

# From commuter to consumer

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In South Africa there are currently up to 18 million economically active consumers that use some form of public transport every day. These consumers make up the majority of the South African consumer base, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the country's marketers. Accordingly, there has been a boom in out-of-home media spend over the last few years, but the question must be asked, are these somewhat isolated communication platforms really reaching and impacting on this market?

"Almost half of South Africa's population are, at some point in the day, a captive audience in some mode of public transport, which on its own holds huge untapped potential for brands who want to communicate with them," says Jacques du Preez, managing director at brand activation and transit media communications company, Provantage Media. "However, we believe that communicating with this large consumer base through isolated mediums is largely ineffective. It is essential for marketers to take a holistic view of how to communicate their intended message and their channel to market when developing a truly through-the-line campaign."

Despite the consolidation happening in the marketing industry at the moment, there are still very few media owners that offer a wall-to-wall solution for targeting consumers. Du Preez states that the closer you get to the purchasing decision, the more important the message becomes. "It is also a question of message retention and top-of-mind awareness at the point of purchase, so this communication needs to start the minute the consumer has contact with the outside world," he continues. Understanding consumers' commuter behaviour is essential to the successful integration of an activation and transit marketing campaign.

"The journey for the consumer begins early in the morning at the country's commuter hubs, as they wait to board their preferred mode of public transport," says du Preez. "The message then needs to be carried across to that transport medium, be it through branding or other new, more innovative mediums. An understanding of the commuter routes now also becomes important, as this is where transit mediums and outdoor advertising can best be utilised to support and add value to campaigns by linking them to in-store and trade activation efforts."

"Drop off points in major retail nodes then offer the opportunity to reinforce the message and elicit a response with direct consumer contact through the trade activation campaigns," comments du Preez. "Trade activation has become increasingly popular in recent times due to the opportunity for direct interaction with consumers, which ideally should lead to a purchase."

Historically, to execute this type of campaign a collection of media companies were required to integrate their respective activities, often not very successfully, both from a cost perspective and often the associated confusion that arose because of the multiple briefs required. "The era of forced co-operation and a lack of accountability between media companies has effectively come to an end," states du Preez. "There are now media companies with the experience and understanding of the transit and activation marketing space that have the ability to take ownership of these campaigns in their entirety, from the time the consumer leaves home until they return in the evening. This ensures the optimal integration of the communication platforms that will be utilised and ensures that accountability for the success of the campaign sits firmly at the door of one company."

Taking accountability for the campaign now also extends past the management and execution of the campaign. Brands want to see a measurable and quantifiable return on their investment. "By using a one-stop media partner for this type of campaign, brands also ensure that a truly reflective measurement of success can be done," continues du Preez. "The fact that every facet of the campaign is owned by one media partner means we are able to effectively measure the reach of each facet of the campaign, ensuring that the objectives of the brief are met, be it increased sales, eliciting dialogue with

consumers or just making marketing work,” he concludes.

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