



Ashish Limaye, general manager – marketing, Starcom MediaVest Group, started his career in 1996 and has worked across media sales, direct marketing and integrated marketing communication for over a decade. He has been associated with and was an integral part of organizations like Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd (BCCL), Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India Ltd (D&B), Portland India and Indiainfo.com. Limaye has successfully handled positions ranging from business head driving revenue, managing a team of cross functional talent, and generating sales at grass root levels etc. Limaye talks about the potential of the OOH sector and about ways to make a brand stand out from the clutter in today's world.

The marketer today is spoilt for choice. You may call it a 'choice of plenty'. Brand track surveys, sales performance, competition mapping are all significant issues in making a media choice. But choices have a peculiar way of adding to the complexity of decision-making. Imagine making an informed choice from a selection of 200+ channels, 40+ radio stations, 45+ print titles (read dailies), not to mention countless websites. All this to ensure that one's brand stands out from the clutter. To add to the complexity, marketers are realizing that we are living in a world where consumer attention is scarce. Consumers are increasingly becoming immune to media and exposure models are failing worldwide.

How does a marketer address these challenges?

The answer is very radical but simple in thought: disengage content and communication. Do not allow content of the media decide the fate of your communication. Look at TiVo – a technology

which helps a consumer to watch only content and not brand communication. Consumers want to isolate content from your brand communication. Do not serve your consumer with brand communication under the garb of content.

So how does one really disengage the two?

The medium that does not link content with communication is OOH. It is impossible to align a billboard or a bus-shelter with a specific content. While the environment in which a billboard or a bus-shelter is seen is a good indication of how your communication will be consumed, it will not be the overriding factor, and importantly, the consumer cannot swap/switch it off!

Let us examine few cases where we can create interesting opportunity around locations where consumers spend time:

Residential societies: Such locations can create opportunity for categories like banking/finance/insurance/health/home décor/paints and household goods to communicate with consumers. Appropriate management of OOH locations like ATM directional signages, retail shop facades, shop canopies, parking, etc., presents opportunities for tremendous uncluttered viewing of communication message without the fear of it being missed or avoided. A long-term approach to such locations is a wise marketing decision.

Transit media: Transit needs are ever increasing and will evolve as apt locations for multiple brands to communicate with consumers. Imagine being served with wet tissues the moment you board a private taxi! It makes your transit journey a pleasure and adds value to the consumer's experience. Locations like airport, railway stations, coaches, private cabs, etc., offer unprecedented opportunities for marketers. Categories like travel accessories, packaged food, beverages, insurance products can leverage such locations.

Corporate offices: Reaching out to an enterprise segment for categories like IT, peripherals, office stationery, financial products. It just needs a creative thought and identification of locations like office lobbies, elevators, parking bays, etc., to strongly embed brand communication without getting washed out.

City corridors: New York's Times Square is the most prestigious city corridor for brands like Coca-Cola, Nike, Samsung, LG, designer houses like Christian Dior, etc. What opportunity drives such brands to Times Square? The compelling argument of "not to be missed" is the only argument which comes to a marketing mind. As urbanization grows and traveling distances increase, city corridors will remain the most vouched for locations for mass brands and brands which are driven by imagery.

Leisure destinations: Where do consumers entertain? Shopping districts, multiplexes, large format organized retail...an endless list of locations to tap into wallet-heavy-spend-ready consumers. Which medium other than OOH offers you proximity to such consumers and locations which are just limited by your imagination?

Washrooms: Address a basic consumer need and be there to leverage this location as a communication opportunity for your brand -- cost-effective, yet targeted. Brands like personal care, innerwear, and all wild, imaginative categories have a plethora of choices to make in this segment. The list can be endless, and only be limited by the imagination of the marketer. Growing spends in OOH category is a good yardstick to assess how fast this medium is growing and what opportunities marketers are leveraging.

To sum up, in this increasing trend of consumers driving segregation of communication and content, marketers will have to outsmart consumers and identify locations which offer opportunities to communicate. OOH is your simple and smart choice. All you need is to relate with the fact that the “medium is the message”.

[Ashish Limaye can be contacted here](#)