

Why the Western Cape is set to become the new outdoor media hotspot in 2023

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If there were a battle between the provinces, each of South Africa's nine would have something special to offer.



Simon Wall, Group CEO at Tractor Media Holdings

Gauteng, literally meaning 'place of gold' in Sotho, is one of the richest natural resource sites in Africa. KwaZulu-Natal, on the other hand, is well-loved for its tropical climate and sprawling beaches. And then there's the Western Cape...

From an out of home (OOH) media perspective, Group CEO at Tractor Media Holdings, Simon Wall, anticipates that after years of playing second fiddle to Gauteng, the Western Cape is set to become the outdoor inventory hotspot for 2023.

Wall shares three key reasons why he anticipates the province will be in high demand by OOH advertisers in 2023.

SA tourism returns with a bang – and all eyes are on the Western Cape

"Certain Western Cape destinations such as Cape Town, the Winelands and the Garden Route are world-renowned for their beauty, which acts as a drawcard for tourism. Tourism means people, and in OOH terms, this translates as potential audiences to which our clients can advertise," says Wall.

And tourists are already pouring into South Africa's most picturesque province. Wesgro's Tourism Research Overview September 2022 revealed that since the 2020 pandemic, tourism recovery in the Western Cape has continued on a steep upward trajectory: "Cape Town International Airport (CTIA) in particular portrayed an impressive aviation recovery and growth... In September 2022, two-way passengers through CTIA's international terminal reached a recovery rate of 81% when compared to the same month in 2019."

In addition, the report stated that the Western Cape's hotel occupancy had seen a recovery rate of 85% when compared to 2019 and that shopping and markets were the most popular type of attraction visited by tourists. Prominent destinations included the V&A Waterfront, Willowbridge and Tygervally, while natural attractions, particularly Cape Point, Table Mountain and Knysna Waterfront, were popular with both domestic and international tourists.

Adds Wall: "Outdoor media is a high-frequency, high-reach medium, and the Western Cape's abundance of iconic landmarks and stunning landscapes creates ample opportunities for OOH advertisers who are not only assured of consumer footfall, but who are also more likely to reach audiences in a receptive and relaxed frame of mind, and therefore more amenable to engaging with their brands."

The rise of semigration

The pandemic is the catalyst behind Cape Town's current boom in 'semigration' and – aided by the shift in the global work paradigm – the protagonist behind this phenomenon is the remote worker, who is no longer office-bound and therefore able to live and work from wherever they choose.

Wall says that Cape Town, recently voted as one of the best cities in the world for remote workers by global housing rental

platform Nestpick, is popular for many reasons. "Firstly, the lifestyle it offers is hard to match: a desirable climate, diverse and beautiful landscapes, quirky eateries and buzzing bars. It also falls within the same time zone as most of Europe – SA's largest source market, according to Wesgro – making it highly attractive to these digital nomads."

This presents enormous opportunities for OOH advertisers. "The novelty of a different lifestyle creates a heightened awareness of our surroundings. Coupled with the flexibility to change locations and shift their 'office' from a coworking spot one day to a coffee shop, the next – these remote workers and digital nomads present an exciting new audience for OOH advertisers."

Western Cape offers more bang for buck and fewer risks for advertisers

Wall says that the Western Cape's OOH market is far less saturated than other provinces such as Gauteng, offering brands the opportunity for their message to generate more attention and resonate more deeply.

However, he warns that the barriers to entry for advertisers can be high, and that due to the City of Cape Town's stringent by-laws, it can take up to two years for a site permit to be granted. "The good news is that the City is generally very compliant, and thus far more of its sites have the necessary approvals in place."

What does this mean for advertisers?

"Media owners will typically invest far more in their Western Cape inventory, as there is little risk of sites being removed due to non-compliance. This means that advertisers stand to benefit from sophisticated technological innovations and more complex infrastructure, as media owners are not scared to use these sites as testing grounds for exciting new executions," he says.

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