

The Revenue “Road Map” for Digital Out-of-Home Networks

By Alan High
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Foreword:

Although Digital Signage and Digital Out-of-Home (DS/DOOH) offer advertiser and other communicators superior messaging capabilities, with the ability to target consumers and audiences at points where messages are influential and will get noticed, it has been at times challenging for networks to capture revenues for advertising and other messaging. In this paper, the author, Alan High provides valuable insights aimed at achieving the revenue potential offered to DS/DOOH network operators.

This paper outlines the potential and power of dynamic display as a preferred medium for brand, merchandising, promotional, advertiser, patron, staff and student messaging. Alan has carried the banner of the possibility and the fulfillment of display advertising revenue achievement, while providing counsel to assure easy and fluid access to ad spending that are the foundation of many display business models. Alan lays out the framework that can assure initial and sustainable network success.

Beyond being a “how to” guide, this paper is valuable too in reflecting the transition of the industry from its initial stages in achieving a critical mass of display inventory to its place as a tangible, viable and compelling proposition fully delivering on its promise and capabilities.

Lyle Bunn

The Digital Signage industry, with its wide range of deployments, diverse venues and multiple formats continues to enjoy unprecedented growth. Currently there are an estimated 450 networks playing 1 million+ ad spots on over 900,000 displays across North America. Estimated annual advertising revenues in 2008 were over \$2.0 billion, with a sustained 20%+ annual growth rate over the last 5 years.

Costs to install and operate Digital Signage networks continue to decline while there has been a dramatic increase in the number and types of networks. Retail outlets and malls, airports, banks, elevators, sports stadiums, bars, restaurants and schools represent just a few of the venues and applications. Everywhere there’s an opportunity to touch large numbers of consumers, Digital Signage is either present or being contemplated. Additionally, consumers are spending more time out of home-working, shopping and playing. It’s inevitable that marketing investments continue to gravitate to locations where consumers congregate and spend time.

Digital Signage (DS) deployments are generally referred to as internal, non revenue based networks. Digital Out-Of-Home (DOOH) networks by definition tend to be more mass consumer related and depend upon or underwrite a portion of their costs through advertising. The focus of this article is specifically directed towards DOOH.

Despite the significant revenues that the DOOH industry has achieved to date, the strategic planning behind many of these networks has taken a secondary role to deployment issues. There appear to be far too many “if you build it they will come” views towards revenue generation with DOOH signage. The glamor of digital can be seductive, leading many companies to shortchange the process of properly evaluating and strategizing the “real” revenue potential. Some companies are making mistakes by overlooking the key elements of success for Digital Signage which is hindering their ability to optimize revenue and profitability.

Network operators must be thoughtful, focused and diligent in maximizing revenues. This article is designed as a step by step guide for developing a successful DOOH network. In effect, a road map that companies can use to guide them through all the steps required to evaluate, strategize and help deploy the optimum mix of components to maximize revenues.

There are no guarantees that a revenue based Digital-Out-Of-Home signage network will be successful, but valuable insights in this article will help avoid potential mistakes and oversights during the evaluation process.

The Critical Success Factors for Revenue Development

Five key success factors have been identified, all of which are essential components in assessing a DOOH opportunity and achieving its maximum revenue potential:

- 1 Define the objectives and key variables necessary to achieve revenue growth.
- 2 Determine the role of the venue, including variables such as location, traffic and dwell time.
- 3 The content and configuration dilemma. Assess how content can be used effectively to help maximize revenues and how important content is for the success of a Digital-Out-Of-Home Signage network.
- 4 Review, define and refine the sources of revenue.
- 5 Review ways to successfully market and sell the advertising component of each DOOH signage network.

