

AS SUMMER HEATS UP, TRAVELLERS PACK THEIR BAGS AND HEAD TO THE AIRPORT BUT FOR SOME REASON, BRANDS CONSIDER THIS A TIME TO TAKE A BREAK TOO. THE OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SECTOR PRESENTS ITS CASE AS TO WHY THIS IS THE BEST TIME TO ADVERTISE

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Come fly with me. Let's fly, let's fly away, ol' Blue Eyes once sang. And that is exactly what plenty of Australians will be doing this silly season. Interestingly, while we tend to spend big jet-setting during summer, on the flip side, ad spend dips. But it's hardly the time for brands to be taking a break.

Not only are consumers spending more when it heats up, a study by industry body the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) shows people are more aware of outdoor advertising in the summer months. The September poll found 54% of respondents are more clued in to outdoor ads when the weather heats up.

"Outdoor is particularly effective in the summer because people spend less time watching TV and less time online. Conversely, people say they notice outdoor advertising more. Because total ad spend is down, summer is a less cluttered environment making it the perfect time to be spending

on outdoor," explains OMA's director of marketing, Julie Jensen. Despite this, brands aren't getting in on the act. Steve O'Connor, CEO of outdoor media company JCDecaux, says: "Outdoor as an industry, and the individual operators, need to educate the market more about the role outdoor advertising can play during the summer months in making campaigns more effective."

"There hasn't been a lot of promotion as an industry when it comes to validating reasons why outdoor advertising is relevant over the summer months. For example, retail expenditure actually grows during and consumption of some key media channels decrease. At the same time, more people are out and about with increased exposure to outdoor advertising and arguably in a more relaxed mind to spend," O'Connor continues.

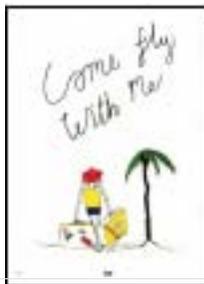
In addition to the warmer months being the preferred time of the year for consumers, it's also when most Aussies pack their bags, head sky-high

and spend their holidays in some enviable location. Martin Salter heads up advertising and new media at Sydney Airport.

He says: "Our passengers increase during school holidays and peak over the Christmas period. These numbers are supplemented by friends and family who come here to greet them. The arrivals and departures areas are very emotive locations and brands are able to take advantage of this through digital placements in these areas."

Vodafone is one brand that advertises in an airport environment and media agency Bohemia Group manages commercial distribution for the brand in this space.

Brett Dawson, managing partner at Bohemia, says: "To most, the airport is the gateway to enjoyment via a holiday. It's an incredibly exciting moment and mindset. This creates a great opportunity to emotionally connect and add real value." ▶



Dawson has noticed an increase in outdoor recall for the Vodafone brand over summer as traveller numbers increase. "The summer months present great value as demand decreases and available audience increases," he says.

Brendan Cook, CEO of out-of-home media supplier oOh! Media, says: "Summer, for all of out-of-home, is peak season. Research shows holidaymakers travelling by air in the warmer months are in the headspace of thinking about a future holiday. It's a great opportunity for travel-related advertisers to offer a call to action in their campaign, because travellers are likely to take it up."

And the opportunity is only growing. Paul Osborne, general manager of commercial at outdoor media provider APN Outdoor, says: "Airport travel is increasing year-on-year, month-on-month. It's a significant increase. Airports are fixated on passengers and passenger growth. With that increase, over time, it helps to sell that environment better."

The likely reason for this growth is the decreased cost of travel.

Flight costs have dropped by more than 40% since Frank Sinatra's classic tune was made famous. On December 1, 1947, Qantas flew the 'Kangaroo Route' from Sydney to London. The flight had layovers in Singapore and Cairo en route to London. A return fare is estimated to have been £585, equivalent to 130 weeks pay for the average Australian at that time.

APN Outdoor's general manager for sales, Mark Fairhurst, explains lower prices mean a more varied demographic for advertisers to reach. It's not just cashed up Baby Boomers passing through the departure gates. He says: "It's a great opportunity to tap into younger audiences."

But oOh! Media's Cook says the problem with getting advertisers on board in airport locations is a larger one. He says: "One of the challenges we have is the lack of understanding among advertisers around how common air travel is."

