Transit media in China - Provantage shares key insights

By Jacques du Preez, issued by Provantage

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Jacques du Preez, MD of Provantage, shares his learnings from a recent trip to China



On a recent trip to China, we were fortunate to experience first-hand the large-scale megatrends that are impacting out-of-home media, on a global scale. China was an eye-opener. As the fastest growing urbanising region at present, the country can teach us a lot about what we can expect when Africa is impacted by mass urbanisation towards the year 2025.

This won't come as a surprise to those watching the urbanisation trends as statistics show that by 2030 Africa will be overtaking Asia in terms of large-scale urbanisation. As China is currently ahead of the curve, it offers a snapshot of what is to come.

A large proportion of infrastructure development has happened within the transportation landscape and on a smaller scale this is what we are experiencing in South Africa. We too are seeing new airports, new railway networks, the upgrade of existing passenger rail infrastructure and the roll out of rapid bus transport systems.

In this respect, the aim of our trip to China was to find out the following: in China, how do their transit media companies operate and what do they offer?

What we picked up is this:

1. For starters they are not afraid to innovate and use technology, on a massive scale.
2. Various mediums are integrated seamlessly and aesthetically, they are part of the architecture and infrastructure. Media are part of an infrastructure from the very beginning with screens, billboards, sound and the like all part of the building specifications. They haven't been added on as an afterthought.
3. They implement multiple engagement strategies that use digital, static and activation in high traffic commuter areas making for extremely effective campaigns.
4. There is a huge drive towards "green". Many mediums are solar and wind powered, which also allows for cost-effective and at the same time impactful illumination.
5. Their transit network is extremely easy to understand and navigate. Moreover it is cheap and exceptionally efficient with millions of people using it daily.
6. Transit media is all about the consumer and it is there not just for the advertisers, but to enhance the commuter journey.
7. The usage of OOH in China is aggressive. Brands and advertisers understand the landscape and therefore understand the value. In South Africa we are still educating advertisers on the value of our multiple touchpoint transit media offerings.

The bottom line is this: we are sitting with an economically active base in the transit space and we need to create world class media that will attract brands.

But, all is not lost when it comes to our own country. We observed that South Africa is ahead of the curve in certain respects, namely:

1. In South Africa there is a prevalence in social media that doesn't exist in China, as they have shut down most of their

social media platforms.

2. Our out of home media is very cost effective compared to what is offered in China, so a lot of our media is undervalued.
3. We know our target markets and our audience. We also have far better research into consumer behaviour.
4. South African Media Owners care about the consumer and we spend a lot of time providing good content and a pleasant end-user experience.

New infrastructures are natural incubators for OOH Media

We are very fortunate to have an array of brand new infrastructures in South Africa and these are natural incubators for OOH media. We need to focus on incorporating and developing world-class integrated OOH media solutions in these environments, market them appropriately and ensure that we develop and provide advertisers with credible efficacy research. It is a very exciting time to be in the OOH sector!

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Jacques du Preez is MD of Provantage.

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