1. Objectives and Key Communication Issues

As with any new business venture, completing a business plan is a vital step. Each DOOH signage deployment needs a careful review of a number of factors; the most important is what do you want to accomplish? Three critical areas of focus have been identified– the Network, the Audience and the Market:

1. The Network: What is the primary mandate of the DOOH network? Do you want to inform, train, entertain, help sell merchandise and/or make money? Most digital networks are a combination of multiple objectives, not just revenue generation alone. These should be placed in order of importance and a weighting applied to each. This helps clarify and rank the importance of each variable and impacts the network’s final design and operation.
2. The Audience: Research, especially acceptable audience metrics are fundamental to the success of an advertising dependent DOOH network. ***The more dependent the model is on revenues, the more important the role of research.*** These variables are reviewed in more detail in Section 5- Marketing and Selling the Signage Opportunity.
3. The Market: It’s difficult to accurately estimate the long term revenue potential of the DOOH network without sufficient market knowledge. Here are some guidelines that will assist:
 - Look elsewhere. Many DOOH networks have been deployed in similar venues in other regions or countries. Take the time to analyze what others have done and review the advertisers who are using the network. Can their success be replicated and their mistakes avoided?
 - Solicit potential advertisers who you think would be interested in your DOOH network. Find out as much as you can about their marketing, advertising investments and objectives. Talk about the vision of your network and find out what it would take to move budgeted dollars from other media formats.
 - Is there other signage in place and is it revenue generating? For many out of home venues, static signage is common and it’s not difficult to develop revenue estimates. If a DOOH network is being introduced where there is an existing competitive non-digital one, be wary of the potential impact on revenues. Introducing a new (and competitive) media format doesn’t necessarily mean that revenues will increase exponentially. Why? Because advertisers have become accustomed to the inherent value proposition and strengths of each media they buy. Introducing a DOOH network that offers significant advantages and added flexibility, doesn’t necessarily translate into new revenue. ***If the advertiser wasn’t interested in purchasing the media format and venue before, introducing a DOOH network won’t necessarily alter that thinking.*** Most DOOH networks are grouped into the out of home segment which represents 3-5% of total advertising expenditures. Switching dollars between different media (from print to out of home as an example) is a long term process. Digital won’t always accelerate those time lines.

Don't underestimate the importance of this step. It's always best to be conservative when trying to determine revenue potential and if done properly, it will maximize the opportunity for long term success. Also, don't let financial considerations drive the revenue estimates. Analyze all these components carefully to help develop a revenue model first, and then see how it fits within the financial thresholds that are being targeted.

2-The Role of the Venue

The venue will have a significant impact on every aspect of a DOOH network, including revenues. Look at each aspect carefully and use these guidelines to help compile the best "component parts".

