

With Content - CONTEXT is King

24 Mar 2008



Today it is an established fact that content plays a key role in delivering the ROI on a screen media network. But getting content right is a subtle issue, and not merely a matter of transporting a successful campaign from one medium to another. To be truly effective, content must take account of viewer context, delivering messages that are geared to the time, the place and the situation.

ShopperCentric, the UK based retail behavior and research specialist, has put it as follows, "the tone/style of the message should reflect the core shopper modes in that store/department". An approach that naturally leads to the identification of different messaging formats to match specific shopper contexts - such as:

Grocery: purposive mode, aisles used as shopping list, want to get out and go.

- Here, we should focus on visuals that stand out, and use short, sharp messages

Lifestyle/ Home: browsing mode, seeking inspiration, indulgence.

- Here, we should focus on visuals that build atmosphere, and messages that tempt

Technology: browsing mode, information gathering, knowledge building

- Here, we should focus on dynamic use of media, and solution-based messages.

Content used for driving a sale is different from that used to build a brand. For example, content at the retail shelf-edge is generally best focused on driving immediate purchase decisions, while screens further away from the shelf edge may deliver more value by focusing more on brand awareness and encouraging associations and recall.

Physical environment is also a significant issue. Some locations have a lot of ambient visual "noise", so content needs to leap out of clutter. Other locations are captive - like hair salons and taxis, here content must concentrate on longer term engagement.

The recognition that context plays a key role in content planning is an important step forward, but there is still much research required before we fully understand how consumer receptiveness relates to environment.

This is important, because in measuring the effectiveness of media – it is important to ensure that we enable our media customers to compare like-with-like, and have some generic mechanisms for doing so.

The complexities of finding common tools for audience measurement in the digital signage media market is one of the key industry challenges – and an area that the next Screen Forum Event in London is set to cover.

A 10 second advert played in a shopping centre will hit a lot of people and have a wider outcome from a small proportion of the views. Whereas a 10 second ad is wasted on fewer people in a captive environment - here a 60 second 'feature-advert' is likely to have a greater impact on its fewer viewers.

The answer is that digital signage content plays many roles, in some situations it should be measured like a Poster, in others like TV, in others like Magazine/Print and in others like Point of Sale Merchandising.

For the ROI to really stack up, the content must in each case match its relevant traditional viewer experience.