



Outdoor

Billboards have come a long way since the Burma Shave days. From the first advertising mural painted on the side of a building to today's animated "diamond vision" boards, outdoor advertising is an established part of the great American landscape. If it stands or rolls, chances are it has an advertisement on it. Bus sides, transit shelters, sidewalk benches, even privately owned automobiles, all reflect the value the business community sees in making their name visible to the public.

Many of today's billboards are impressive. Vinyl technology provides advertisers with the ability to display images that are photographic in quality. Diamond Vision technology is turning some billboards into giant flat screen televisions. Inflatable and structural attachments make an advertiser's message 3-D. These technologically evolved billboards do more than create visual impressions; they create word-of-mouth message proliferation.

Still, there are distinct limitations to what outdoor messages can achieve. While outdoor is effective at brand maintenance (assuming an adequate number of boards are bought), it is ineffective at initial branding. Due to the minute amount of time consumers can spend reading them, billboard messages must be brief. Some experts recommend no more than eight words. As a result, comprehensive messages cannot be conveyed with a billboard. Advertisers regularly must alter the messages they communicate to consumers. Marketing situations such as new locations, new departments, new products or services, and special events all require a new message. However, changing messages on existing billboards is cost-prohibitive and require significant amounts of time to accomplish.

For all these reasons, Radio is the perfect partner for outdoor advertising. Not only can Radio do the things that outdoor cannot, we do them all cost-efficiently. And considering the primary purpose of billboards is to reach consumers in their cars, can you think of a more compatible medium than Radio?

And by the way ... the Burma Shave outdoor campaign was brilliant.

Advantages

Attention Grabbing: The combination of size, color and illumination attracts attention.

Strategic Placement: Billboards can be placed in high-traffic areas or other strategic locations, while transit signs can be affixed to the backs and sides of buses, in bus stops, and in rail stations.

Low Cost: Based on research by the Outdoor Advertising Association of

America, outdoor's cost-per-thousand is significantly lower than any other advertising medium.

Building Word of Mouth: Billboards can generate curiosity in "teaser" campaigns.

Full-Time Audience: Outdoor's message can appear year-round. For additional fees, outdoor advertisers can purchase evening lighting – or in some cases, even 24-hour illumination.

Directional: Billboards can be used as directionals, guiding consumers to the location of a given business.

Disadvantages

Brevity: The very nature of outdoor advertising demands that the commercial message be brief and relatively simple. Therefore, it is difficult to communicate product details, competitive advantages, and specific consumer benefits. Billboard companies generally recommend no more than seven words on a billboard, or people speeding by will not have time to read the message.

Limited Availability: Prime outdoor locations (in high-traffic areas) often are controlled by large, long-term advertisers. Construction of new billboards is restricted by costs, space availability, and sometimes-rigid municipal codes and environmental regulations.

Lack of Effective Measuring Tools: Unlike other advertising media, outdoor advertising has no truly reliable method to measure its effectiveness. A few studies have been done, but they mostly apply to limited geographical areas and employ widely varying methodologies.

Low Recall: Commuters behind the wheel and other potential customers are exposed very briefly to outdoor messages, minimizing message retention. Such adverse conditions as heavy traffic or bad weather also can limit message impact and recall.

Ugly Image: Because of growing environmental concerns, many communities have eliminated, reduced, or limited the volume and placement of outdoor advertising.

Inflexible: Once a message is up, it generally stays up through the duration of the contract, even if the advertiser's needs have changed. In addition, printing a new message is expensive, possibly taking weeks to produce and days or weeks to have it displayed.

Plus Radio

Power of Sound: To be effective, billboard messages must be brief. That's where Radio can help. Use Radio to enhance and expand on the message displayed in your billboard showing.

Recall: Radio blankets the market. Your outdoor message can be seen only where it is displayed, but Radio allows your message to travel with your customers wherever they go – at home or at the office as well as in the car. By combining Radio with outdoor, you can build your message's range and frequency – and reach more of your customers more often building recall.

Personal Connection: The Radio Ad Lab (RAL) shows that Radio listeners enjoy listening to their station and believe the advertiser's message is directed toward them. (*Radio Ad Lab (RAL)*,)

Flexible: Radio gives you the option to easily make copy changes. Use Outdoor for image, and Radio for timely information. A billboard can grab your customers' attention; Radio can give them the details. By combining these two complementary marketing forces, Radio can deliver all the information on your products and services your customers need in order to make intelligent purchasing decisions.

Bad weather and adverse traffic conditions: Both are known to decrease outdoor ad exposure, but Radio listening actually increases under these circumstances. American consumers depend on their car Radios for weather and traffic reports, so billboards and Radio make an effective drive-time combination.