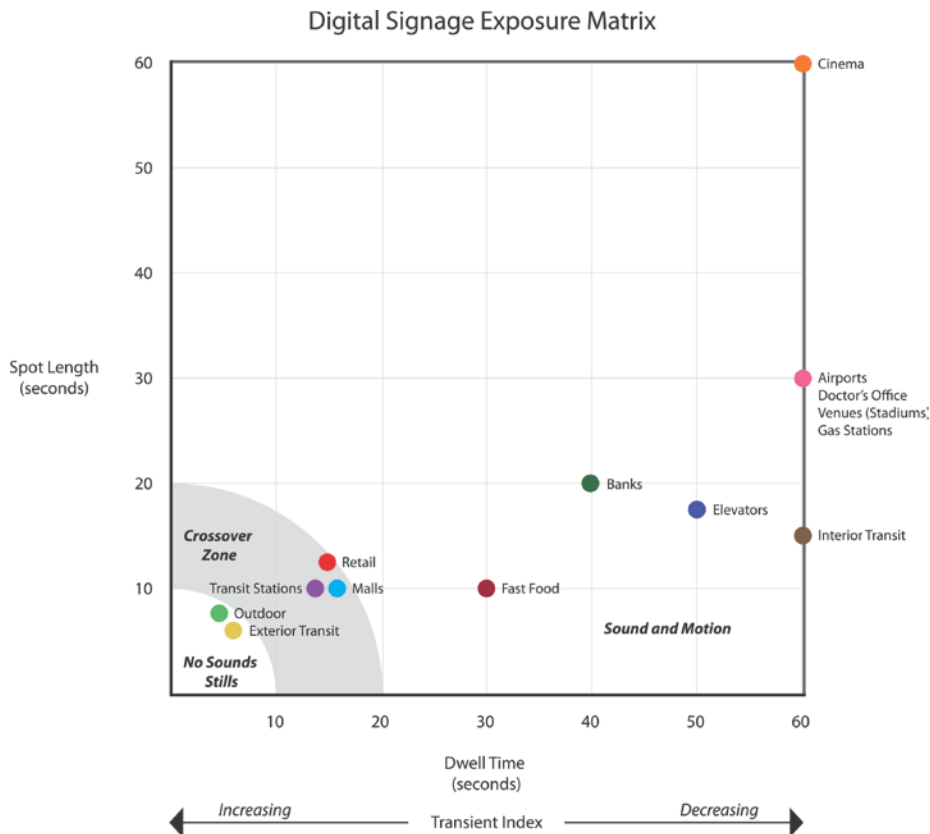
- Environment- Every venue has a slightly different environment. Understanding how consumers interact within it will help bring the viewer and the content/advertising opportunity together with maximum effect.
 - What is the viewing opportunity and dwell time for consumers? For example, in an airport you have considerable dwell time with passengers waiting in departure hold rooms or in baggage claim areas. Airport departure lounges offer a similar viewing opportunity to in home environments. An airport DOOH network can run more content with longer commercials using broadcast creative. Duplicating this network in a transit station would be considerably less effective. With riders on the go, dwell time is minimal; therefore running 30 second advertising spots with a 10-15 second viewing opportunity fragments the message and lessens its impact.
 - Noisy or quiet? – For example, Transit Stations are noisy with pedestrians on the move. A DOOH network should consider whether sound is necessary or even viable given that viewers may be hard pressed to hear the message. Retail outlets on the other hand may be quieter but with numerous other distractions. Not all DOOH networks require sound in order to be effective or successful. For busy, noisy environments, care should be taken in determining whether the network should include or exclude a sound component.
 - Is it a captive viewing opportunity? - Captive venues (like those in airports or cinemas) have a more attentive audience. In cinemas, many advertisers are running longer, specially produced commercials as there's a better opportunity to entertain and engage viewers. The combination of large numbers of viewers and a captive, attentive audience is usually a strong formula for success.
 - What's the frequency of repeat visitors versus new viewers and how will they affect the frequency of viewing? Retail outlets tend to have a relatively loyal customer base with a high percentage of regular and repeat customers. New customers increase the overall reach of the network, repeat customers add to frequency. The flow and audience mix can be used to optimize the sales cycles and the ideal message frequency.

- Are there other distractions that could impact the overall effectiveness of the DOOH network? Visually busy environments have the same impact as noisy ones- they detract from the viewing opportunity, necessitating shorter, more focused messages or larger displays in order to break through.
- Location, location, location- Like real estate, the correct mix of where and how digital signage is located is critical. Digital signage needs to "fit into" the environment, yet be visible and deliver impact. Ideally, monitors should be located where consumers congregate or pass. The layout of the venue will also impact the locations, sizes and orientation. It may not always be possible to align the consumer viewing opportunity with signage visibility but the better it can be done, the more effective the network. Some examples:
 - Dwell Environments. Airports are a good example. Signage needs to be located in hold room areas where passengers can sit, watch and listen with minimal interruptions. Given the large number of hold rooms a signage deployment has to be extensive in order to cover the majority of the audience. Screens need to be large enough so exposure to multiple viewers is possible in one area but not overwhelming to the extent that other options are not available to airport personnel or passengers (who may not want to view the signage). Within this same environment there's also a transient component of passengers moving to gates or baggage claim. Here dwell times and the consumer's attention span are shorter. Combining digital and static signage together can be a highly effective mix- DOOH signage in hold rooms represents a targeted, high quality exposure opportunity. Static signage located along corridors is ideal for passengers on the go with a limited viewing opportunity.
 - Transient Environments. A shorter viewing opportunity, less dwell time and a busy atmosphere usually necessitates larger, more impactful signage. As the number of signs is probably fewer, choosing the highest traffic locations will maximize overall effectiveness. Ads need to be shorter to be more visually impactful. Sound is a secondary consideration.
 - Transactional Environments. Most retail DOOH networks are transactional based. There is sufficient dwell time but not in the same location. Signage should interact with consumers as they move about the store so that during the course of their visit each consumer will be exposed to multiple screens (and potentially multiple messages from the same advertiser). Shorter spots, with higher frequency will be more effective than longer spots with less frequency.
- The Landlord – networks where the landlord is also the owner/operator usually have fewer deployment and operational challenges. However, for many DOOH networks, the network operator isn't necessarily the owner of the real estate. When dealing with a third party venue owner there needs to be a clear agreement over a number of critical issues.

