

Q&A with Hubble CEO on Uber's new entertainment device

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

27 Feb 2017

Following the announcement of Uber's new interactive entertainment service, provided by Hubble (previously Taxi Media Group), CEO Justin Duveen shares the impact its having on the driver, the rider and the advertiser, and how it's innovating in the out of home (OOH) space.

To provide some context, Uber partnered with Hubble late last year to install interactive touchscreens that provide entertainment to riders. Besides benefiting the rider, the driver is incentivised financially for placing the device in the vehicle, and the advertiser is able to track engagement.



"We at Hubble are excited to make a difference to the lives of Uber riders and their hardworking driver-partners, and after months of dedication and late nights we successfully launched in a select number of driver-partner vehicles on 1 September 2016," said Duveen. "Shortly thereafter we were approached by Uber for a collaboration, and in December 2016 we signed a contract appointing Hubble as Uber's preferred in-vehicle interactive entertainment partner in South Africa."

■ The rollout will continue throughout the year. How many vehicles currently have these devices and how many do you still plan to roll out?

We currently have 300 vehicles installed with our interactive touch screens, 100 in Cape Town and 200 in Johannesburg. Demand has been strong with many of South Africa's top blue chip companies such as Old Mutual and Discovery fighting campaigns on our system and receiving engagement rates far exceeding expectations. We are busy growing and plan to exceed 2,000 screens this year.

■ The collaboration only took place three months after Hubble piloted the service in a select number of Uber vehicles.

- Why did Hubble take the initiative to do this?

The founders realised that there was an opportunity to inspire and entertain Uber riders during their 15-minute Uber journey, and simultaneously give brands the opportunity to showcase their products in a unique, engaging and innovative way.

With the tremendous growth of Uber, which shows no signs of abating globally, we decided to back a winning horse and made it our mission to help improve the Uber rider experience.

- **Why/how did the collaboration come about as a result?**

A few weeks after we launched in Cape Town, Uber noticed us and requested that we work with them. They wanted to perform market research on the passengers who experienced the screen while in an Uber, and we agreed. The results were phenomenally positive, so much so, that an agreement with Uber was concluded late in December, appointing us as their preferred in-vehicle interactive entertainment partner.

- **Why is Hubble a good fit for Uber?**

The name Hubble was picked as we noticed a trend towards short, easy to remember names and it is based on a hub, which is a place of gathering to share stories and inspire adventures. It also aligns well with the Hubble telescope, which suggests a closer look. Hubble is a better fit with Uber than our previous name, Taxi Media Group.



- **Comment on the features of the device. How does the interactive aspect benefit the rider and the advertiser?**

The founders wanted to change the way advertising was portrayed. Instead of being an interruptor of attention, which we all dislike, we wanted to change the customer mindset to one of openness and curiosity, which our interactive system, by giving control back, evokes.

We spent time researching and understanding what Uber passengers are looking for and designed our system based on what we found. There is a tremendous interest in news, weather, activities and events around us, restaurants and nightlife and we designed our system around these.

We also offer a traditional TV channel for those who prefer to lean out and just relax and be entertained.

- **What's in it for a) the driver, b) the rider and c) the advertiser?**

Our system works completely independently of the driver and turns on and off automatically when the driver starts and stops their car. We pay the owner of the vehicle a monthly amount for placing the screen inside their vehicle.

We give the rider the opportunity to be entertained and engaged in a fun and interactive way, giving them complete control of the experience. We provide games, competitions and interesting content to help pass the time on their 15 to 20-minute Uber ride.

Advertisers are given the opportunity to showcase their brands to high LSM Uber riders during their 15 to 20-minute journey. This offers the advertisers a unique opportunity to have a much deeper conversation with customers that are interested in the brand and have opted in to the communication. Very rarely can brands engage with customers for 5 minutes or longer. Every touch on the system is tracked, which offers brands a great way to measure their return on marketing investment.

■ **What opportunity does this present for out of home media?**

In Cape Town, where out of home space is limited, Hubble offers an innovative and exciting platform for brands to reach and engage with their audience in their environment.

Traditional billboards and newer digital billboards (which represent the majority of out of home media) are unable to accurately track views, and therefore it's difficult for marketers to track their return on investment.

Hubble presents a unique opportunity in the out of home media industry to measure views and engagement levels in campaigns, which measures return on investment and in turn helps marketers become more and more effective.

■ **What has the general response been to date?**

The general response to Hubble has been overwhelmingly positive and growth has already exceeded our high expectations. Both riders and brands love it!

■ **Comment on the results of the campaigns already flighted.**

Our music video campaign has been our most successful so far, with a 21% engagement level. Compared to online of just 0.2%, that is astounding!

A female fragrance had a 13.7% click through rate, with 8% of those actually entering the competition.

Most astoundingly some of our advert completion rates are almost 90%, which is almost unbelievable compared to the single digit figures most other platforms offer.

■ **Any developments since the device was launched?**

Our system offers marketers great flexibility to perform beta testing on different elements of their brand campaigns to help increase engagement.

An example is Travelstart, which after introducing games gained much higher time spent on its campaigns and a 200% increase in sales leads.

■ **What's next?**

Technologically we will always be innovating with new games, experiences and functionalities. We are busy working on enabling riders to buy tickets to shows, events and even get discounts off their Uber rides for interacting.

Our aim is to continue to grow rapidly in South Africa and to use our learnings from the experience to help us grow into Africa and beyond.

We would like to say a special thank you to all those who believed in us, to all our investors and those innovative brands, Ballo Sunglasses, Barlowworld VW, Hugo Boss, NAC Helicopters and many others.

For more info, read [The future of out-of-home is here, with Uber \(of course\)](#).

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