In an airport setting, there is always a steady stream of people, unlike other common

out-of-home advertising environments like roadside billboards which may see traffic ebb and flow. Not only are there more people, those that are seeing the ads are far more receptive to them.

APN Outdoor's research piece, The Attention Economy, found "regular travellers in an airport environment are twice as likely to take notice of an advertising message compared to the Australian average". Similarly the OMA conducted a study during 2012-13 and found compared to other paid media, outdoor ranks in the top spot for awareness and also for creating 'desire'.

Airport advertising is clearly well positioned for results. Jensen says: "It is known to be very effective in driving awareness for brands. A benefit of airport signage is that it's delivered in

**"AIRPORT TRAVEL IS INCREASING
YEAR-ON-YEAR, MONTH-ON-MONTH.
IT'S A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE."**

APN OUTDOOR'S PAUL OSBORNE

an environment with long dwell times in comparison to other environments."

It's these high dwell times which prove most important for brands. Bohemia's Dawson says understanding a traveller's journey is integral when selecting ad space for clients. "Humans tend to bolt directly to their departure gate," he says, an area the company focuses on because of the length of time people spend there.

High dwell times and high ad recall figures at the gate are good news for APN Outdoor and fellow out-of-home media provider oOh! Media. The two companies have a stronghold on media assets within the vicinity of major airports in Australia. But this could soon change at Sydney Airport. In late 2014, the busiest airport in Australia called a

tender for the provision of outdoor advertising services. Salter says the response from the market has been "overwhelming".

APN's Osborne says the reason the two companies currently dominate the space is due to them being able to prove they have experience in managing airport advertising concessions. He says: "There are significant operational costs and expertise required."

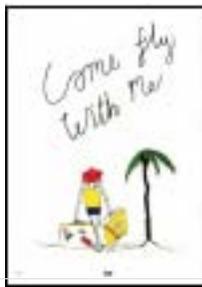
Ownership of advertising space at multiple airports gives APN Outdoor and oOh! Media the ability to tailor campaigns around Australia to suit the journey of a target audience. APN's Fairhurst magnanimously says: "If you just buy one of us, you're missing out on a significant portion of eyeballs – especially for domestic travel."

Mike Tyquin, chief commercial officer for outdoor advertising company Adshel, says the Sydney Airport tender is a big deal. The contract up for grabs includes the international terminal as well as the Virgin, Jetstar and Tiger terminals in addition to a number of large format billboards in the vicinity. Tyquin says: "It's the largest airport advertising contract by value in Australia and a very critical part of the overall airport advertising offer in this market."

Submissions for the tender were due at the end of November with a seven year term expected to be offered. The results from the tender will be revealed in the first half of 2015 with the value of the contract estimated to be worth \$20 million per annum.

Various criteria must be met in order for a company to be awarded the tender with innovation and creativity top of the list.

Already, there are some interesting innovations in the airport advertising space. QView is one such digital innovation that launched earlier this year. A joint initiative by Qantas and oOh! FLY, a division of oOh! Media, the digital signage and content offering was rolled out in Qantas member lounges across the country. QView delivers relevant news, sport, weather and content across oOh! Media's digital screen network inside Qantas Club lounges. Travellers can also access real-time boarding notifications on their own ▶



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devices through QView. Ana Suto, manager for advertising and retail marketing at Qantas, says: "The market has responded strongly to QView and we've witnessed high levels of engagement with both our customers and media agencies."

Suto says there were initial concerns that advertising in a members lounge environment might diminish the sense of exclusivity and prestige often associated with such a space. However, she says: "Our research and feedback has confirmed that not only are our members receptive to advertising they also believe its execution enhances the environment."

INNOVATION AT THE GATE AND BEYOND

More broadly, innovation is integral to the airport advertising sector and various countries around the globe tackle it in different ways. Adshel's Tyquin says airports in Italy are known to have expensive, world-class digital assets. While JCDecaux has installed a selection of moving digital screens at Changi airport in Singapore.