- Will the landlord take an active or passive role in the operation of the network? Most landlords will be active during the initial setup stage where structure issues, communication objectives, etc are agreed upon. Once the network is operational, ongoing issues will need to be addressed. Many landlords will want input on the content and advertising approval. The creative approval process can be challenging and time consuming. Most landlords will also want time on the network to communicate with their customers. This potentially impacts revenues as saleable space is utilized. Additionally, this could represent a significant commitment of resources depending on the deal structure that is agreed to.
- Access to data: For retail DOOH networks, one of the key functions of the network is increasing sales of advertised items. Having access to product movement data is critical for demonstrating the effectiveness of the advertising and driving sales on the DOOH network. Other research information (traffic flow, customer profile information) that is unique to the venue can be used in marketing support literature.
- Venue Competition: Be cautious of venues where there is already an existing, non digital competitor. Even non competing formats represent a dilution of the sales opportunity and set up potentially destructive metrics on price as well as confusion with advertisers.
- Are there any content, category or legislative restrictions? Any such constraints could severely impact revenue projections.
- The financial model: Landlords tend to over value their real estate. Guaranteed revenue streams and/or a percent of sales are common requests. Building as much flexibility into the financial model early on could be the determining factor between success and failure. DOOH networks have significant up front capital and high operation costs which preclude higher financial payments, at least in the short term. Revenues often fall short during the start up phase. Don't make the mistake that many others have - letting the cost structure dictate what the revenues should be- this is a recipe for disaster. Work from the top down, not the bottom up to arrive at realistic and achievable revenues. When projecting revenues, establishing three thresholds is always recommended.
 - Low Revenues- This would be a worst case scenario, representing the minimum revenues that you expect the DOOH network would generate
 - Mid Revenues- The expected revenue levels based on the business plan
 - High Revenues- A possible outcome where expectations are exceeded
 If the revenue projections in the model don't hit the financial thresholds you are trying to achieve, review again to see what costs can be eliminated to make the network viable. (Your network integrator can help with this analysis). The vast majority of DOOH networks have failed based on unrealistic revenue projections

Taking the time to fully understand how consumers spend time in the venue (including average time spent, movement patterns etc.) where the DOOH network is being deployed will pay huge dividends in maximizing the overall effectiveness of the network.

Many of the major DOOH networks have been mapped onto the following schematic- The Digital Signage Exposure Matrix. This illustrates how the key DOOH network elements – sight, sound, viewing time and stills/animation interrelate with the venues dwell time (viewing opportunity) to arrive at the optimum and most effective mix.



3- The Content and Configuration Dilemma

Significant emphasis has been focused on content as the key element necessary to maintain viewer interest. This is not completely accurate. The variable that is often overlooked is the length of the viewing opportunity (dwell time). As the viewing opportunity increases, so does the importance of content.

DOOH billboards have a very short viewing time frame and up until recently, no content. With a DOOH billboard network, a TV broadcaster can provide changing headline news throughout the day. The advertising reinforces their core business- timely news information (content) and presents a more impactful message (advertising).

As you move into pedestrian based media (such as retail or transit), the dwell time increases but is still relatively short. With a maximum viewing opportunity of 10-15 seconds, both the advertising and the

content need to align to the exposure opportunity. Running 30 second commercials or news clips is questionable. Shorter 5-10 second content bursts are more appropriate. The content selection should be relevant and engaging for the target audience and pace of movement past the signage.

As dwell time increases, so does the length of the exposure opportunity. Most sports venues, medical offices, airports, banks etc. all provide relatively long exposures with varying degrees of dwell time. For example, dwell times in an airport are typically 40-45 minutes or longer. Content needs to be high quality, timely and appropriate for the predominant audience - business travelers. Banks may have a longer dwell time versus other pedestrian venues, but the viewing opportunity may be limited as the audience is probably less stationary. In this case shorter and more succinct is better than longer and more involved.

