

From local to hyperlocal - Street-level media brightens up urban landscapes

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Bus shelters, street poles, curbside dustbins, street name ads and shopping centre parking lots in South Africa's major metropolitan areas are among the spaces via which Street Network (a Provantage company) has adopted a "hyperlocal" advertising approach to connect with pedestrians, shoppers and commuters in their urban and suburban backyards.



Simply put, hyperlocal targets an audience in a highly-specific geographic location – such as local parks, main streets or grocery stores. These colourfully activated spaces serve a dual purpose: enhancing the visual appeal and functionality of public spaces and providing opportunities for brands to enhance their footprint in local municipalities.

Street furniture advertising – also known as street-level urban media – offers high-impact messaging for advertisers looking to engage with targeted audiences as they walk, drive, wait for transportation or navigate through parking lots at stores and malls. This hyperlocal approach has become an essential component of local landscapes. Positioned at eye level, these strategically placed adverts provide easy viewing opportunities, allowing businesses and organisations to connect with specific audiences in towns, suburbs or cities.

John Faia, director at Street Network, says, *“A well-planned and thoughtfully designed street furniture ecosystem is essential. Street furniture should be available in proportion to the intensity of activity in a particular area and carefully placed to clear pathways for the public. Creative advertising with touchpoints along the pathway make connection with consumers a more natural conclusion.*

“For example, a brand may choose to create a series of engagements on bus shelters en route to a shopping mall – the point of purchase. Street furniture of this nature is part of our audience’s journey, enhancing their comfort and becoming an organic part of their daily narrative.

“Whether it’s providing seating, shelter, waste receptacles, signs, lighting or even gentrified fountains, street furniture

addresses specific needs and creates a comfortable environment for people to enjoy."

According to Faia, street furniture also goes beyond mere comfort; it fosters a sense of community and encourages people to gather and connect in outdoor spaces. By integrating street furniture into urban and suburban landscapes, communities can establish a cohesive identity and create a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

"Street furniture provides functional benefits and contributes to the visual appeal of shared spaces, enhancing the image and identity of an environment," says Faia. "When combined with careful planning and design, street furniture boosts the character and ambience of outdoor areas, making them inviting and enjoyable for everyone."

Beyond the benefits to the community, the hyperlocal street-level approach complements brands' efforts to make meaningful connections with audiences. Faia adds, *"One fundamental truth remains – proximity in out-of-home (OOH) advertising offers a powerful targeting tactic."*

The 2019 Touchpoints Study from [Nielsen](#) showed that 39% of OOH viewers noticed an advertisement providing directions to a specific store, business or restaurant location; while 20% of OOH viewers visited a business immediately after seeing a directional OOH advert and 74% of those visitors made a purchase.

According to Faia, 85% of those that recall OOH recall an advertisement on street furniture. Street furniture intercepts the consumer on their path to purchase – and often during the last window of opportunity to reach them. Street furniture remains highly effective because of what it excels in – driving business by being close to the point of sale, with 43% going to the relevant store to buy a product, either immediately (24%) or later on (76%). ([TGI 2020C](#))

Street furniture's quality, organisation and distribution play a crucial role in determining the overall quality of urban spaces. They not only reflect a municipality's commitment to providing accessible and visually appealing public areas but also set benchmarks for future developments. Street furniture catalyses conversations around urban planning, stimulating innovative ideas and fostering a sense of pride within communities.

According to [Target Group Index data](#), while traffic is returning to near normal levels following Covid-19, the location component of that traffic has changed in terms of the average kilometres travelled, which have declined since 2019. Additionally, consumers working from home no longer commute, and this is changing their shopping patterns.

The retail locations consumers traditionally frequented in the pre-Covid era are, in many cases, no longer the most convenient shopping locations as remote workers shift to new locations that are more convenient. This fast-emerging dynamic creates a significant opportunity for retailers to pull in new customers from their local area and generate new business.

In the "new reality", consumers are moving around in smaller areas and making shorter trips on average, and the work-from-home shift allows local – or hyperlocal – businesses to draw on customers in their immediate vicinity.

An Out of Home Advertising Association of America (OAAA) [report](#) reveals that nearly a quarter of the top 100 OOH advertisers are major tech brands such as Google or Apple. This is because OOH is one of the best ways for brands to take advantage of a mobile market. With mobile adoption universally on the rise all around us, brands need to tell their stories in the right places with more impact.

Says Faia, *"The adoption of technology in the street furniture environment is becoming more prominent within the urban realm. In addition, as the world becomes more connected, street furniture will become far more multifunctional by offering an increasing array of digital services."*

Making a case for OOH driving online activity is a 2019 [study from Nielsen](#), noting that *"two-thirds of OOH viewers (66%) used their smartphone – looked up the brand, accessed a coupon, downloaded an app, etc. – in response to seeing an OOH ad."*

Faia elaborates: *“Affluent consumers tend to be tech-savvy, are keen travellers and are highly lifestyle- and wellness-focused, seeking out brands that reflect their lifestyle and surroundings. Putting your brand in front of the ever-growing urban middle market during their consumer journey is an organic way to engage with these vibrant audiences while they are out and about – whether during their daily commute or taking a trip to their favourite takeout restaurant or shop.”*

Faia concludes, *“In the evolving OOH market, connecting with influential audiences with high spending potential is best achieved as they go about their daily lives and are most receptive to visual messaging. Essentially, Erwin Ephron’s Recency Theory is applied on the path to purchase because the right message at the right time is more likely to succeed.*

“These audiences generally live in and around urban and suburban areas where they are primed to notice advertising as an organic part of their daily choices. This is enhanced when advertisers add value to the spaces audiences inhabit.”

For more information about [Street Network](https://streetnetwork.co.za/) and its comprehensive range of urban advertising solutions, please visit <https://streetnetwork.co.za/>.

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