APN Outdoor's Osbourne finds digital screens "gimmicky" but in the 2009 JCDecaux Airport Eye-Tracker Survey, 94% of respondents said moving digital adverts were more striking than static ads. The same survey reported 65% of airport visitors seeing digital ads as effective in delivering messages.

It's not just the media owners who seek innovation. Tyquin says: "The airport authorities are looking for a high-end customer experience themselves, so they have a strong appetite for new technology."

Sydney Airport has partnered with software company Techmedia to integrate advertising platform Scala with flight information at the International terminal. This means APN screens at the international gates are able to display destination-specific content to travellers. For example, a traveller at Gate 31 travelling to London will see London related content and offers.

In addition, Sydney airport is dabbling in some extra digital developments. "We are about to launch one of the best commercial screens in the southern hemisphere at our TI departures wall, it is an ultra high definition LED screen," says Salter.

"Digital has been a major contributor to innovation within the airport space. The Qantas

network in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth went through a large scale digital transformation more than two years ago and was the first and largest fully digitised airport terminal network in the world," says Suto.

Kirsty Dollisson, general manager at out-of-home provider TorchMedia, says digital billboards have "lit up" Australian airports. She says: "While the uptake was slow compared to other countries in Asia, the traditional billboard has been illuminated with bright, vibrant moving colours and quite often sounds. Some great executions, in Sydney in particular, have seen billboards engage consumers by offering scents or product samples to give creative another dimension."

"The benefit of digital for clients is that they can book space with far less notice. You could literally call today and have signage up tomorrow morning," says APN Outdoor's Fairhurst.

Contactless communication innovations, like QR codes, those funny looking square barcodes you scan with a smart phone and near field communication (NFC), the 'tapping' technology behind Visa Paywave and Mastercard PayPass, are also helping to create interactive experiences for customers in airport settings.

Fairhurst says there are a number of technologies in the media provider's future including NFC, beacons and smart WiFi. Beacons are devices that register a signal on smart phones within a 10-metre radius and are capable of delivering targeted content and offers. As for smart WiFi, it's exactly how it sounds; a technology development that enables smarter, faster WiFi that reaches further and is more reliable than ever before.

The Moodie Awards recognise digital, mobile and social media innovations at airports and oOh! Media bagged one for best concourse advertising this year for its Google Play campaign which leveraged NFC capabilities.

Travellers at Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane domestic airports were able to use their mobile device to interact with one of many advertising panels that featured Google Play content. Using NFC, people could instantly download movies, magazines, books, music or games from the Google Play Store to their device.

It's not just digital innovations making waves in the sea of airport advertising opportunities.

Michael Scruby, founder of outdoor media buying company Site Tour says there are many other areas for clients to take advantage. He says: "There's what's referred to as ambient media; the bottom of the trays as you go through security and also translucent stickers on the windows, which are perfect for beautiful, big brand campaigns."

There are also experiential zones, or sampling zones in the airport such as subscription wine service Wine Selectors that offers wine samples to travellers as they make their way to the gate.

Those in the business say airport advertising should look outside the terminal for inspiration, especially to executions that could lead to earned media opportunities.

Once such example is Whybin\TBWA's award winning GAYTMs from earlier this year. ANZ transformed ATMs to celebrate Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, bedazzling them with rhinestones, leather and fur.

"This is a great example of how outdoor companies can execute campaigns which leverage mainstream media coverage and blur the lines between what is outdoor advertising and experiential marketing," says TorchMedia's Dollisson.

Right now, advertisers should be focused on the warmer months ahead. And this coming summer is looking to be especially busy for Aussie airports as sports fanatics travel to attend the Asia Cup football tournament, the ICC Cricket World Cup and the Australian Open.

"These are great opportunities for brands to take advantage of the increased passenger numbers and potential brand engagement over this period," says Salter.

"Any client could advertise during this time because of the sheer volume of travellers, but it's ideal for those that can tap into the mindset of people who are into their sport," says Fairhurst. Major sponsors for these sporting events often take a generic approach, Fairhurst notes, and so it's an optimal time for brands to do something a little different.

Temperatures are soaring, people are soaking up the sun and preparing to getaway. "...let's fly, let's fly away," swooned Ol' Blue Eyes. Travellers have heard his cue and advertisers should too. This summer, the airport is where the eyeballs are. ■