Other considerations:

1. How long is the “loop” before it repeats? The basic rule of thumb is the shorter the viewing opportunity, the shorter the loop length. There’s no hard and fast rule here, it’s mostly common sense. DOOH billboards typically run 8 second stills only (no animation or movement) with 6-8 advertisers per loop. Pedestrian DOOH networks might run a 2-5 minute loop (or longer) with content and advertising mixed in with 5, 10 or 15 second advertising spots. Loops in airports are 30-45 minutes on average with 15- 30 second commercials and content pieces 2-3 minutes or longer. The focus should be on developing an effective communication network with the audience by capturing their attention and interest. Ultimately this will make generating revenues substantially easier.
2. Sound or no sound and why? Let the Digital Signage Exposure Matrix guide you. Again the longer the exposure opportunity, the better opportunity there is to engage the viewer. Longer dwell times allow viewers to absorb more complex messages, most of which would have a sound component to enhance the experience.
3. How flexible should the network be? Adding more flexibility (faster downloading of information, more real time updates etc.) is like adding features to a car- it adds to the overall cost. Let the communication objectives decide the relative importance along with input from advertisers, agencies and your DOOH network integrator. Utilize consumer research if necessary for further insights.
4. Stills vs. full motion video or a combination of the two- which is better? Again length of the exposure opportunity should be used to determine the best mix. Short dwell times necessitate simple messages and minimal movement in order to be effective. Flash ads either as stills or with some basic animation and/or sound can be very effective for 5-8 second exposures. Longer dwell time environments begin to replicate the in home viewing opportunity enabling longer content pieces and the use of conventional broadcast ad material.

5. Broadcast vs. flash- advantages and disadvantages. Which is better? Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. For a flash based network, each screen is addressable and can run its own unique play list. Flash commercials are simple to create and file sizes are relatively small vs. broadcast. The other advantage with flash networks is you can use telephone links (hard wire or cellular) to transmit data. Broadcast networks require significantly more band width and dedicated wiring. Again the network objectives and the exposure opportunity will influence the set up. Operation costs between the two formats vary considerably depending on the type of content and where it's coming from. Decisions regarding which format to adopt should be made in consultation with your network integrator.
6. Is there an ideal content to advertising ratio? As dwell and exposure time increases, content becomes more important in generating viewer interest and engagement. Judgmentally, advertising to content ratios can be higher (50% or more) for shorter dwell time networks (transit stations, malls) and declines as viewing time increases. Why? Consumers who spend time watching a DOOH network are there to view the content- the advertising role is secondary. Advertising ratios tend to decrease and content increases as time spent viewing goes up. Venues like airports are similar to an in home exposure with typical content to ad ratio of 4 or 5 to 1.
7. Landscape or portrait orientation for monitors? The vast majority of DOOH network operators have chosen the landscape mode, especially for retail applications. These networks often use ceiling space, suspending the monitors to an easy viewing height. Many pedestrian based media deploy in the portrait format. With fewer locations, a larger visual presentation and screens at eye level, this orientation has been adopted for many mall and transit applications. These larger screens have a smaller footprint which is more advantageous in environments where floor space is at a premium. Final decisions regarding orientation should be driven by the business analysis and the type of network that is proposed.

One of the challenges facing DOOH networks is a lack of industry standardization (formats) and measurement metrics. Each DOOH operator is encouraged to support the Out of Home Video Advertising Bureau (OVAB). OVAB has established audience metric guidelines which provide details on how audience studies should be conducted. OVAB is also engaging in a number of macro research studies that demonstrate potential exposures to DOOH media. Standardized, comparable metrics across all aspects of DOOH networks is critical in providing advertisers with consistent content formats across multiple networks. Long term, it's essential that the industry adopt common standards in order to be readily accepted by the advertising community.

All of these factors play an important role. DOOH networks need to get the right "presentation mix" in order to impact the viewer. If the mix is wrong, then the presentation and the viewing opportunity are not in sync and a revenue based DOOH model could be compromised long term.

