

Unlocking the potential of Out of Home in Africa

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Africa is the second largest continent in the world with the second largest population. It has a vibrant growing media industry, with the largest Out of Home (OOH) market share in the world - more than double the global average.



Source: © Provantage [Provantage](#) Financial services giant Old Mutual's massive building wrap on a strategic OOH site in the heart of the capital city of Accra, Ghana

The inaugural Africa Forum held by the World Out of Home Organization (WOO) recently explored OOH opportunities on the continent.

At the event in an interview with Tom Goddard, president of the WOO, Celia Collins, GM for Africa, OMG, was optimistic OOH's progression and a return to normality this year, following a drop in OOH levels during the pandemic, on the continent.

"The drop was especially in markets where there were lockdowns," says Collins. While the levels have picked up this year, Collins says we are not yet at the levels we were seeing in 2019. She is confident, however, that we will get back to these levels, and maybe even exceed them.

Jacques du Preez, founder and shareholder, Provantage Media, in a presentation following Collins' interview, concurs with this. "As in other parts of the world, the pandemic had a negative impact on Africa. In 2021 we saw a sharp recovery and we are predicting a three to six percent growth in Africa over the next five-year period," says du Preez.

Africa a growing market

He adds that OOH now accounts for 13% of advertising revenue in most key markets with OOH media in Africa accounting for a higher percentage share than in most other global markets.

Collins explains that West and East Africa are some of the biggest growing markets for OOH. “Large investments into the medium have been made in Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia and brands are also branching out into the French-speaking countries, including the central African countries,” she says.

Du Preez adds: “Multinational and regional OOH media owners have significantly expanded their footprint in a number of African markets., while there are also some strong local OOH media companies present in the large African markets.”

Both have seen growth in the multimarket campaigns with 70% of all briefs becoming Pan-African. Collins believes this will grow to be closer to 90% by 2023. This growth will drive sustainability and incorporate global products.

Africa’s Achilles’ heel: measurement

However, both says that biggest factor holding Africa back is audience measurement. “While the Covid period saw a dip in measurement on the continent, audience research and measurement has been on the decline on the continent compared to five to 10 years ago.

Today out of 21 countries, excluding South Africa, only three have credible audience research” says Collins.

She adds that South Africa is beating this drum. “We need research that is credible, and we need a common standard. Without this, global brands will not invest or invest less.”

It is her belief that marketers, media owners and advertisers need to pull together to find the funding to get credible research on the continent. “We have three advertisers committed to funding credible research. If we can secure more, then we can go in field and show the rest of the continent that it can be done - not a shoestring budget, but also not costing a fortune.”

Nine predications for Africa

As part of his presentation du Preez gave nine predictions for OOH in Africa.

1. OOH will grow substantially across all African markets (aided by infrastructure development, reduced costs and technological developments) and many of these markets will transform from being billboard dominated to multiformat.
2. Digital OOH (DOOH) will grow in most African markets. With demand growing for quality digital OOH formats and the growth of international OOH companies coupled with infrastructure projects we will see a dramatic increase in both digital billboards and Digital Placed-based Media (DPBN). Programmatic buying will grow in the larger markets, which will further drive DOOH growth.



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3. Mobile (MOOH) OOH and multi-channel campaigns – incorporating various OOH formats - will become widespread

and best practice. The power and synergies that OHH can deliver, especially in an African context, is simply unmatched.

4. West Africa will be the fastest growing and most lucrative OHH region, driven by population size and GDP growth. We predict that the OHH industry in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire will become more sophisticated.
5. Measurement data and reporting will expand to major markets and standardise, driven by major players and media agencies. Proof of campaign execution remains problematic and will need significant improvement. Measurement data will also influence the commercial conduct of OOH media owners.
6. Government regulation and legislation will improve as knowledge levels increase, driven by infrastructure development, better spatial planning, and the implementation of global best practice in many Africa countries and cities. Governments will expect OOH media concessions to add significantly more value to consumers and to the environments, such as beautification and public amenities.
7. OOH formats that are custom designed to capture and integrate the informal sector in Africa will be successful and in high demand.
8. OOH media ownerships in Africa will consolidate as multi market OOH media companies utilise knowledge, scale economies and global buying networks to expand. They might, however, do so by entering into local partnerships. This will consolidate /standardise OOH media formats and sizes.
9. OOH concession and rights will be awarded to media owners that are conscious about sustainability, community, involvement, and job creation.

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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