

Why OOH campaigns should think beyond the billboard

Article



Out-of-home (OOH) campaigns in big cities need diversity in OOH formats so more of the target audience sees the ads without advertisers necessarily spending more, according to Brian Rappaport, CEO of OOH agency Quan Media Group.

Billboards account for the majority of OOH ad spend in the US, but that percentage dropped slightly last year (74.3% in Q3 2023 versus 76.3% in Q1 2023, per the Out Of Home

Advertising Association Agency of America's Q3 2023 data). That leaves room for other creative campaigns, from wrapping subways to playing tutorial videos on public transit.

New York City [digital grocer](#) FreshDirect's new out-of-home (OOH) campaign, which expanded upon the brand's partnership with the Yankees, included a wrapped subway train to the stadium, a co-branded delivery truck, a branded terrace to watch the games, and tote bags.

“[FreshDirect] doesn't seem like they're a brand that ever is complacent when it comes to running out-of-home,” said Rappaport, who worked directly with FreshDirect on the creative campaign.

Quan uses audience insights tools and anonymous [mobile](#) data to build a heatmap of where potential consumers spend time and then buys multiple formats within that area. “There's hundreds of different formats, and to truly see success in out-of-home you should have a holistic media plan,” said Rappaport.

There are plenty of examples of these “non-complacent” out-of-home ads, which push the format in new ways.

- FreshDirect [partnered with So Yummy](#) to create recipe video ads on digital screens in the subway, which also included QR codes to buy the recipe's ingredients.
- [Cheetos recently incorporated](#) two real crashed cars in front of a billboard that jokes about the dangers of eating Cheetos while driving.
- McDonalds launched a [scented billboard](#) in the Netherlands.

OOH success is hard to measure compared with a display or search ad where clicks and conversions can be tied to specific campaigns. FreshDirect leverages brand lift studies to confirm lifts in awareness and in conversions. “We have a media mix model in place that we use that proves the ROI on out-of-home and helps us when we're making the case to invest heavily in the subway or train wraps,” said Amanda Temes, marketing director at FreshDirect.

Events like sports and concerts offer OOH opportunities for brands. Billboards like the ones seen during the [Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival](#) take advantage of places where dwell time may be high due to traffic or public transit use and of people taking pictures to post on social media. They also allow advertisers to align themselves with events that fit brand identity.

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