

10 Reasons to Celebrate OOH in 2015

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Celebrated author Margaret Atwood once wrote, “Optimism means better than reality; pessimism means worse than reality. I’m a realist.”

I’m a realist, too. As we come to the end of 2015 and embrace a New Year, reality looks good to me. There’s no question our industry faces challenges in the days ahead and we can’t shirk from those realities, but here are ten reasons to celebrate OOH.

1) OOH is Growing.

OOH is the second fastest growth medium following digital (online, social, and mobile) with gains projected through the next three years, according to ZenithOptimedia.

Next year, ZenithOptimedia expects US OOH to grow 4 percent, and continue that pace through 2017. OOH will continue to be the top performing form of traditional media, and outpace total combined media through 2017 even after accounting for digital (online, social, and mobile).

2) OOH Growth is Global

The Australian OOH industry is up dramatically with double-digit growth. Alan Brydon, the new leader of the UK OOH industry group, Outsmart, says the most prevalent theme in the UK is “positivity.” According to Magna Global, OOH will grow globally by 5.2 percent next year compared to 4.3 percent for total combined media. The overall message is that OOH continues to perform well everywhere.

3) Broadcast is Down; Print is Worse

A weakening in other media channels signals an opportunity for OOH. Global TV ad spend will fall this year, for the first time in a non-recession year. In the US, TV spend will be down 3.9 percent. Nielsen recently admitted, the smart phone is eating TV spend. TV viewing by all age groups peaked in the 2010 season and has been declining ever since. Before that point, TV viewing had been growing since 1949.

Of course, TV’s revenue will be sustained somewhat in 2016 with the cyclical infusion of presidential election and Summer Olympics media spend.

The downward spiral of print will continue. Newspapers will be down 12.9 percent this year and magazines will be down 13.5 percent. Radio will be down 3 percent.

4) Project MORE

The TAB Board of Directors has just agreed to test an ambitious proposal intended to enrich and expand the information derived through OOH ratings. The plan will produce enhanced audience measurement using a blend of standardized sources for vehicular traffic data, augmented through multiple data sources. The information will cover millions of miles of roadways, include volume and congestion by time of day, and vehicular occupancy.

Further enhancements are expected to include the measure of pedestrian volume, new eye tracking research, and advanced audience profiling in an effort to produce more timely metrics for an expanded universe of OOH formats.

5) Strong Buzz

The OOH industry's *Feel the Real* campaign landed big on the press radar screen, starting with an exclusive in [The Wall Street Journal](#) during Advertising Week in New York. Equally important, media planners noticed the hyper-targeted OOH ads, and their responses lit up social media.

A favorite tweet remarked, "Nice media placement! Right outside my ad agency window," posted Marc Stryker, media director at the Penna Powers agency in Salt Lake City. [A web post from India](#), asked, "When will we see OOH in India taking such an action?"

6) Digital Ad Spend Will Soon Overtake TV and That Helps OOH

[The Wall Street Journal](#) recently reported that digital ad spend in the US will surpass TV spending next year. Digital will be the largest media category with revenue expected to exceed \$66 billion.

The OOH medium complements digital media. In fact, [MediaDailyNews](#) writes, "Today, OOH is increasingly becoming the media of choice of public brand declarations. The public plus private formula is tried and true and an effective mode of communication." But, instead of using TV and print to deliver this combination, more marketers are turning to digital and OOH.

7) Technology Helps OOH

Ford is asking consumers to design custom OOH ads, taking "brand connections" to a new level. In five UK markets, Santa Claus made his rounds on 50 digital billboards. London is displaying traffic updates on digital taxi tops.

Advances in display technology and data integration are combining to make OOH an even more compelling design palette for brands. The result is a new generation of OOH design options that can engage consumers like never before.

8) Urban Amenities

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio says new street-level ad panels that bring free Wi-Fi are “a critical step toward a more equal, open, and connected city.”

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti says waiting for the bus should be “an opportunity, not a chore,” thanks to upgraded bus shelters and benches.

Municipalities are beginning to see more dimensions to the traditionally linear role of the OOH medium with new amenities and revenue streams. When the intelligent and intuitive nature of a connected web is linked to the physical world, it positively impacts cities and makes them better places to live. OOH helps to make the connections.

9) The Industry Maintains Strong Relationships with Congress

President Obama just signed a five-year Highway Bill to maintain roads, bridges, and transit while protecting OOH industry property rights. Despite attempts to inject two amendments to the Bill that could have harmed OOH, our industry responded with deliberate action and the amendments were defeated.

The OOH industry has a long history of working with elected officials to ensure that our right to conduct business is preserved while remaining a positive economic driver and job creator in communities across the country.

10) More Brands Recognize the Power of OOH

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, a 12-week campaign boosted enrollments by 92 percent for Delta Dental of Minnesota, driving consumers to a website to browse dental plans. Digital billboards were supported by bus kings, train wraps, posters, and bulletins. This highly engaging campaign won OAAA’s 2015 OOH Media Plan of the Year Award.

Local businesses and national brands rely on OOH to deliver messages to active audiences when they are away from home on the path to purchase. The brands using OOH straddle every product category, but some of the most striking growth has been among technology advertisers. Apple, Google, Samsung, Snapchat, and Spotify are among the brands investing more heavily in the power of OOH.

Yes, I am a realist, a realist who cannot ignore facts. OOH is a growing and vibrant media channel with much to celebrate as we ring in a New Year.