



Posterscope is the UK's leading Out-of-Home communications specialist. This is the latest in a series of guides to the medium published by Posterscope's research division, Out-of-Home Horizons. As the series progresses, all the guides will be available on www.posterscope.co.uk

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How to use ...



...Digital Out-of-Home

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A few years ago digital Out-of-Home media was virtually non-existent. Now there are 99 media contractors operating over 50,000 screens in this sector - including Tesco TV, McDonalds and screens on-board trains - allowing advertisers to communicate with audiences in a hugely diverse range of environments.

In 2002 Posterscope launched a division called Hyperspace to ensure that our clients are able to use digital Out-of-Home in the most effective and efficient way. Here we look at what the sector can offer advertisers and some of the issues that require consideration.

What is digital Out-of-Home anyway?

We define digital Out-of-Home media as any screen based opportunity, located outside the home that can carry advertising, as well as technology-driven Out-of-Home media, such as posters that interact with mobile phones or PDA's. We divide these opportunities into two: 'Environmental' screens (ie those located in enclosed spaces e.g shopping centres, music festivals or taxis); and 'Broadcast' screens (ie those in public outdoor locations such as city centres or roadside screens)

The digital Out-of-Home market attracted £8.4m in advertising revenues in 2003 (excluding Piccadilly Circus) and if growth just continues at the current rate it will be worth almost £25m in 2006. Between 2001 and 2003 the value of the market increased by over 200% (see fig 1). So what about the advertiser? Why should they consider using digital Out-of-Home?

Flexibility

Digital Out-of-Home is a very flexible medium; advertisers can buy space by daypart, allowing much more precise targeting and efficient buying. Magners Cider recently advertised on Transvision screens in stations using afternoon and evening spots only. Clearly most of us are unlikely to be enjoying a pint of cider on the way to work!

Similarly Virgin Mobile's cheeky and sometimes controversial copy was only aired in pubs and bars between Thursday and Saturday nights when audiences are feeling more hedonistic and relaxed. Many such digital opportunities are in environments where audiences are very specific and the lack of Ofcom regulations allows copy to be used that is unlikely to be allowed on TV.

Film distributors wishing to advertise 15 or 18+ rated films can also do so without the need to censor trailer content.

With such buying flexibility, campaign flighting or weighting can be approached more innovatively, for instance by increasing the weight of advertising as a product launch date approaches, or upweighting on key days of the week.

Fast copy changes

With copy that is delivered electronically tease and reveal campaigns can be easily incorporated, as can copy changes when competitors become active (great opportunity for spoiler campaigns) or when market conditions and advertising requirements change. Advertisers in the financial sector can ensure that figures are up to date, travel advertisers can promote specific late deals (and remove ads when places are full) and record labels can react to un-



Hand dryer screens

pected artist success or chart position. Those in the media sectors can convey the latest news - whether that be serious headlines or gossip. As copy is created and delivered electronically it is now no more expensive to make executions specific to individual screen locations. Address of nearest retailer, showroom or cinema can be incorporated into the copy at the touch of a button.

Digital Out-of-Home reaches the places that other media can't

Despite the breadth of existing Out-of-Home media, there have always been places where media are scarce or non-existent. Boots, for example, has been a notoriously difficult place to promote your product, but they are currently trialling screen networks, as are many other retailers. Similarly, less obvious environments have digital networks enabling advertisers to maximise relevance - Columbia Tri-Star's film XxX is full of snow-related stunts, hence the screens in extreme sports centres provided a perfect fit, as did Match Day Media's network of plasma screens in football stadia for Guinness' sport-related copy.

Interactivity

Allowing consumers to interact rather than passively consume advertising can potentially result in much more engaging and effective communications. Sony Ericsson tapped into this when they allowed viewers to send photos of themselves and their friends from mobile phones on the station concourse to the giant screens above them. Audi used personal screens in hair salons to allow consumers to touch the screen and view detailed information about their A3.

An interactive poster system called Hypertag takes a different approach, enabling consumers to download information, pictures, ringtones and even games, directly from a chip embedded into poster sites via infra red.

Planning

Digital Out-of-Home is consumed in very different ways to TV, when people are in an 'Out-of-Home' mindset, but is also implemented in a different way to other forms of Out-of-Home media. There are, therefore, a number of planning issues which need to be considered. Hyperspace is uniquely positioned to advise on these issues, which include:

The screens: Is the correct type and number of screens being used? With the array of options available to contractors it is important for media planners and buyers to understand, for each environment, whether LCD is preferable to plasma, or whether a dynascan really is appropriate. Is rear projection or LED better for large format screens?

'Editorial' content: Planners need to be aware whether this is necessary, given the environment, audience and media consumption. Passengers on the underground for example would watch ads for the sake of it whilst waiting for trains, whereas on a station concourse, where there is a plethora of other distractions, engaging content is essential. Advertiser-funded programming, or ads as content (for example, film trailers), are becoming perfectly plausible.

Ideal spot length: This will vary depending on environment, editorial content and how audiences consume the media. For example, a consumer is unlikely to view an entire 30 second ad whilst moving through a supermarket aisle, but in a doctor's surgery waiting room this is quite feasible, as content is engaging and dwell time high.

Optimum frequency: There are many opposing views as to how many times per hour your ad should be aired and these are often based on how much space a contractor needs to fill. Hence insightful opinions are required, as demonstrated in fig 3, which analyses product sales vs frequency of advertising.

Creative: In some cases a TV ad can simply be adapted to become suitable for digital Out-of-Home, but in many instances this is not appropriate. Fortunately, development of an ad needn't cost the earth (and in some cases Hyperspace can arrange for media owners to fund work).

Accountability: This covers two issues: has my ad actually been aired and (realistically) how many people have seen it. With copy being delivered electronically the former is easily measurable via transmission reports. However the issue of audience measurement is far more complex. Digital media consumption habits vary enormously from TV and audiences are not measured by BARB. So to help solve the accountability issue Hyperspace have developed a tool called Prism Screen. This provides realistic, directly comparable audience delivery data for every digital Out-of-Home opportunity, allowing us to benchmark plans and ensure best rates.

Fig 1 Digital OOH market revenues

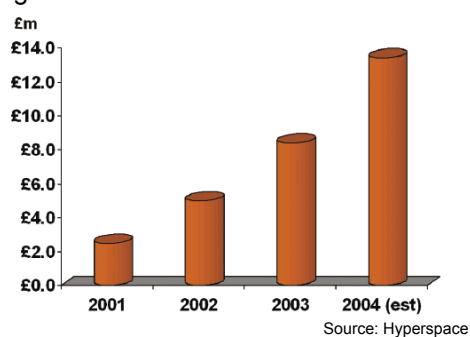
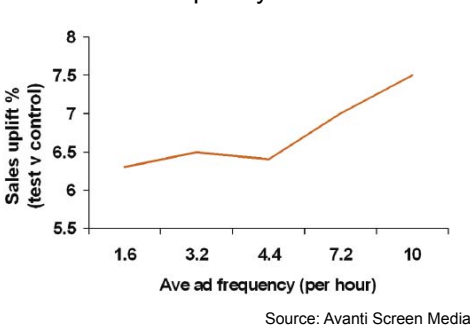


Fig 2 Sales uplifts by environment



Fig 3 Bar screens - frequency v sales



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Screens onboard trains



Transvision - Sony Ericsson

