningful ways for brands to engage with commuters en route.*

"However, this media must be relevant and adapted to consumers' mindsets on every step of their journey."



According to the Transit Ads team, transit advertising offers brands daily opportunities to strengthen brand value, positioning and status in urban lives. “Daily commutes are ever-changing, and commuters have developed a complex set of emotional, cognitive and behavioural versatility and agility to make their way through the system. Understanding these responses on a personal level is the best way to connect.

“Knowing not only how and where consumers commute daily, but what they think and feel, empowers us to reach a targeted audience of economically active commuters in environments they understand,” continues Dumakude.

The Commuter Chronicles Project reveals that the transit environment allows brands to stand out with high-impact collateral that is creative and sensitive enough to engage commuters’ attention.

Dumakude concludes, “The exhaustive research covered by the Commuter Chronicles includes specific insights about real-life journeys, highlighting all the media stops along the way that allow commuters to engage with brands.

“We know advertising is more effective when adapted to consumer mindsets during their journeys. And we are now able to further maximise our impact.”

To learn more about the Commuter Chronicles Project and strategic OOH marketing in action, visit www.transitads.co.za.

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