

Out of home: We are not out of the woods yet, but I can start to see the clearing

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By now we are all seeing, feeling and living the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown. Looking back, I still struggle to believe that everything that has happened and is happening, is the reality.



[Figure one](#)

Admittedly, I have been trying to find my feet and establish a sense of order in an out of home (OOH) landscape, which is adjusting and changing at a fluid pace.

Taking a step back and surveying the landscape, I must admit that I am filled with both hope and excitement, which are two emotions that are most welcome given their absence in the last few weeks. I have seen agility and flexibility from so many media owner partners and people, the true strength and depth of the human spirit and its ability to adapt in order to survive has been one of the highlights I have experienced (in fact, the only highlight).

Mobile out of home

An unpredicted ‘benefit’ (if there is such a thing) of the impact of Covid-19, is how the changes in people’s movements has propelled the OOH industry forward towards the adoption and growth of mobile OOH, as pointed out in a recent article part three of a three-part series, where Simone Visser, OOH data and insights strategist at Posterscope, highlights [Posterscope’s](#) position on mobile OOH and the importance thereof.



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This is such a game-changing leap forward and I am delighted to see media owner partners collaborating with mobile location geo-targeting providers to not only provide geo-targeted ads around their OOH inventory but, more importantly, using mobile signal data to show an uplift to traffic from level five to level four.

Traffic measurement

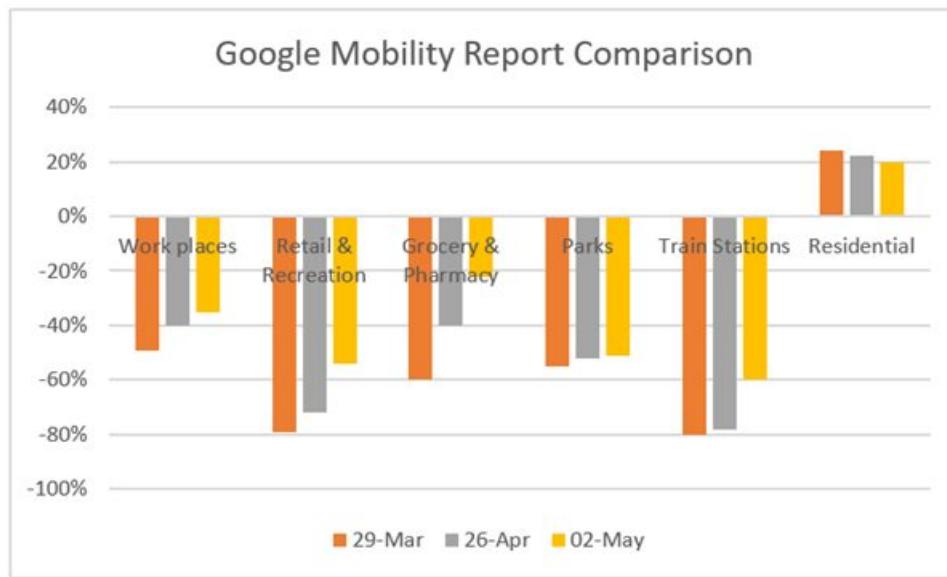
Out of home has always struggled to compete with other media channels with regards to measurements. There are a few options around out of home measurement such as OMC/ROAD data, traffic counts from car counters, 'person-with-clicker-not-really-watching-the-road' traffic counts, data from tracker devices in cars and so on. Each of these has varying degrees of accuracy. But if there has ever been a time to quickly, accurately and frequently prove cars on roads and eyeballs on billboards it is now and the industry has stepped up and headed the call for proof, which currently is also delivering a message of hope.

Again, we see agility and adaptation from the out of home industry. We are seeing TomTom data being invested in to provide live traffic data and cameras being fitted to roadside billboards to show how traffic patterns are increasing, albeit not to the normal standard, but we are seeing documenting of the uplift and progress.

If we compare some of the data across a few environments from the [Google's Mobility Report](#) from 29 March 2020 vs 26 April 2020 vs 2 May 2020, we can see the following key uplifts per environment from 29 March 2020 to 2 May 2020:

Environment	%uplift as of 2 May 2020 towards baseline
Workplace	14%
Retail & Recreation	25%
Grocery & Pharmacy	38%
Parks	4%
Train Stations	20%
Residential	-4%

Importantly, these uplifts show how more people are returning to key environments and this means more people are on the roads. People are returning to work and the commuter market has seen an uplift of 20% from 29 March 2020, as restrictions have been lifted for level four.



[click to enlarge](#)

Local is lekker

We can see how people are out of home in a different way. Malls, supermarkets and convenience stores are still being visited and people are travelling past out of home sites along their journey to their local stores. Interestingly, some malls are starting to share foot traffic figures of almost the same traffic before lockdown. For example, a mall in Soweto was seeing around 37,500-foot traffic per day pre-lock down and as of 2 May 2020, they are reporting 35,000 foot traffic per day figures. Now is the time to focus on hyper-local targeting and messaging that is relevant, engaging and appropriate.

New formats and developments

If it does not exist, we will build it. We are seeing so much of this approach to out of home with a lot of media owner partners developing sanitation stations and booths that can be installed at offices, malls, airports and other environments. We will be a part of ensuring people are safe to return to places they frequent.

That's exactly what we should be doing now, we have acknowledged the circumstances and impact of Covid-19 in out of home, but the time to forward plan is now and we're going to get there by standing together, adapting and adapting quickly and doing everything we can to show how our roads are filling up.

Media owners and agency partners, if you are not doing so already, I invite and encourage you to focus on what you can do to show and share what is happening on our roads and how we are seeing small wins.

We cannot move forward alone and really need each other to demonstrate the shifts in out of home. There's an old African proverb that says: "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

And together we can, and we will.

About the author



Currently the regional manager for Posterscope Western Cape, [Livia Brown](#) has been crafting her OOH expertise at Posterscope since April 2013. With immense knowledge, experience and skill in location data intelligence, Brown has a huge passion for data and believed the OOH landscape is in the midst of a spectacular evolution and she couldn't ask for a more exciting industry to be a part of.

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