4- Sources of Revenue

Many DOOH networks look to the advertising industry for revenues. But advertising budgets and media selection are not as fluid as everyone thinks. The inherent advantages that are built into most DOOH networks aren't necessarily utilized by many advertisers. In fact DOOH networks generally offer much more flexibility than advertisers can realistically accommodate. For example being able to change an ad 4 times per day for a fast food chain (different creative for breakfast, lunch, dinner and drive through) only makes sense if the advertiser can accommodate these changes- most aren't in a position to do so currently. It will take time for advertisers, agencies and out of home specialists to build this increased flexibility into their creative and media strategies and when they do, the communication effectiveness of the DOOH network will improve and so will the revenues!

Network operators also make the mistake of depending too heavily on advertising budgets while ignoring other lucrative sources of funds. Beyond traditional advertising there are other areas that can be used to generate revenues:

- POS/Promotional Budgets: Funds that are traditionally directed to POS displays or promotional activities might be more effective if a portion of these funds is directed to a DOOH network. POS budgets are used primarily for price reductions or display activity. Redistributing some of these dollars to a DOOH in store network will improve overall consumer awareness more than the price reduction alone, potentially resulting in higher overall sales.
- CO-OP funds: These funds, based on retail product sales are used to fund flyers and newspaper inserts. Co-op funds normally average 3-5% of total sales. When these funds are used for print advertising, they represent a hard, non recoverable cost to the retailer. Co-op dollars spent on a DOOH network can come back to the landlord in the form of revenue share (or ownership) on the network. Having a co-operative and motivated landlord who can assist in helping push funds to digital can have a significant impact on the top line success of the network. Many DOOH retail based networks currently utilize co-op dollars as a primary source of revenue. By supplementing this with revenues from traditional ad budgets, the network operator reduces their dependence on a single revenue source, increasing the long term potential for success.
- Types of Advertisers: Many DOOH networks focus on one source of ad revenue, either national or regional/local. Focusing on both sources will optimize the revenue opportunity.
 - National advertisers: Usually take a wait and see attitude with a new DOOH network. In most cases an advertising agency is managing the budget, and the flexibility to move dollars is often limited. It's essential that the DOOH network be introduced at each company's planning stage. The better the metrics (research) that can be provided, the higher the probability of inclusion in the media plan.
 - Local and Regional advertisers: They tend to be more flexible and faster to react to new opportunities. Of the two, Regional advertisers will have larger budgets and may or may not use an advertising agency. Local budgets are smaller and often seasonal. The challenge with local advertising is smaller expenditures and more contracts, resulting in a longer time frame to recoup the sales investment.

5- Marketing and Selling the Signage Opportunity

Marketing represents an investment in future success. Establishing competitive rates, correctly positioning the network, utilizing effective research data to support the audience and viewership claims all need to be done up front.

One of the most critical components for the long term success of a DOOH network is research, especially when the primary source of revenue is advertising. Without it, there are no metrics that media personnel can use to establish the relative value, audience coverage or effectiveness of the network relative to its costs. Here are some guidelines:

- a. Is the audience quantifiable? Airports have definable gross audience measurements through ticketed passengers. The more quantifiable the audience and the larger the numbers of potential viewers, the better the revenue opportunity.
- b. Is the audience qualifiable? The demographics (and lifestyles) of the audience are paramount before many advertisers will include any new media in their advertising plans. Advertisers are looking for information about the audience viewing the network. They want to have accurate information on demographics - age and sex, income levels, occupations etc. This data is critical, allowing advertisers to align their communication objectives with those of the DOOH network. High quality venue specific information can be obtained through out of home research specialists such as Scarborough, Peoplecount, MRI, Nielsen or Arbitron. Network operators can also contract for custom research if they need more definitive data or if existing syndicated research data is inadequate. Industry accepted, standardized metrics comparable to other media is essential to long term acceptance and viability of any new DOOH network.
- c. Is the audience desirable? Certain audiences and demographics tend to command more advertising dollars than others. As an example, higher income earners are attractive to a wide range of luxury goods marketers as are business to business consumers. The more defined the venue and its audience, the higher the probability that it's desirable to a wider range of products and services (i.e. cinemas or airports)
- d. Is the network impacting the audience? Strong audience metrics, especially at the initial launch stage are often not enough to obtain ad support. Advertisers want to look beyond the numbers to actual results- is the DOOH network communicating with its audience and having an impact? Awareness research is useful to attract advertisers. Far better, if the DOOH network is integrated with a retail outlet (as many are) there is a wealth of sales information that can be used to correlate advertised products with in store sales to produce meaningful ROI's.

