

Is out of home in your digital strategy?

By [Andre Steenekamp](#), issued by [Mark1](#)

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If it looks like digital and it acts like digital, it probably is digital. Programmatic digital out of home advertising, or pDOOH, is now available as a digital media buy on a CPM basis. Gone are the days of booking sites long term and negotiating rates with multiple media owners. Now you simply open your favourite programmatic buying platform, select your targeting parameters, budget and timing and you're ready to go.



I'm a fan. But I wasn't always this way...

I started my media career in newspapers, selling advertising space to a loyal reader base. That was a long time ago. Before digital media, our competition was TV, radio and outdoor. Measurement of effectiveness was tough, but at least newspapers could claim active readers. TV and radio also reached massive audiences, so something had to stick.

Out of home on the other hand? I was not so convinced. To me, it was a long shot. You had to drive past a sign placed off to the side of the road, look up in that exact moment and hopefully, with enough time to see the message, remember the brand. Irrespective, success was claimed.

Back in the day, my girlfriend's father was in OOH. He was the owner of a successful, large independent, often asking me to join him. I told him I couldn't possibly sell something I clearly didn't believe in. He sold his business and made a lot of money; I could have been rich. His daughter and I broke up anyway, so maybe I would have had to give the money back.

Anyway...

When the pandemic struck and humans were confined to their homes, I was convinced that OOH would die a slow death – a popular topic of speculation in otherwise uneventful Zoom calls. Unsurprisingly, the OOH guys were not taking this lying down, using the time at home to innovate. They added a 'D' to OOH, making it digital, and by the time they were done with lockdown, they had added a (small) 'p'.

Gone were big, static signboards that changed monthly (at best), moving on to digital screens with animated images, to full on video (even with sound in some instances). For a while, you still had to buy the screen for a month at a time, but the

innovation didn't stop there. They watched as TV and even radio migrated to programmatic, so why wouldn't they?

Now, almost every media owner has digital screens and have made their inventory available as a CPM (cost per thousand) buy on several DSP's (demand side platforms). Your agency's campaign manager can buy and optimise pDOOH alongside your display and video ads without even speaking to a human. They simply choose sites that match your target market's profile down to the preferred time of day and day of week (why show your ad at 3am on a Monday morning when your audience is asleep?) and pace the campaign to spend your precious budget over a limited period. Take a step further by tracking changes in store footfall by tracking mobile phone IDs that pass the displays. Reporting on campaigns now becomes a real thing, especially if you use the connectors (APIs) in the platforms to send the data directly to your reporting tools.



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At Mark1, for example, we use Hivestack as our preferred pDOOH platform and export campaign data directly to our reporting dashboards. We can now overlay our search, pDOOH, CTV, pAudio, social media, display and video campaigns, all on one screen in order to understand the impact each channel has on achieving our campaign objectives.

We regularly wax lyrical about 'user journeys', now we could influence them using pDOOH. Here's how:

- Track peoples' routes to their shopping center and flight ads as they pass.
- Do the same on totems as they walk through the mall.
- In some instances, show them ads in-store, guiding them from consideration to purchase along the way.
- Note increases in e-commerce sales based on exposure to related digital displays.
- Export mobile IDs to Meta Ads Manager platform (as an example).
- Flight related ads to this audience and use those same mobile IDs to find lookalike audiences.

At last, attribution comes to the out of home space!

I haven't gotten to the big word – anamorphic, which is just a fancy way of saying 3D. A proud first for Mark1 (and the whole world, as it turns out) was running an anamorphic programmatic digital out of home campaign. Maybe we were first because no-one knew how to spell it or confidently say it aloud? Seriously though, we created a 3D version of the famous RE/MAX balloon and had household items, like toasters and dogs, floating around it while it seemed to 'pop' right out the screen. We conceptualised, built, optimised, and reported – all via Hivestack, without leaving our offices. We were so excited about our achievement that we made daily trips to the Waterfront to see our masterpiece.

What's cooler? The clever guys from Tractor Outdoor installed cameras around this screen that report on how many people passed by, including estimated age, gender, dwell time and sentiment (surprised, bored, etc.). This has elevated reporting to a whole new level.

So yes, I've been converted, and so should you. Join me.

And maybe if I hadn't broken up with that girl, you might have joined me on my yacht.

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