

The Importance of Billboard Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study shows the importance of Billboard advertising. Billboard advertising is effective for building brand awareness and broadcasting your business (or product or campaign) to as many people as possible. Because they're in such busy areas, billboards tend to have the highest number of views and impressions when compared to other marketing methods. The largest billboard available in a campaign is known as the "bulletin," but billboard sizes can vary greatly depending on location. Billboard advertising can be relatively inexpensive depending on the size and location, but the expense must be weighed against the kind of message you want to get across. Billboards are a very quick read, so they shouldn't contain a lot of information. There are regular billboards, and then there are 3D billboards. These really go above and beyond to attract the attention of viewers. Billboard advertisements are designed to catch a person's attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. Billboards advertising afford some distinctive advantages as a marketing tool. This study shows that billboard advertising in marketing has a major contributing factor towards the success of marketing products or companies.

Keywords: Billboard, Advertising, importance, marketing and broadcasting.

INTRODUCTION

Billboard advertising is the process of using a large-scale print advertisement (a billboard, or a hoarding to those in the UK) to market a company, brand, product, service, or campaign. Billboards are typically placed in high traffic areas, such as along highways and in cities, so they're seen by the highest number of drivers and pedestrians. A billboard is a large outdoor advertising structure typically found in high-traffic areas such as alongside busy roads [1] [2]. Billboards present large advertisements to passing pedestrians and drivers. Typically showing witty slogans and distinctive visuals, billboards are highly visible in the top designated market areas. The largest ordinary-sized billboards are located primarily on major highways, expressways or principal arterials, and command high-density consumer exposure (mostly to vehicular traffic). These afford greatest visibility due not only to their size, but because they allow

creative "customizing" through extensions and embellishments. Posters are the other common form of billboard advertising, located mostly along primary and secondary arterial roads. Posters are a smaller format and are viewed principally by residents and commuter traffic, with some pedestrian exposure

Billboard advertising is effective for building brand awareness and broadcasting your business (or product or campaign) to as many people as possible. Because they're in such busy areas, billboards tend to have the highest number of views and impressions when compared to other marketing methods [3]. Essentially, billboards are large posters - a medium that people have used to advertise products and services since the time of the ancient Egyptians. And make no mistake: Billboards are a form of advertising - versus public relations or promotion - because you must pay for the message on display. "A billboard or

bulletin is a large outdoor advertising space that is meant to target and attract the attention of pedestrians and motorists in the surrounding area," says Digital Media [4]. Today's billboards attract attention via several formats:

So-called "static" billboards bear the greatest resemblance to their ancient ancestors, with printed vinyl stretched over a base of wood or aluminum. *Billboard extensions add a three-dimensional element to an otherwise flattened image, with an add-on piece or cutout designed to enhance the billboard's visibility.* Digital billboards provide even greater creative freedom. They "are essentially large computer screens that can be programmed to display messages in a range of innovative ways," B Media Group says. "Things can be as simple as switching between images periodically so that multiple advertisers can cut costs by sharing a single billboard, or they can get more complex by utilizing animation and real-time updates."

The term "billboard" is derived from "billing board," a large outdoor advertising space designed to capture the attention of motorists and pedestrians. Typically placed around automotive and foot high-traffic areas, billboards are meant to be simple and striking. Advertising agency creative departments prize billboard space for its golden opportunity to do groundbreaking, impactful work, but there are some drawbacks as well [5].

Billboard Details

The largest billboard available in a campaign is known as the "bulletin," but billboard sizes can vary greatly depending on location. The typical size is

14 feet high by 48 feet wide. Billboards used to be created using sections of paper pasted together to form one image, but it's more common in the millennium to see digital printing on vinyl material. This allows the entire image to be printed on one sheet, and it can be erected quickly and easily. A billboard buy is usually for 12 weeks, so it's important that the content be at least somewhat evergreen. Billboards are the ideal place for long-term messaging, but anything more reactive should go somewhere else.

Digital billboards allow creative executions that can be personalized, or swapped out with other ads. Clients can sometimes choose to timeshare their ads with other companies, swapping out every few minutes [6].

Billboard Usage

Billboard advertising can be relatively inexpensive depending on the size and location, but the expense must be weighed against the kind of message you want to get across. Billboards are a very quick read, so they shouldn't contain a lot of information.

This type of advertising can be a great option if your campaign is one of awareness and branding, but it should be avoided if you want to convey a lot of information about your product or service. Six words is the ideal amount of copy on a billboard, and that can severely limit your ability to communicate with potential consumers [7].

You should also consider the content and tone of the billboard because this can have some negative side effects. Sexually provocative billboards have caused accidents on roads and motorways—the Wonder bra ads were infamous for this—and you don't want the negative publicity of car accidents being directly linked to your ad campaign or product.