Without adequate research data, a DOOH network's long term success is questionable. Research is expensive but absolutely vital. Don't short change this investment as it will continue to pay huge dividends through improved sales and profitability.

Other marketing elements are also vital to revenue generation and one of the most critical is the rate structure. Rates can only be effectively developed with reliable audience data as its cornerstone. Detailed operation, sales and administration costs plus a basic understanding of other like or competitive media will help create a viable rate structure for the DOOH network. Most media are based on Cost per Thousand (CPM). With static signage the media calculation is relatively easy- if the circulation of the sign is known and each sign has a value, then calculating a CPM is easy. The changeability of digital introduces an increased opportunity for exposure, so intrinsic research is necessary to determine the average number of advertising exposures for each viewer. From this a CPM can be determined. The primary target audience and the quality of the venue will also play an important role in determining rates.

Try and glean information from as many sources as possible when establishing rates. Loop length only affects frequency of exposure. It doesn't impact CPM's. Deciding on the optimum mix of content to advertising and the loop length is largely judgmental. As a guide, the shorter the viewing opportunity, the shorter the loop length (and the length of the spots) and the lower the CPM. More captive, higher quality audiences like cinemas and airports generally command a higher CPM.

Take care not to build too much complexity into the rates early on. The sales cycle should represent the norm for other industry media- in the case of out of home in North America, it's 4 weeks. For retail, the promotional cycles are often shorter. Resist the temptation to promote the maximum flexibility of the network – some examples would be selling specific day parts or time frames (i.e. evenings). If you sell a certain time segment you have to sell the remainder to someone else and this limits overall reach against the advertiser's targeted audience. Once the network is established and demand builds, this may become a viable option for attracting new advertisers.

Support material needs to reflect the vision of the DOOH network. Print and video material are both essential elements in the marketing kit. Web sites also play a vital role in providing information. As the network gains traction, additional information on advertiser successes or testimonials, or category ROI effectiveness studies will help generate support from potential customers.

Virtually every DOOH network has detailed information on ad message frequency and proof of play. For retail DOOH networks access to product sales data represents a powerful tool in demonstrating the effectiveness of the network. Additionally, attendance at Industry trade events and advertising in trade publications are important in growing awareness and connecting with potential customers.

The final element in the mix is one of the most important- sales. No matter how good the network is or the value of its audience, the quality of the sales effort will play a critical role in the long term success of the network.

Setting up a dedicated sales force is an expensive proposition and represents a long term investment. There are other options available to network owners, especially during the launch phase. Rep agreements with digital sales specialist are common in the industry as are agreements with aggregators. A number of these aggregators are developing multi-venue and multi-platform digital networks. Their advantage is they are single source, they simplify the buying process and have no ownership stake, their role is predominantly sales.

Make sure you focus on all national, regional and local sales opportunities. Initially target the “low hanging fruit”, be flexible and responsive. Prepare a comprehensive list of target accounts and obtain as much feedback from potential advertisers and their agencies about what is necessary to get them to invest in the network. Consider introductory offers to encourage early sales support and spend the time monitoring and refining the sales proposition as required. A hands on approach, especially early on will pay off longer term. The more opportunities covered, the greater the likelihood of success.

Conclusion

We have assessed how the success of a DOOH network results from the interaction of a wide array of critical factors. Unfortunately there are no easy shortcuts to success. It’s a combination of careful and thorough planning, common sense and understanding and applying the 5 key success factors in this article. If you do your homework, you will create the best “component mix” and be in a strong position to maximize revenues and profits and ensure the long term viability of your DOOH network.

About the author:

Alan High is President of Clear Channel Malls. His experience with digital signage covers a wide range of formats and venues in out of home. He helped pioneer Clear Channel’s digital products in Dundas Square, Toronto’s equivalent of Times Square and was instrumental in the launch of Toronto International Airports DOOH network, a joint venture with CBC. He also provided guidance in the launch of New York City’s Digital Urban Panel program, one of the “first” network digital deployments in out of home.

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