

Airport lounges: golden territory for marketing your brand

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When it comes to location-based marketing, airports have long been a favourite place for brands to get their message across to business and leisure travel consumers. As well as being highly targeted places to reach a particular level of LSM or geographic location, airports are also home to a large captive audience of people waiting - whether it's to check in, board a flight, or greet arriving passengers. Within this environment, airport lounges in particular are even more targeted, and typically cater for a more exclusive clientele.



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As I sell advertising space in Bidvest Premier lounges throughout South Africa, I see first-hand how effectively brands can market to higher LSM consumers in these very specific environments. The shift towards digital advertising has also carried over into this environment, and brands now cater for digital interactions with airport consumers. The recent launch of the airport lounge-specific digital advertising platform means that advertisers can air full screen adverts of up to 30 seconds on 38 TV screens across all 10 Bidvest Premier lounges in the country.

If you're a brand considering where to place your messaging or if advertising in an airport lounge a good idea, here are five key reasons why advertising in this very specific location can be highly effective:

1. It's highly targeted. If you're a premium or luxury brand, airport lounges share this "premium" affinity given the specific criteria needed to gain access – whether it's belonging to a certain bank or organisation, or earning a particular level of income. This idea of exclusivity can be an effective environment in which to advertise a premium or luxury brand to consumers.

2. Suits a wide range of brands. People are at airport departure halls for various reasons, whether it's going on a weekend break, a family holiday overseas or a business trip. They're also at various life stages, from young and single through to more senior businesspeople. This variation means there's potential for a wide range of brands to reach their optimal target market. It also suits both B2B and B2C brands, for example who want to reach company executives travelling between meetings, or specific B2C consumers in information technology, insurance, motor vehicles, telecoms or banking.

3. Captive audience. With modern life moving at such a fast pace, an airport lounge offers a rare pause where someone has nowhere else to be. Brands therefore have the rare extended opportunity to get someone's attention – particularly busy executives who typically have full daily schedules. Recent Bidvest lounge stats show that the average lounge visitor stays for

around 35-40 minutes, which provides a sizeable window in which to catch a consumer's attention.

4. Highly customisable. Digital advertising within airport lounges can be changed often, which means they can be far more customised and the whole setup is far more flexible. You can, to a certain extent determine the frequency of flightings, which means you can tailor the volume and messaging to your budget, location or specific marketing objectives. For example, you could change ads to align with a particular time-sensitive offer, or to make them geographically specific so that they relate to an offer in a city surrounding a particular airport, Best of all, there's very little extra cost for this level of customisation.

5. Cost effective and flexible. Buying digital advertising can be a cost-effective way of reusing creative you've already produced, for example for your above the line TV or even YouTube ad campaigns. Through this cross-pollination, you get increased reach for the ad, which lowers your initial investment in creating it.

Amid the chaotic bustle of airports, airline lounges provide an oasis of calm, and carry with them an air of exclusivity aimed at a specific sub-set of traveller. In this unique "captive audience" scenario, a well-executed, well thought out digital advert can be highly effective at reaching a particular audience and get you more bang for your marketing buck.

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