

Primedia Outdoor talks to townships

As more and more retailers establish outlets in the township areas, their advertising demand to communicate with this vibrant market increases. The growing number of shopping centres and burgeoning middle class audience in the township areas sees the outdoor medium experiencing another shift to satisfy increasing township billboard demand.

Prior to 1990, outdoor advertising was prevalent in townships but shifted to urban areas to target higher LSM markets. Primedia Outdoor has anticipated the trend and maximised advertising opportunities with strategically situated PrimeLite billboards in areas such as Umlazi, Kwamashu and Soweto.

"Advertisers are realising the necessity of communicating to audiences in these areas," says S'khumbuzo Nkosi, Primedia Outdoor's CEO. "Townships are recognised as valued economic hubs with growing disposable income."

No matter where situated, billboard advertising reaches a broad spectrum of consumers and outdoor in townships targets not only the residents, but also captures another lucrative market. Many of the higher LSM black economic demographic living in the cities originate from townships and regularly return to visit. In addition, many high income earners still reside in metropolitan township areas such as Soweto.

As an outcome of the escalating demand for prime billboard real estate, suitable new sites are hard to find. Rental prices - dependant on size and location - are shooting up. The PrimeLite billboards in townships offer advertisers high reach and frequency because of their high visibility and positioning.

Generally, media owners constantly develop new channels to reach consumers and although there are more technological options available everyday, advertisers place great value on the benefits and power of the outdoor advertising medium.

Examining its extensive bouquet of products in locales across South Africa, Primedia Outdoor notes that many advertisers use identical messages in townships and higher LSM areas. The reasons lie in the many new township malls with similar shops and brands to those in the more established shopping centres. Advertisers seek to command purchasers in both areas as opposed to one or the other.

"Unfortunately an alarming number of local marketers and advertisers fail to create suitable messages for the appropriate audience and do not maximise reach," Nkosi explains.

"Outdoor advertising is a great way to build a company, create product awareness and develop brands. Powerful and impactful, it crystallises the unique benefits of a product in one 2-3 second glance. We work closely with clients to advise them on which billboard locations will do their advertising campaigns justice."

Location is paramount and billboard sites are strategically selected. The promotion must be clearly visible to motorists and pedestrians to maximise its effectiveness. Provided it is well positioned, this medium is proven to reach consumers and build real brand awareness.

Some of the products and brands utilising Primedia Outdoor's billboard advertising in township areas include: Unilever; SA Pep and Brandhouse. More non-traditional brands recently seen in these township markets include: Nokia, Motorola, DST and Nedbank.