



**'Outdoor needs to be more organised in smaller cities & towns to leverage the opportunities'** Strong quarter-on-quarter national GDP growth over the last one year had created expectation of comparable growth in the Indian OOH industry. OOH industry has come out of the slowdown induced-business trough relatively unscathed but the overall outdoor spends are far lower than expected. At the same time, with brands pushing into smaller towns and cities in a major way, new opportunities beckon the outdoor industry in these markets.

**Surojoy Banerjee, CEO, HANSA Outdoor**

, talks about the industry trends and challenges in an interview to **network2media's Rajiv Raghunath**

. HANSA Outdoor is part of the R K SWAMY HANSA Group, a leading marketing communications and services group serving over 150 leading companies from 18 offices across eight cities in India and USA. Excerpts:

**Year 2010 was the big hope for the Indian OOH industry, coming out of two rather difficult years. Are you satisfied with the way business has shaped up?**

Outdoor spends have declined considerably post the recessionary phase. This phase saw a time of correction in outdoor prices where supply far exceeded the demand for outdoor media across major markets. For example, many large players within the telecom sector have curtailed their spends on the outdoor over the past two years.

The launch of a new brand/service usually creates a spike in spends as far as the outdoor business is concerned. There have been many brand launches in various categories over the last fiscal till date but their spends in the outdoor have not been large enough to satisfy the growing appetite of the outdoor business.

**With key consumer brands making major forays into non-metro cities and towns, do you think the OOH industry will need to direct greater attention on these markets?**

Because of intense competition in tier 1 & 2 markets, consumer brands have been keenly focusing on tier 3, 4 and 5 markets since these markets offer greater opportunities in terms of an untapped consumer base. Under such circumstances, the outdoor as a medium can play a key role to help a brand showcase itself within such a market at a very low entry cost since the cost of outdoor media in such markets is relatively low compared to tier 1 & 2 markets. The outdoor in such markets becomes relevant for a brand since television still has limited reach. Also, the outdoor as a localised medium works effectively to boost the retail visibility of brands within these markets. Therefore, the outdoor media in these markets need to be far more organised and disciplined to encourage national brands to advertise in them.

**Do you see a greater number of brands entering the OOH fold? If not, please explain what will it take to grow the base?**

The number of brands/categories using the outdoor media has been steadily growing over the past few years. Currently, the outdoor media across the country is largely utilised by sectors such as telecom, banking and financial services, insurance, satellite television and automobiles.

A lot of brands/categories shy away from the outdoor primarily because their advertising budgets are not adequate enough to deal with the rising costs of this medium. Also, the lack of a common currency to evaluate the medium dissuades many brands from showcasing their message on outdoors.

The presence of an adequate mechanism to evaluate the outdoor media and a mechanism to regulate pricing of outdoor media will encourage many other brands/categories to adopt this medium.

**What is the growth outlook of HANSA Outdoor over the next three years?**

Consolidation of revenues from our existing business and growth from new business categories.

**What is the best way that brands can break out of the clutter in the metro OOH markets? Is innovation the preferred route?**

There is no single or best method to help a brand stand out of the clutter. The ability to create multiple visibility opportunities to address the relevant TG and the ability to create a larger than life imagery of the brand within these spaces could help a brand stand out amidst the visual congestion in any market place.

**Would you consider digital OOH displays as a key part of a campaign?**

Digital OOH displays are the media of the future. They are far more engaging by virtue of the fact that they are dynamic and have the ability to do more as compared to static displays. They can be made an integral part of the entire OOH campaign provided they are priced reasonably.

**Are you in support of the campaign execution norms laid down by national and regional OOH associations, such as on credit period, minimum campaign period?**

We support all norms that create a healthy business relationship between all the stakeholders of the business. [You can contact Surojoy Banerjee here](#)