

Where will out of home advertising lead us?

 By [Ingrid von Stein](#)

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As new forms of advertising come to the fore (especially via mobile devices), many have questioned the future role that OOH advertising will play.

To begin with, a quick explanation on what OOH refers to:

- OOH encompasses all forms of billboards; mall promotions; sport sponsorship; brand ambassadors and advertisements occurring in a public space.
- The other branch of "traditional" advertising along with TV/Radio/Magazine and Newspapers.

In recent years, OOH has begun to receive stiff competition from the newer much hyped forms of advertising via mobiles and the internet, though hybridisation is occurring as shall be explained below:

Pro's and con's of OOH

Pro's	Con's
1. Most cost effective	1. Intense competition can lead to clutter or "information overload".
2. Still one of the most accessible forms of advertising (i.e.: people literally see the brands in front of them).	2. Above mentioned competition means that the adverts/promotions/campaigns need to stand out.

The internet fuels mobile and social media advertising

The advent of the internet in the early 1990's has fundamentally changed every aspect of human life in the last two decades. Entire industries have been up ended, seeing once sound business models crumble before the market's very eyes whilst at the same time opening up new and exciting ventures and possibilities for growth.

The music industry, print industry and general retail stores have all taken a major hit due the convenience that e-shopping allows, whilst at the same time new companies based on the internet dominate stock market trade and are amongst the most valued on the planet, Google is a prime example. At the same time, the internet and technology in general have spurred older companies such as Apple and Samsung into new areas of dominance and creativity.

This is not to say that there are not certain hindrances with this new form of advertising:

- As it is a very new sector, it is constantly evolving with new ideas constantly overtaking seemingly good ones: the industry is not "settled". Companies do not want to "place their eggs" in a piece of technology that could soon be

obsolete just due the breakneck speed that technology advances. • Connected to above point is that some of the new forms of advertising can be expensive due to the fact that the technology and applications are relatively new (all developed in the last decade, often the last five years).

Despite this though, the growth in the e-advertising industry has been phenomenal, facilitated by the quick adoption of smartphones, rising access to the internet and also the speed of connections is improving, yet demand cannot be met, whether it be in developing regions such as Africa or the more developed regions of the First World.

Having your cake as well as the cherry on top

Some commentators said that OOH would "die" off as it was inevitably relegated to the technological dust-bin of history, however what has actually occurred is a hybridisation that is occurring between not just OOH and new e-advertising, but all forms of traditional media and the newer e-advertising:

- Both brands and media agencies have seen the pro's and con's of each form of media.
- As a result, advertisements and promotions are beginning to be done across all forms of media and public spaces, with each distinctive form of advertising complimenting one another rather than competing against one another.
- At the same time, the extreme cut throat nature of the industry has further developed this hybridisation as brands clamour to be noticed against the "clutter" and information overload.
- Examples include: Bluetooth billboards; geo-sync hotspots, location based advertisements to smartphones amongst many others that have begun to be developed in the last few years.

This hybridisation **is** the future of advertising not just in South Africa but globally. Companies that are brand conscious need to begin to adapt their marketing campaigns to a digitally engaged public, but at the same time not forego the traditional forms that still have much relevance in a world where consumers need to drive to work every day and like to go out on weekends - in short hybridisation is the only way to gather all forms of media in a way that benefits brands rather than hinders them.

South African Context

- Compared to international standards, South Africa has a very high general standard of advertising.
- This has come about due the hard working nature of industry professionals and the standard of competition being so, creativity is a must not a luxury.
- Adoption of technologies in the advertising industry is growing rapidly but due to the small base from which it is originating and the general expenses, this adoption does lag compared to first world countries. We still however are the most technologically advanced country in the entire region and are still referred to as the gateway to Africa especially in a technological sense.
- Anti-competition legislation in advertising is seen as a hindrance by the advertising industry, but government is reluctant to change the law.
- The Future looks very bright for those who position themselves now to take advantage of future opportunities.

This article was compiled based on insights taken from a frank discussion hosted by MEDIA @SAFM with industry experts: Craig Page-Lee, MD of Posterscope, Lisa Mallet, Product & Pricing Manager at Jaguar Land Rover, SSA and Dinesh Diar, CEO, Ad OutPost.

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