

Shedding light on an elusive environment: Commuter segment insights within taxi ranks

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Feeding the South African masses to the thousands of destinations across the country, taxi ranks constitute the heart of the commuter industry. The myriad of people queuing each day at the thousands of taxi ranks stand testament to the role taxi ranks play in enabling urban commuting for millions.

"All about the ranks" research

There is no denying that taxi ranks form the centre of South Africa's biggest public transport system. It consists of a bustle of millions of commuters, taxis, taxi drivers and informal traders. However, limited understanding exists of the dynamics within taxi ranks. Leading innovators in the commuter space, Primedia Outdoor commissioned research with renowned commuter market specialists, Minanawe, to gain more insights on the 'ins' and 'outs' of taxi ranks. Germiston, Alexandra and Rustenburg have ranks ranging from 7 to 17 million plus commuter trips per month, making them the biggest and busiest ranks within the country. For this reason, the research focused on these three ranks to ensure that a comprehensive view of the taxi rank business is achieved.

Not all commuters are the same

Various different segments are present within the dynamic and ever growing taxi rank environment, from taxi drivers, commuters and hawkers, to name a few. But there are also intricate nuances within segments. For example, crucial in understanding the times of day commuters visit ranks are their motives for visiting ranks. Findings indicate that they catch taxis at various different times of the day, for example a big proportion of commuters catch a taxi as early as 4am whilst other commuters catch a taxi during lunch hours. The research study identified numerous commuter segments within the rank environment, the three biggest being the work commuter, the social commuter travellers, and the travelling for shopping commuters. These findings are important as it confirms that motive influences times of the day which people travel through ranks. According to Terry Murphy, Marketing Executive for Primedia Outdoor, "as ranks are the first and last point of purchase for most commuters, it is extremely important to ensure that timing of advertising is specific to specific target segments".

Rank TV offers powerful out of home format to marketers

Accompanied with high reach and frequency as well as nearby purchasing behaviour, another important finding is the high dwell time within ranks. Most commuters spend around 10 to 20 minutes at ranks. This finding emphasises the ability of the rank environment to afford impactful engagement opportunities for advertisers with high ad recall returns. Murphy supports this by stating that "recall figures are substantial within this space, almost 80% of commuters watch Rank TV with 75% recall seeing an advert on Rank TV, most of them being able to spontaneously recall the add specifically".

Rank TV offers the opportunity to engage with this captive audience in a highly entertaining way, with commuters and taxi drivers alike, enjoying Rank TV advertising. In one example, a staggering 85% of the respondents enjoy seeing the highlight packages on what is to air on e.tv and 83% say it reminded them to watch e.tv that night. Clothing, beauty, food and cellular brands are also well positioned to harness this engaging space as commuters agree that they would like to see more advertising on discounts for these categories.

With Rank TV located in 10 major taxi ranks nationally, the profile of these ranks consists of audiences who are targetable for high reach and frequency. Murphy concludes that "these insightful findings illustrate the remarkable value of Rank TV as a tactical medium to engage with a extremely desirable and engaged audience".

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