

Pioneering the DOOH wave

DOOH hardware manufacturers see a DOOH wave in the making that will lend spurs to the OOH industry



By Pray Jani

A little over a decade ago, the transit infrastructure in the country was outmoded, and most of the brand advertising at such locations were at best minimalist. But, with the transit infrastructure undergoing massive upgradation, the advertising at the transit locations also got a major makeover. The airports in the metro and mini-metro cities, metro rail networks, and even railway stations illustrate this change. Today, brand advertising at the airports, for instance, is not about mere static displays, but are dynamic and highly engaging. DOOH media has principally catalysed this makeover. The switch to DOOH for advertising at the transit locations, or for that matter, in many other OOH locations, is gradual. The media owners have carefully treaded the DOOH landscape owing to certain downside risks in investing in this tech-driven, capital heavy media.

Outdoor Asia spoke to some of the key suppliers of DOOH media hardware, both indigenous and international, to gain insights on the domestic market demand for DOOH solutions. A decade ago, digital media equipment cost a “fortune” and had to be imported.

Manish Gundigara, Vertical Head – Infrastructure, PSU at LG explains that when DOOH media opportunities came on the scene, a few media owners did invest in the DOOH hardware and software solutions, but their efforts ran aground owing to poor RoI.





Technology itself was not so evolved then to deliver great DOOH advertising experience. **Monik Madhwani, Director of Woohoo Screens**, points out that back then traditional LED DIP (Double in-line Package) chips were used for advertising display screens that produced about 4 lumens per LED. Moreover, each LED chip was capable of emitting only one colour, so a bigger screen was required to create an image.

DOOH technologies have come a long way since. Today, the SMD (Surface Mounted Diode) LED delivers high efficiency. The LED, soldered on the circuit board, gives out multiple colours with a capacity of emitting up to 100 lumens. The same is used on digital media making it cost effective, and enhances the quality of display. The DOOH display screen cost has come down by up to 60%.

The DOOH growth opportunity will also be augmented by the current policy environment. **Puneet Sethi, Vice President, Consumer Electronics Enterprise Business, Samsung India** believes that the government will strongly back the digital revolution.



“The demand in India will be fuelled by digitisation initiatives by the government and digital shift in branding options by brands,” he says.

Likewise, LG is looking to leverage the DOOH growth opportunities in India. “Certainly, India has a lot of potential but the stringent laws on DOOH advertising is a limiting factor,” says Manish Gundigara. “However, there is a lot of conversion to DOOH seen at the malls and airports, which is a positive sign.”

LG is offering its WebOS platform with built-in memory

and super-sign software to cater to the emerging needs of the OOH industry. The LG LCD LED backlit indoor and semi outdoor displays are also hitting the markets – they are suited to 24x7 operation and ensure high brightness of screen displays of up to 4000cd/m2.

Manish add that’s the DOOH growth will augmented by the opportunity to “combine data-driven targeting with powerful, dynamic creatives.”

Similarly, MagicINFO, Samsung Display Solution’s proprietary software, has been developed for content management. A well accepted technology, “MagicINFO enables content teams to update message designs and schedules from any location at any time. It manages advertising content on DOOH Media so consumers can view product information right away,” says Puneet.

“All the major international and local players are present in this market. We are cognizant of the competition and at the same time committed to offer our customers the best quality products with highest possible value perception,” he adds.



Atenti Origins Photoelectricity Consort is another company that has been looking at the Indian DOOH market with great intent. The firm claims to have developed appropriate all-weather digital screens that can withstand the Indian weather conditions.



Rajneesh Rawat, Managing Director of Atenti Origins Photoelectricity Consort says the key differentiator of his firm’s media solutions is that “our media has 4-6 layers of PSB (a digital display pressure sensor) which makes our product steadier than the other offerings in the market that have only 1 or 2 layers.”



With the software solutions for content management on DOOH media becoming increasingly important for the business, the company tied up with Broadsign to take to the market an open platform that allows seamless software integration. Some of the Indian DOOH hardware companies are already manufacturing