Billboards That Go Beyond

There are regular billboards, and then there are 3D billboards. These really go above and beyond to attract the attention of viewers. Although there are height and width restrictions along with distraction rules in most states and jurisdictions, advertisers can push the boundaries and

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create boards that are newsworthy. Some have used smoke and other special effects, and others have even had real people "living" on them. This type of billboard is generally not much more expensive because the bulk of the cost comes from renting the space rather than production. Creativity like this is worth exploring because it gives you a greater return on investment and media credit, which can draw thousands more eyes to your message [8].

Types of Billboards

Billboard advertisements are designed to catch a person's attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. They have to be readable in a very short time because they are usually read while being passed at high speeds [9] [10]. Thus there are usually only a few words, in large print, and a humorous or arresting image in brilliant color. Some billboard designs spill outside the actual space given to them by the billboard, with parts of figures hanging off the billboard edges or jutting out of the billboard in three dimensions. An example is the United States around the turn of the 21st century was the Chick-fil-A billboards (a chicken sandwich fast food chain), which had three-dimensional cow figures in the act of painting the billboards with misspelled anti-beef slogans such as "frendz don't let frendz eat beef."

The first "scented billboard", an outdoor sign emitting the odors of black pepper and charcoal to suggest a grilled steak, was erected on NC 150 near Mooresville, North Carolina by the Bloom grocery chain. The sign depicted a giant cube of beef being pierced by a large fork that extended to the ground. The scents were emitted between 7-10 am and 4-7 pm from 28 May 2010 through 18 June 2010 [11].

Painted billboards

Almost all billboards are painted in large studios. The image is projected on the series of paper panels that made up the billboard. Line drawings were done, and then traced with a pounce wheel that created perforated lines [12]. The patterns

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were then "pounced" onto the board with a chalk filled pounce bag, marking the outlines of the figures or objects. Using oil paints, artists would use large brushes to paint the image. Once the panels were installed using hydraulic cranes, artists would go up on the installed billboard and touch up the edges between panels. These large, painted billboards were especially popular in Los Angeles where historic firms such as Foster & Kleiser and Pacific Outdoor Advertising dominated the industry. Eventually, these painted billboards gave way to graphic reproduction, but hand-painted billboards are still in use in some areas where only a single board or two is required. The "Sunset Strip" in Los Angeles is one area where hand-painted billboards can still be found, usually to advertise upcoming films or albums [13].

Digital billboards

A digital billboard is a billboard that shows varying imagery and text created from computer programs and software. Digital billboards can be designed to display running text, display several different displays from the same company, and even provide several companies a certain time slot during the day. The constantly changing texts ensure maximum impact and wide exposure to target audiences. The ability to schedule advertisements remotely, in combination with flexible real-time scheduling, has allowed for a decrease in traditional upkeep and maintenance costs. Additionally, digital billboards are continually integrating with real-time advertisement technologies to measure audiences or serve dynamic content. In January 2015, Ooh! Media launched a campaign with Porsche that detected incoming Porsche cars and displayed a dynamic piece of relevant content to Porsche drivers [14].

Mobile billboards

Outdoor Advertising, such as a mobile billboard, is effective because it is difficult to ignore. According to a UK national survey, it is also memorable. Capitol Communications Group found that 81.7% of those polled recalled images they saw on a moving multi-image

sign.[citation needed] This is compared to a 19% retention rate for static signs. Unlike a typical billboard, mobile billboards are able to go directly to their target audience. They can be placed wherever there is heavy foot traffic due to an event - including convention centers, train stations, airports and sports arenas [15]. They can repeat routes, ensuring that an advertiser's message is not only noticed, but that information is retained through repetition.

Multi-purpose billboards

Billboards may be multi-purpose. An advertising sign can integrate its main purpose with telecommunications antenna or public lighting support. Usually the structure has a steel pole with a coupling flange on the above-fitted advertising billboard structure that can contain telecommunications antennas. The lighting, wiring, and any antennas are placed inside the structure [16].

Usages of Billboard

1. Highway

Many signs advertise local restaurants and shops in the coming miles, and are crucial to drawing business in small towns. In some areas the signs were so dense that one almost immediately followed the last. This situation changed after the Highway Beautification Act was passed; the proliferation of Wall Drug billboards is sometimes cited as one of the reasons the bill was passed..

2. Railway

Billboard advertising in underground stations, especially, is perhaps a place where they find a greater degree of acceptability and may assist in maintaining a neat, vibrant and safe atmosphere if not too distracting. Museum Station, Sydney has mounted restored 1940s billboard panels along the platforms that are in keeping with its heritage listing.

3. Big name advertisers

Billboards are also used to advertise national or global brands, particularly in more densely populated urban areas. According to the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, the top billboard advertisers in the United States in 2017 were McDonald's, Apple and GEICO. A

large number of wireless phone companies, movie companies, car manufacturers and banks are high on the list as well.

