

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

CATCHING CONSUMERS BY SURPRISE



David Mackenzie, MD of BOO!

If you're thinking of building a new mall, BOO! Surprising Media Solutions MD David McKenzie's ambition is to leverage his company's advancements in alternative media to your benefit by taking his place on your mall design team. One of the South African pioneers of mall advertising, McKenzie believes it's around the design table that groundbreaking ideas and thought leadership in the wide variety of media available to surprise and delight customers, can have a major impact on the building's future revenue-generating capacity.

Advertising that doesn't look, feel or smell like advertising is one cornerstone of the philosophy that drives McKenzie. The others are proximity, exclusivity and unpredictability, driving the company together with its clients closer to the consumer, going where the competition hasn't gone, and catching its audience off guard in the most effective and surprising way.

McKenzie believes that by working with architects and shopping mall marketing and operations teams to help draft designs for the fabric, shapes and spaces of the buildings in which he places his often epic advertising formats, BOO! can support the mall's economic viability. "Expanding on effective revenue-producing spaces will add to the bottom line through optimising non-GLA income generation," he tells Shopping SA. "Non-GLA income has now become a budgetary line item for most malls."

McKenzie's company has recently secured contractual agreements with Melrose Arch, the Victoria Wharf mall in the V&A Waterfront, Sandton City and South Point to introduce multi-disciplinary advertising opportunities.

"In some cases the larger mall groups are appointing commercial directors, or folks with similar titles mainly to manage and assist in appointing their strategic non-GLA partners. BOO! looks at non-GLA income on a macro level; we try and ensure that over and above the direct income that is generated from our advertising, ambient media, sponsorship and other alternative income ideas, that we create additional value-adds for the landlord. Examples would include an increase in shoppers' dwell-time through interesting ambient media, so the indirect benefit is parking income as one example. Another example is to ensure that our income-generating ideas also improve the customer experience – the indirect benefit here may



Bisquit Melrose Arch

be a point of differentiation for the mall – such as the sponsored five-a-side tournaments over Soccer World Cup and school holidays that we've done for a centre," says McKenzie.

McKenzie, who was a founding director of Independent Online (IOL), started his media career at Sports Illustrated magazine. But his prominence in the broader aspects of out-of-home media(OOH) has been built up over 15 years since he started a subsidiary media company for Old Mutual Property, conceiving the notion that malls were an ideal advertising forum. Since then he has formed BOO! Surprising Media Solutions which looks way beyond the billboard for alternative media communications for clients.

"We take a multi-disciplinary approach to OOH media. This includes building wraps, wall sites, large-scale exterior LED screens, billboards, glass facades, contravision cladding on buildings, branded escalators and lift doors, and recently Wi-Fi as a few examples," he says. Companies like SAB Miller, Mercedes Benz, ABSA, BMW, Brandhouse and other blue chips are regular clients who partner with the BOO! team. "I'd say that no one element is more effective than the other. Often the elements working together can be the perfect solution, all playing a role in different areas of the mall."

Malls and other properties, McKenzie says, deliver high dwell time, keeping the audience engaged for a while, as they browse through the

mall, sit at restaurants and incidentally pick up the advertising messages via the ambient media. "But, there is a fine line between clutter and relevant media placement. The management and development of advertising within and around shopping malls is a specialised skill," he comments.

"Ambient media creates alternative forms of activation, where art can meet advertising. It gently engages the consumer, often prompts purchases and of course, puts smiles on faces. Examples are as broad as the huge Coca Cola man built from bottle crates at the V&A to a giant construction crane placed on the side of a highway with a KFC chicken dinner bucket hanging from it."

What alternative media developments are we likely to see in the next 10 years?

"The introduction of DOOH (digital out-of-home) media is probably the most pressing change. The evolution from static, in certain areas, to digital LED signage will certainly be the most significant. Once the platforms are in place, we can start to experiment with interactive technology," reports McKenzie.

"The future is incredibly exciting, we are pioneering, what we call, 'The digital eco-system within malls'. The landlords in South Africa operate at world-class levels. But we also keep an eye on global landlords like The Simon Group and Westfield. We recently partnered with a Westfield

supplier to offer a service exclusively in SA. We are currently doing a proof of a concept at one large mall, and aim to roll this out nationally. Watch this space ! "

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