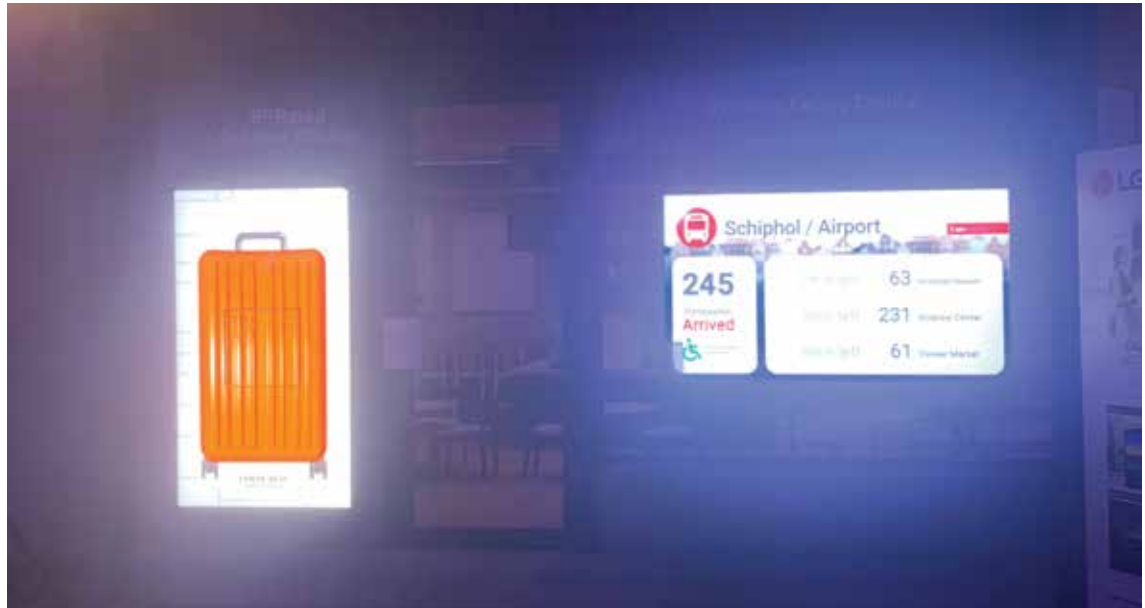



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the equipment in India. The DOOH suppliers market is getting highly competitive. Surat-based Wooahoo Screens has tied up with Samsung to come up with state-of-the-art solutions for the Indian market. Monik observes that the ensuing competition is healthy for the business. With more players entering the fray, a DOOH solutions eco-system is taking shape, he reckons. Although many of the Indian DOOH hardware manufacturing firms are still at an early stage of development, they will be able to take advantage of the eco-system to accelerate their development.

The DOOH formats are varied, and the hardware solutions required for each format have to be carefully designed and developed. Added to that, the solutions developed for outdoor application have to be resilient to India's different climatic conditions. Hence, the media units placed in the outdoor environment are required to have brighter displays for better visibility in daylight, and they ought to be water-proof (which can be done by providing a silicon layer between the LEDs to prevent water seepage. The silicon layer is not provided for units meant for indoor displays).

As the domestic DOOH hardware manufacturer step up the quality of their offerings, there is more competition for the solutions that are imported into the country. Add to that, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had mandated that that imported technologies need to be

BIS certified. In a way, that has placed curbs on cheap imports, which augurs well for the domestic suppliers.


At a broad level, "the DOOH growth potential in India is immense. The DOOH industry has seen 20%-25% growth in the last couple of years and that trend is expected to continue over the next couple of years,"





says **Atul Jasra, Business Head (India) - Philips branded Digital Signage Solutions.** However, the current growth trends are way behind the potential of the market. He is of the view that while the local DOOH manufacturers have come up with their own solutions, it would be a challenge for them to ensure the highest quality standards.

Phillips has explored the transit media options across the country with their pan-India presence. "Certainly, India is a price sensitive market and the clients have a keen eye for value from their investment. But they also understand that investing in high quality media is more prudent. The Phillips brand has a good lineage in the





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Indian market and it is the trust factor in the company that works for us," says Atul.

When it comes to the hardware installations, there are several aspects that define the durability of the media. The most decisive of all is the soldering material. There are two options there, namely copper and aluminium. Aluminium is comparatively an economic solution, but not durable. Copper is more durable but comes at a higher cost.

"We advise our clients to use copper soldering as the cost of ownership is lower compared to aluminium soldering that calls for constant monitoring and maintenance. And in this industry, brands cannot afford downtime, so copper material is more advantageous even if it has a high initial cost" says Monik.

How willing is the Indian market to spend a little extra for better quality? There is a general consensus among the suppliers that the buyers are receptive to better quality solutions even if they come at a higher cost. Clients have a long term plan of over 5 years, which requires them to purchase the media after careful consideration. This has enabled LG to come up with high quality LED with gold wire bonding, high refresh rate, powered with pre- and post-sales support. This is not only durable but LG perceives it as a viable solution as well.

"DOOH requires smart solutions and not just hardware. Once a digital displayscreen is installed, maintaining and supporting it becomes equally important," maintains Xtreme Media, which has a CMS (Content Management System) that is compatible with DOOH billboards, kiosks and digital signages. With such compatibility, the client is able to manage the campaigns from a single set-up.

solution." Today, the backend software is a pivotal addition that did not exist so prominently earlier.

Woohoo Screens has come up with its own CMS to support automation, scheduling ads, managing the campaign remotely and so on. Atul adds, "Software is the soul of the unit". Philips was apparently the first to introduce android-based signage, making campaign roll-outs and monitoring possible from a single monitor or server.

China has seen DOOH growth much before India has experienced it. For a long time, media owners used to import the hardware components from China and assemble them in their factories. Speaking of Chinese indulgence, many Chinese companies have been actively contributing to the Indian DOOH market. Speaking to Outdoor Asia, **Linda Xiao, Sales Director – India, Shenzhen Leyard Opto-Electronics**, says "the Indian market is indeed growing quickly. However, there are several low quality LED screens and video walls being sold. This is perhaps due to lack of experience and knowledge from the end-users regarding the products."



For Indian companies, DOOH has become a space of innovation. "The products are becoming available at a steadier cost," says Linda. "At the moment LED video wall has changed from mostly project-based to more popular consumers' market, hence, distribution channel network for LED display is forming up in India," she added.

How is the company contributing to the Indian DOOH market, is an important question that needed to be answered. "Leyard is promoting full range of our LED module pixel pitch ranging from P1.5 to P10, SV & USV series through our distribution network with more cost-effective option for different vertical markets. At present Led video wall in India is not fully organized, In future, we believe it will be more saturated as Brand-led market" said Linda. They have been introducing latest hardware technologies in India which not only takes the market forward but also educates the indigenous players about the technological advancements and innovative paths to take. ●



Sanket Rambhia, Director, Xtreme Media, says, "We don't offer off-the-shelf products like our Chinese counterparts. Our focus has always been to understand the customer problem and market dynamics and propose a comprehensive



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