

Digital innovation provides new opportunities for brands

Shopping & Retail Southern Africa interviews BOO! Surprising Media Solutions' CEO and founder, Dave McKenzie.



Dave McKenzie

In February this year, leading out of home media company and digital out of home specialist, BOO! Surprising Media Solutions launched its national student solution, including a campus television network, at South Africa's top universities, giving brands an opportunity for direct access to this important Generation Z youth demographic.

The new national student media network will include BOO! Campus TV, an on-campus communication and entertainment channel; on-campus large format static media with short and long-term opportunities; transit media, incorporating student transport as mobile billboards; centralised campus activations bookings and campus radio opportunities.

These student media solutions from BOO! are yet another channel that the out of home specialist is offering brands, having been a leader in mall media and out of home advertising for 15 years.

BOO! has grown into a leading digital OOH company in South Africa with offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town. It also operates in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique, including premium brand offerings in airport lounges across the continent.

BOO! Campus TV is powered by a world-class browser-based broadcast system developed in Switzerland, where content and advertising can be controlled and distributed remotely for brand advertisers. At each university, key locations have been identified to place the digital screens – of which the largest is 3.5-metres x 4-metres – in areas with high student traffic, such as food courts, dining halls, student centres, libraries and lecture hall entrances.

Beyond this, the BOO! student media solution includes a national, automated campus activations booking system, large format static media, campus radio, and alternative media such as student bus branding and direct media drops to student residences, like door hanger advertising.

The innovative project has been three years in the works and aims to give tertiary institutions a vital added "third" income stream, as well as providing brands with direct access to the all-important Generation Z demographic.

Shopping and Retail Southern Africa asked Dave McKenzie the following questions:

What is your product offering?

BOO! has built our brand on curating media (advertising) platforms across multiple different locations. We pride ourselves on having the unique quality of, in most cases, pioneering new media platforms that had not existed in the media landscape previously.

In the shopping mall landscape, it is a particularly exciting time. The BOO! team pioneered advertising in malls in 2001 when we launched South Africa's first mall media company.

We initially rolled this out across Old Mutual's mall property portfolio that included, Menlyn Park, Gateway and Cavendish Square, to mention a few. The product mix included: branded escalators, branded lift doors, hanging banners, lift banners, and so on. The business was sold to Primedia many years ago.

We launched BOO! Surprising Media Solutions in 2005 as an out of home media company and some of my old team joined me to launch a new generation media platform in our world class malls.

To sum up, the BOO! strategy is as follows; to 'Declutter and Digitise'. We have evolved to become what is known as a DOOH (digital out of home) media company:

- Static media is being replaced with digital LED screens suspended from the voids.
- Less media, positioned smartly, offers multiple touch points throughout the mall for advertisers to reap higher rewards than a lot of the old static clutter.
- The electronic screens also offer the mall's marketing teams the ability to refresh and keep current their own marketing to the shoppers on this new platform.
- A distinct electronic strategy across the interior, exterior and parking areas.



Die Neelsie - Stellenbosch University



Range Rover - Melrose Arch Piazza

This DOOH strategy is already being rolled out by BOO! across South Africa's largest universities through BOO! Campus TV. The media platform is a first in South Africa and will be used primarily as a communication tool for the universities to talk to their students.

The initiative is funded by BOO! on risk and is recovered through advertising income, shared with the landlord, in this case the university.

How does this impact brand activation in what LSM and age group?

The art of advertising in malls is a fascinating science. Each target market requires a very different approach.

Brand activation, as one example, is typically a one-to-one engagement that prompts trial via sampling with the objective to convert to a sale. The mall environment is perfect in this instance as the product should be available to purchase nearby.

In the main market (typically townships) malls, the wrong approach to product sampling (free give-aways) can be catastrophic. It could create a stampede which in fact will put off the serious shopper who does not want a big noise and crowds while they are undergoing their normal fashion or general shopping. The tenants too don't want this sort of noise, so brands have to be very careful when driving their sampling in the main market mall environment.

Sampling in the premium mall environment also has to be finessed and the nuances of the market understood. This shopper does not want to be bothered by promoters pushing product to them. They would rather take a wide berth unless the incentive is clever, tasteful, and adds value to their shopping experience. A photo booth for the family over Christmas, giving them a memorable take away, subtly branded with a sample, is one example that can be effective.

What is the future of mall advertising?

There are two approaches: The one-to-one engagement, namely brand activation (below-the-line); and the other, branding within the mall environment (above the line advertising).

Brands rarely make the two work together, but utilising both into an integrated, well-thought through communication to the shopper, will drive amazing results, typically measured through increased sales.

The future is of course the move towards a digital platform in the mall, whereby the content is relevant on screens and educational for the shopper. Online searches, loyalty redemption, facial



Curved DOOH screen Park Corner Rosebank, Johannesburg



Mall activation

recognition and of course the merging of the digital and the physical - "Click and Collect", are just a few examples.

4. Anything else you'd like to mention?

The BOO! prediction and philosophy for the future is: Declutter and Digitise!

Profile: Dave McKenzie

Experienced media veteran Dave McKenzie launched BOO! Surprising Media Solutions in 2005, after a solid track record in senior management at blue chip media companies. After an initial highly successful five years, BOO! was acquired by Avusa/Times Media Group (now Tiso Blackstar). Dave stayed on and ran BOO! and Airport Media for them. When they delisted, he saw the opportunity to acquire the business back.

BOO! has since grown into a leading digital OOH company in South Africa with offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town. It also operates in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique.

Dave began his career in magazine and digital publishing with Sports Illustrated and CAR magazines. He went on to become a founding partner and marketing and sales director of IOL, starting the business for the Independent Newspaper Group at the time.

His career in Out of Home media began when Old Mutual Properties accepted his proposal for a unique media subsidiary to manage and sell space in their mall media portfolio, and Dave became the founder and MD of POP, South Africa's first mall media company, which was subsequently sold to Primedia Unlimited, being rebranded as Primall.

He is a SACS old boy and his education was completed at the Cape Technikon and UCT Graduate School of Business. He is married and has two sons; and despite a busy travel schedule commuting between Cape Town and Johannesburg, he finds the time to play league soccer and cricket.

Company profile

BOO! Surprising Media Solutions (www.boomedia.co.za) is a leading Out of Home media company in South Africa. The CEO and founder is Dave McKenzie, an influencer in the OOH media industry for over 20 years. A pioneer of mall media in SA, BOO! is now a multi-channel leader in alternative media solutions that offers "innovation that is complemented by implementation". BOO! holds the exclusive media rights for most of the large property funds and ensures that brands receive opportunities that place them in close proximity to their targeted customer, with exclusive and high visibility campaigns that surprise consumers. ■



V&A Waterfront large format LED