

Advertising on Court TV - new opportunities

As media agency Carat SA recently revealed, the Oscar Pistorius trial drew unprecedented audiences, yet advertisers responded sluggishly, despite the potential for increased exposure.

This is the time that media strategists should consider how they will advise their clients and advertisers should the spectre of Court TV in SA become a reality.



Photo via [Free Digital Photos](#)

"It is quite understandable that advertisers have chosen to steer clear on this unknown new playing field in the short term. They have traditionally been scared of controversial connections, for instance being associated with political parties and court cases in general, despite public interest and large audiences," says Ilsa Grabe, media manager at Carat SA.

"We have researched the opportunities and gathered insights, to understand how to best approach this space - which can't be ignored forever - should a mooted court channel become reality."

New trial coverage expected

It is already expected that a similar application for a live broadcast will be brought in the case of Shrien Dewani, who is set to stand trial for the murder of his wife Anni Hindocha. Grabe says that the Pistorius trial has exposed the public - most of them for the first time - to the often-fascinating workings of the justice system and courtrooms. This has created an appetite for more of this brand of 'reality TV', which viewers arguably experience as more authentic and less contrived than scripted 'reality TV', as they voted in their numbers by ditching their regular viewing preferences.

Grabe says that in this sense, the programming landscape will quite possibly be altered forever, as more and more trials are broadcast live and the public becomes less skittish about advertising in these spaces.

"The Oscar Pistorius trial has impacted on the public's consumption of the media. Although advertising in these spaces are still slow, advertisers are starting to re-evaluate the future of their own content," says Grabe. "Advertisers and media people recognise the way this live trial has changed the way the world is exposed to real life, and real life tragedies, via the media."



Slow uptake

Statistics provided by iProspect, digital partner of Carat SA, shows that even though the size of the audience viewing the Oscar Trial channel is substantial and competitive, advertiser uptake until now has been small in comparison. Only six advertisers have invested in the channel so far, with a spend of R4.3 million (rate card value and excluding self-promotion). If one excludes advertising by group partners, the top three advertisers for March (latest available data) were Samsung, Budget Insurance and Nu Metro.

"Should this changed landscape become a regular, even normalised feature in the future, advertisers will have to ask themselves: what impact would this have on my approach to unique, benefit-driven communications in the future? What value will I be adding, how do I engage and grip these audiences, and how do I do so with due respect?"

"With such a great deal of engagement happening on and offline there is a great opportunity for advertisers to tap into these audiences, but advertisers are understandably still not sure how to respond to the opportunity without risking being seen as insensitive."

'Real' TV attracts audiences

"Although their instinct may be to steer clear of appearing controversial or insensitive, advertisers ignore this new space at their peril. The statistics and trends are positive: high viewership, high interest, changing viewing behaviour, changing media landscape, the most real 'reality TV' ever.

"Each brand will have to carefully consider whether they believe that the environment is the appropriate one for their company and values, as one can't control or predict viewers' reaction to advertising in these new but sensitive spaces. However, advertisers also can't indefinitely ignore the potential exposure provided within this new landscape, particularly should it become the new normal, and specifically if their competitors are going to beat them to it," she concludes.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>