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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

How to use Outdoor...



... to reach opinion formers

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You could argue that almost all advertising is targeting opinion-formers. We all form opinions, and in most cases advertisers want us to form the opinion that their product or service is worth buying.

Although the phrase “opinion formers” is usually used more narrowly than this, it remains susceptible to several definitions. In marketing terms we may variously consider opinion formers to be: people at the cutting edge of fashion, those whose sense of style is respected by others, “early adopters” of new technology, business decision-makers, or those in any part of society who are involved in a significant change in accepted behaviour.

What they all have in common is that Out-of-Home can reach them.

Out-of-Home reaches the hard-to-reach

What many of the groups we might label “opinion formers” have in common is that they can be hard to reach. Of the opinion formers we want to reach many will be light TV viewers. Business decision-makers work long hours; trendy style-leaders are out all the time. They’re also the kind of people who screen out ads. But both research and common sense tell us that Out-of-Home is extremely hard to avoid.

Out-of-Home targets fashion leaders

The advertising for many fashion and beauty brands revolves around an iconic image, making Outdoor the perfect medium for creating impact, whether it’s the classic Calvin Klein black and white photography on large-format sites or David Beckham promoting Police sunglasses. The ongoing campaign for FCUK makes the most of Out-of-Home’s power to convey a simple, striking image or idea. Fashion targeting younger age groups can also benefit from the urban/street association of the medium, as well as its increasing ability to reach them within bars and other venues. Puma – competing against Nike (on a smaller budget) – used Out-of-Home to reach students, advertising only on screens in student unions. Cool creative, but only to be seen within the campus, so building a strong link with the target audience.

You’ve either got or you haven’t got style – Out-of-Home has

The increasing number of non-traditional Out-of-Home opportunities offers an effective way of reaching a hip, style-conscious audience. Smirnoff Black Ice was initially launched to target cool style-setters. The communications channels used included placing cards in the pockets of clothing in stylish shops and placing branded “white labels” in independent record stores. Having snagged these early adopters, Out-of-Home then also offered the more traditional formats that allowed the campaign to broaden out to a wider audience.

Not that you need niche formats to reach a niche audience. Following the successful use of Out-of-Home to launch the new Mini, the medium was again used to promote the MINI Cooper S. The new model was at a premium of more than double the cost of a standard small car. The advertising had to be spot on to interest the style-setters, who would understand the qualities of the car and pay this premium. The advertising was a mix of 48 sheets and special builds. The special builds were seen to capture the spirit of the MINI Cooper S – fun, impressive, fashionable, modern, small yet big. The

advertising suggested a mini epic, and successfully communicated the desired messages – legendary, an icon, always in style, a driving adventure – to its audience. The MINI Cooper S sold out immediately.

Early adopters latch onto Out-of-Home

Apple turns again and again to Out-of-Home to launch its new products, targeting people who are both style-conscious and early adopters of new technology. For the launch of the new generation iMac they wanted to maximise reach of early adopters and early majority purchasers, who would be personal and business users at the top end of the purchasing ladder. Launching in February with short daylight hours, the campaign was planned as the biggest-ever backlight only campaign in London. The mix of the simple, stylised creative, backlit on the London streets, delivered the sharp image that gave the product a unique vitality on the street.

Apple also used Out-of-Home heavily to promote its iPod, the bold, colourful creative work proving immediately effective in helping to propel this gadget into the centre of cultural discussion.

Out-of-Home can influence behaviour...

You only have to look at the trouble some “legacy brands” are facing to realise that consumers aren’t just changing what they buy, they’re changing the way they buy. As the pace of change increases, more and more new products and services will be asking consumers to re-think the way they behave. Ocado – the Waitrose on-line grocery shopping service – is a perfect example, at the forefront of a revolution in shopping. Naturally, it was launched directly to all existing John Lewis and Waitrose Account customers, but there was no guarantee that this group would be the early adopters to on-line grocery shopping necessary to Ocado’s success. And anyway, such a new service isn’t simply an added value to existing customers; it’s also a perfect vehicle to take away business from rivals. So Ocado has used carefully selected Out-of-Home routes – primarily on the Underground – to target its London-based, ready-for-change consumers.

...and alter our way of thinking

Surely a candidate for the most effective advertising ever must be the Conservative’s 1979 poster, headlined “Labour isn’t working”. This aimed to reach the biggest group of opinion formers in the country – the UK voting population. The success has been well documented and the creative re-examined at every election since, as the political parties continue to em-



Ocado.com

ploy the visual power of Out-of-Home to sway public opinion in their favour.

Out-of-Home influences business decisions

Business decision-makers are hard to pin down. Out-of-Home manages to do just that. International business travellers can be reached with great precision, using airport advertising, which can be planned based on arrivals for specific destination or at specific check-in-desks. The Orange Business campaign, targeting decision makers in companies who have an input on the choice of company mobile phone supplier, recognised that tightly targeting one audience would be missing the point. The “opinion former” here could be anyone – Finance Director, Managing Director, Office Manager, IT department, PA to any of the above, the receptionist or someone in Procurement. 48-sheets in carefully planned locations covered all the bases.

Similarly, one of the Out-of-Home medium’s most famous and award-winning campaigns takes a wider view of opinion formers. The Economist doesn’t just want to reach existing business leaders. It also has to convince all the wannabe business leaders that the magazine will help them reach their aim. It’s hard to argue with the success of this campaign – who doesn’t know that missing an issue of The Economist would leave them vulnerable in the boardroom?

Reaching opinion formers isn’t always enough

As several of these examples have illustrated, many (most?) campaigns targeted at opinion formers must also reach a wider audience. It’s no use Fashion leaders, style gurus, and early adopters owning the coolest products if the rest of us haven’t got a clue that they’re cool. The wide variety of formats available in Out-of-Home, from extremely niche “ambient” vehicles through to the broadcast power of 96-sheets, make it the ideal medium to reach both the opinion formers and the “approvers”.



Apple - iMac



Conservative Party

“THE ADVERTISING FOR MANY FASHION AND BEAUTY BRANDS REVOLVES AROUND AN ICONIC IMAGE, MAKING OUTDOOR THE PERFECT MEDIUM FOR CREATING IMPACT.”



The New MINI Cooper S



Smirnoff Black Ice