

GUEST COLUMN

# Cinema advertising rides on digitisation wave

Advertising in cinema halls is gaining appeal among advertisers because of the structured manner in which inventory is sold post digitisation

The digital era has truly democratised cinema. Prior to the digital era, only about 500-600 screens across India got movies on the day of release. Now, with almost 100 per cent digitisation, all screens across India qualify as release centres. Prior to digitisation, advertising was limited to the 600 release centres across the country. Now, all 8,000-odd digital screens across India are available to advertisers who can use cinema to reach out not only to the audiences in metros and major cities, but further beyond.



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Cinema advertising was always a part of out of home budgets. This is because the investment was made in cinema halls as properties and limited to 600 properties across India. Now with nearly 8,000 digital screens screening fresh content, providing over ₹7.7 crore of unduplicated reach every week, the cinema space has become a powerful medium and is being seen as an important option to support television as a medium.

In the last 20 years, the big brands had moved away from cinema as a medium and had focused on TV as an audio-visual medium. This was because of the lack of control of independent screen owners and limited reach of the release

centres.

Now digital cinema chains have aggregated release centres across the country and the execution of campaigns has become seamless. This has led agencies and brand managers take a fresh look at the medium. The advertiser needs to now only talk to one media owner to execute a pan-India campaign.

To summarise, cinema advertising is gaining appeal among advertisers because of two major reasons: the structured manner in which ad inventory is sold (versus a largely fragmented market prior to digitisation) and the fact

that it guarantees the undivided attention of captive audiences.

In geographic clusters with limited TV reach, brands struggle to get desired deliveries through television. With disproportionate cinema reach in these markets, cinema naturally becomes a preferred medium to support TV.

For example, Andhra Pradesh has over 1,200 screens and these collectively deliver over ₹ one crore weekly unduplicated reach. This is substantial and enough to excite the brands wanting to grow in this market.

There are various tools available to advertisers such as TAM, RAM and IRS for measuring the effectiveness of TV,



AJAY MOHANTY

radio and print. Cinema is still not organised on the ticketing front and it is difficult to measure footfalls. However, thanks to the media, the box office collections of movies are now monitored by the minute and is being discussed on var-

ious fora. This serves as a great tool for advertisers to monitor ROI. For example, if a movie delivers ₹100 crore collection in 10 days, with the average ticket price in the country at ₹55, advertisers can easily calculate the reach of the movie. In this

case, it would be ₹1.82 crore in 10 days.

On an average, 30 movies are released every week in 30 different languages. So brands now see cinema as a set of 30 movie channels showcasing 30 new movies every week, having a TSV (time

spent viewing) of 3 hours per viewer and servicing 30 languages.

Unlike TV, radio or print, cinema is just a platform and the same screen can draw demographically completely different audiences for every film. Brands with mass appeal find great efficiency in using this medium. Cinema as a medium is a lot like cricket these days.

Over the last few years, brands have gone beyond using stars and have invested in film partnerships and sponsored film premieres on TV. Most brands have learnt that this invest-

ment on films is full of risks and it is better for them to invest in cinema. Smart brands have also understood that India goes to watch movies every week and that of 52 weeks available, 20-25 weeks are really big weeks, including weeks with holidays and festivals that draw maximum crowd. Brands make it a point to catch up with their audiences during these big weeks. More than 1,500 movies are released every year and brands don't want to limit themselves to the use of four/five movies.

Over the last two years, cinema advertising has grown faster than all other mediums (except online/digital). The next five years will see hectic activity in this space and the next leg of growth will come from off-screen activation. 🐘

**Advertising in cinema halls guarantees the undivided attention of captive audiences**