'Innovation would come into its own with the adoption of new display technologies'

The outdoor advertising domain is no stranger to the general entertainment channel (GEC) segment. Most GECs have taken the outdoor route to build larger-than-life presence for their new shows ranging from reality programmes to daily soaps. Sony Entertainment Television (SET) is one such GEC that has effectively employed the outdoor to showcase its new offerings to its target audience. **Danish Khan, vice-president & head - marketing, SET**, talks about the role of the outdoor in the channel's promotional initiatives in an interview to **network2media's Rajiv Raghunath**
. Excerpts:

How important is the outdoor in your scheme of things?

The outdoor provides reach and frequency to advertisers. But, we have our own channels to build reach. Hence, when we take the outdoor route, the objective is to create big impact, such that it becomes the talk of the town. A strategic approach to outdoor advertising will bring in rich dividends.

With a new generation of digital display technologies coming into the outdoor domain and the introduction of large format video screens, would you intensify the use of this medium for your campaigns?

As I have said, the outdoor medium is not a reach medium for us. So, if the new formats help in creating a big impact on the local audience, we would go for it. A high recall is what we would look out for.

What are the discernible new trends that you have noticed in the outdoor domain in recent years?

For one, OOH infrastructure has grown in different directions. Malls, multiplexes and other youth hangouts have become attractive OOH mediums. These have become good catchments areas where a young population in the high income bracket are seen.

The other key trend is the growing importance of smaller cities for outdoor promotions. In these markets, experiential marketing and other BTL activities work well. I must say that the outdoor has a key role in these markets where the print or for that matter television do not enjoy sufficient reach. Activities engaging school children, housewives and others could be impactful outdoor engagements.

Transit media is becoming a popular medium for channels to connect with a larger audience. What are your thoughts on this?

Transit media is an effective medium. It creates the surround effect. The properties used may be bqs or Metro stations and inside Metro branding.

There is talk about the outdoor getting increasingly cluttered in the metros. What is your observation on this? Is there a way out?

The clutter is palpable in the Mumbai and Kolkata markets. Two ways in which the issue of clutter could be tackled are: innovation and cost rationalisation. The number of units need to be rationalised.

Are you satisfied with the quality of innovations used for outdoor campaigns in the country?

Innovation would come into its own with the adoption of new technologies. That hasn't quite happened in India. As new technologies enter the domain, innovations would get better.

What steps will enhance the value of outdoor advertising?

Creative innovations, better monitoring mechanisms and information on the utilisation of media units would contribute significantly in my view.

Yet, when it comes to the issue of measurement metrics, a lot has been said and written about, but my take is that the outdoor is a simple medium to plan. It is an accessible medium and the planning for it is governed by local knowledge. A commonsensical approach works best.

Do you see the share of OOH going up in the overall ad spend in the Indian market?

I don't see that happening. The growth of this medium will be in tandem with the overall growth of the ad spend. You can contact Danish Khan here