4. Tobacco and Alcohol advertising

Prior to 1999, billboards were a major venue of cigarette advertising; 10% of Michigan billboards advertise alcohol and tobacco, according to the Detroit Free Press.[26] This is particularly true in countries where tobacco advertisements are not allowed in other media.

5. Non-commercial use

Non-commercial advertisement is used around the world by governments and non-profit organisations to obtain donations, volunteer support or change consumer behavior.

Advantages of a Billboard Advertisement

B Media Group maintains that "digital billboards have brought this advertising tool into the 21st century." Whether or not you agree with this assertion, there is no doubt that billboards afford some distinctive advantages as a marketing tool. Some are obvious - billboards are:

- Huge, and therefore inherently attention-getting (the objective of all forms of advertising). *Best at displaying simple, straightforward messages that most consumers can easily decipher.* Capable of reaching a large and diverse audience, because they are usually placed in locations where they are most likely to be seen [17]. In this way, billboards provide a small business owner with maximum exposure.* Adept at fulfilling consumers' need for multiple "touches" - a marketing term that speaks to the number of exposures a consumer must have with a business before responding to a call for action. This applies especially to motorists who see the same billboards every day on their way to work. Such repetition can deliver value, both in increasing awareness and spurring action.

Other potential advantages of billboard advertising make sense - at least under the right circumstances. Consider that billboards:

- May capture one of the few “captive” audiences left in an ad-happy society. Consumers can zoom through commercials on TV, click off ads on the internet and walk out of the room when a radio ad fails to engage them. But they have to keep their eyes on the road, especially if they're the driver.
- Can spawn an almost immediate increase in sales. This is why the “Aunt Millies” and “Uncle Bobs” of the world - businesses located on highways with quick turn-offs - rely on this advertising medium.
- Allow for more geographically targeted marketing than perhaps any other form of advertising. You may not know who is viewing the message, but you know exactly where they are when they read it. And if you cater to a limited service area, billboards could fit your marketing goals to a T.
- Deliver a low cost per impression. Even an expensive billboard can deliver a low cost per impression if a large number of people see it.

Digital billboards offer several other benefits, namely the ability to:

- Feature a moving (as opposed to static) image. *Display different messages at different times of the day. If Aunt Millie's kitchen is still open after breakfast, a billboard could advertise her lunchtime specials. And if she's open for dinner, it could attempt to lure people with her evening fare.* Stream content from a business's website or social media platform in real time, bringing a compelling symmetry to a marketing campaign [18].

Disadvantages of a Billboard Advertisement

Like that brash, boisterous cousin, billboards can excel at making their presence known. But everyone knows that not all attention is positive or engenders a favorable response. Beyond the size and “tune-out factor” that all advertising can elicit from weary consumers, billboards present some drawbacks. They:

- Are stationary objects that require consumers to rely on their recall ability. In this way, they are markedly different from online ads, which consumers can revisit time and again, and print advertising that consumers can read at their leisure and return to later.* Provide people with precious little information [19]. In fact, depending on who you consult, it's recommended that “billboard type” be confined to no more than 10 words. Such a pithy message might not be enough to buoy sales from consumers who crave information. On the other hand, it could be enough to plant a seed or make an impression, similar to some carmaker billboards that feature a single adjective.
- Offer an extremely brief, if not fleeting, exposure time to absorb the information. But again, depending on the message, speed could be part of the allure.* Usually are a short-term advertising tool, unless you make a commitment to change the message on a monthly basis.
- Make it impossible to target a specific group of people (the flip-side of reaching that large and diverse audience). If your business caters to a specific demographic - say, professional males between the ages of 25 and 45 - billboards provide no guarantee whatsoever that your message will reach them. However, if your business serves a more expansive demographic - or you decide the reach of billboards is worth the cost - you may be willing to overlook this drawback [20].
- Can become casualties of the outdoor elements, right along with the message they contain. Even a billboard you deem affordable could end up being a waste of money and creative time if a long streak of heavy weather strikes your area. But precipitation isn't the only cause of visibility problems. So are 18-wheelers and other large vehicles that may obstruct motorists' vision at the

precise moment they approach your

billboard [21].

CONCLUSION

This study shows that billboard advertising in marketing has a major contributing factor towards the success of marketing products or companies. It should be noted that even though billboard advertising plays a vital role in the operations of the company yet it does not function on its own. But rather, it also depends on the other elements of Integrated Marketing Communication like sales promotion, public relation, personal selling and others to succeed. It was concluded that billboard advertising has the ability to influence customers in their decision making. The cost of a billboard -

and what the same amount of money could buy in the form of other types of advertising - may be one obstacle you are trying to overcome. But there is another concern many small business owners harbor too: They fear billboards may be too "flashy" for their image. More traditional advertising mediums that cater to the masses, and especially radio and TV, might strike you as more suitable, if not more conservative. Only you (not even your marketing team) should settle this issue because you (not your marketing team) will live with the aftermath.

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