



# Q&A



March 31, 2021



COMMB spoke with Brandon Kirk, Vice-President of Client Solutions at Rogers Sports & Media, to hear about the company's recent entry into the OOH space. We explore the various markets that Rogers Sports & Media will focus on, and we find out more about their recent acquisition of Rouge Media and partnership with Vertical Impression. Brandon offers some fascinating insights on breaking into OOH!



## What were the deciding factors for Rogers Sports & Media to get into OOH at this time? How did the opportunity come about?

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“We’ve been thinking about for OOH for a number of years. We’ve always been excited about the channel, and it was a matter of the right opportunity that would best deliver on our omnichannel offering.


It’s an area where we are expanding as it gives our customers the ability to connect with different audiences at different locations throughout the day. It’s also an amazing complement to our diverse suite of offerings at RSM. While Rouge was a timely acquisition opportunity, Vertical Impression is a unique partnership across not only Rogers Sports and Media but also Rogers for Business on a connectivity level.

Prior to the pandemic OOH was approaching the half billion-dollar level as a business, and while the pandemic poses challenges now, we believe the industry will quickly return and surpass 2019 levels coming out of COVID. This will be driven through key areas of focus.

First, I think it will be incumbent on us to tell a very accurate story consistently on traffic/foot fall patterns, how they are growing coupled with proof on the efficacy of our offerings.

Second, would be the continued advancement and optimization of programmatic and related tools that drive process and planning efficiency.

Third, would be increased promotion of OOH in the omnichannel approach. This is about the demonstration of how it complements other media platforms and of course how can we better retarget consumers exposed to OOH faces through digital touchpoints. We are getting way better at understanding the customer journey through data and OOH represents a huge opportunity to drive results for partners as part of overarching ideas and solutions that can solve a marketer’s problem.”



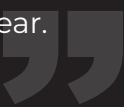
Can you provide context with regards to your acquisition of Rouge Media and partnership with Vertical Impression, and why these were strategic initial endeavours into OOH for Rogers Sports & Media?



With Rouge we are excited about a unique network across **three key categories:** bars/restaurants, college/university campuses, and hair salons/barber shops

With Vertical Impression, we saw an opportunity to incorporate a growing segment in the OOH market, residential DOOH, into our overall offering. Their screens allow our advertising partners to be the first thing people see as they leave their apartments, and the last thing before they return home. On top of this, their audience detection tech and real-time ad targeting options complement our overall strategy to focus on advanced advertising offerings. The fact that their traffic levels weathered the pandemic so well was a factor, but really, it's their strategic positioning close to people's homes and audience data that made them a great fit for our overall offering.

In both cases we have added local and national scale to our portfolio, and this is very important to us. Rogers Sports & Media can be a solution for maximum national exposure, and it also offers the most precise targeting solutions through our Advanced suite of products, in addition to our outstanding local offerings and media brands. "With Rouge and Vertical Impression, we've added close to 4,000 digital and static faces, and a network that will be closer to 5,000 OOH faces by the end of this year.



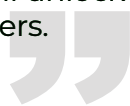


## How does OOH fit in with Rogers Sports & Media's other media assets and / or business units?

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It was a missing piece in many ways, and I can't tell you how excited we are to now be in the space. Rogers Sports and Media is a very large sales operation that includes local and national sales executives. We are multiplatform in focus and while we are experts in television, advanced, digital, radio and publishing, OOH is new to us and today, it's about continuing to build our strength in this area with the team of experts who joined us in January, and partners in all areas of the media and marketing ecosystem. We want to be strong in the OOH space and we are committed to making the industry stronger by focusing on being better every day. I think we bring a fresh perspective to the platform and we think the opportunities are endless. With RSM it's about premium content and strong brands... finding ways to extend this strategy to the OOH platform is a natural progression that will create even stronger connections with audiences and will unlock more value for our advertising partners.



Q. What are Rogers Sports & Media's ambitions for the short term and long term in the OOH space? Are you planning any new acquisitions?

“In the short term our focus is on building trust in the marketplace with our new suite of OOH offerings and providing increased visibility around their strengths, efficacy and value as an exciting extension to our existing portfolio. In this process, feedback has been critical as it's important we prioritize around the areas of growth that will deliver the best visibility and value for our partners. As mentioned, we are aggressively expanding in this space.”



## Which markets are a priority for Rogers Sports & Media in Canada and why?

“Rogers Sports & Media is a combination of very strong national and local brands including Sportsnet, Citytv, OMNI, OLN, FX and over 57 leading radio stations. With OOH we’ll look to where we can drive opportunity across platforms. On the Vertical Impression side, we’re working with them to expand their inventory in the GTA, Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa, Edmonton, and Calgary. They’re already the national residential leader, but there are many more towers that could benefit from installing their screens. In terms of our campus, restaurant/bar and salon network, we’ll take a similar approach by focusing on opportunities in the markets where we can see the most incremental value.”

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What excites you the most about moving into the OOH space and what are some of your early concerns or pitfalls to avoid?

“What excites us most is potential. COVID has created challenges for the OOH industry, but the light at the end of the tunnel is continuing to get brighter. As mentioned, it's critical to focus on the audience story and innovation that will build confidence and excite partners about the positive direction for this industry.”





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