

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING: A FIT CASE FOR INDIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT:

In the age of aggressive marketing, advertising plays an important role to influence the buying behavior of customers. The advertising is also considered as one of the most important tools of brand marketing for the business. Advertising has the potential to popularize a product and eventually drive sales for the product. In a country like India, marketers heavily depend upon advertising. The overall impact of advertising on customers and potential buyers is quite high. The evolution of online advertising media has been a major turning point for advertisers and marketers. With online advertising dominating other ad media, brand owners are heavily advertising through the various means of online advertising. Outdoor Advertising practices these days are also technologically advanced. Offering a rich look about the advertised brand, an online advertising ad display at the airport, shopping mall or metro station easily catches customers' attention. Conventional means of advertising such as outdoor and print media have gone through a complete renovation. This is because of the technological innovations that have brought a drastic and dramatic change in the look and feel of various outdoor as well as print advertising media. Online advertising which is one of the latest means of brand promotion is also getting popular among brand owners and advertisers. This paper aims at understanding the attributes of Outdoor Advertising and different methods used in online advertising.

Key Words: Online Advertising, Mall Advertising, Pillar Kiosk.

1.0 Introduction

In an age of aggressive brand marketing, advertising plays an important role to influence the buying behavior of customers. Through an advertising campaign customers are aware of the existence of brands in the market. The advertising is considered to be the most important tool of brand marketing. It can be said that Brand marketing is impossible without a proper advertising plan and campaign of the brand. Advertising has the potential to popularize a product and thus to drive sales for the product. In a country like India, marketers and individuals heavily depend upon advertising. The social impact of advertising in India is quite high. Advertising has touched everyone's life. Whether it is a FMCG, Industrial Products or a cosmetic brand, advertising creates a huge impact upon the buying behavior of Indian customers. Interestingly customers are easily influenced by advertisements and no sooner end up in adopting the product.

The introduction of online advertising media is a major turning point for advertisers. With online advertising dominating other ad media fora, brand owners are heavily advertising through various means of online advertising. Outdoor Advertising practices these days are also technologically advanced especially when it comes to the tools used for launching an online advertising ad campaign. Offering a rich content about the advertised brand, an online advertising ad display at the airport, shopping mall or metro station easily grabs customers' attention.

Conventional means of advertising such as outdoor and print media have gone through a complete renovation. This is because of the technological innovations that have brought a drastic and dramatic change in the look and feel of various outdoor as well as print advertising media. Online advertising which is one of the latest means of brand promotion is gaining momentum among brand owners and advertisers. The main objective of an advertising campaign is to draw attention of the target audiences and to position the brand through a persuasive brand message. An advertising message of a brand may influence the customers in various ways. The advertiser spends a handsome amount of money to promote his brand in the most creative or innovative manner to the target group.

2.0 Attributes of outdoor Advertising:

2.01 Innovations

An outdoor advertising ad campaign launched by an advertising agency could be remembered by customers especially for its innovation. Sometimes it could be the media vehicle used for the campaign or the theme/style of reflecting the brand message. Innovation does play a key role in any outdoor advertising ad campaign. Customers easily notice an outdoor advertising Ad display because it grabs their attention- while coming across the ad display. If the display looks dull and ordinary with no innovative approach, it may not attract customers' attention. There had been studies manifesting that the more innovative the display looks, the deeper impact on target groups could be. So, it is a good proposition for an outdoor advertising agency or company to launch any outdoor advertising ad campaign through an innovative technique or tool or an amalgamation of the two.

2.02 Flexibility

An outdoor advertising campaign is differentiated from other media vehicles in flexibility of ways in presenting the brand message. The outdoor advertising Ad display is almost fixed in terms of time and space. Customers have a flexible choice to go through the brand message anytime they want to. Sometimes the brand message may be missed out while driving on the road or when in a hurry. However, one can visit or drive back to the same location later and go through the brand message. Unless, the display is changed, the same brand message can be accessed anytime whenever they are free to do so.

2.03 Coverage

An outdoor advertising Ad display is meant for all and sundry. Anyone can go through the brand message without any bias or discriminating feature. Those who find the brand message relevant and useful can consider about buying the product while those who don't find the brand message useful may avoid it. Customers may make their buying decisions without coercion. This liberal approach of brand promotion provides ample coverage amongst the target groups.

2.04 Impact

Outdoor Advertising campaigns provide good brand impact on prospects or buyer groups. An amalgamation of innovation, flexibility and mass coverage provide customers a lasting impression about the brand for a longer period of time. An outdoor advertising company stands apart from others because of these striking attributes.

3.0 Features of Outdoor Advertising:

Outdoor advertising is one of the oldest media of brand promotion. Advertising brands through outdoor media vehicles such as billboards, hoardings, kiosks, posters etc have been in use since the advent of advertising in India. Some of the important features / advantages of outdoor advertising are as below:

- **Cost Effectiveness:** Outdoor advertising is cost effective in promoting a brand or service because it is mostly one time investment. An outdoor ad can be kept for weeks, months or even years. Hence, in outdoor advertising one doesn't need to invest again and again.
- **More reach:** Outdoor advertisements provide better reach to customers as compared to other advertising tools. This is because of the fact that outdoor advertisements cannot be switched off like Electronic Media Ads or News Paper ads. One may avoid a radio or TV advertisement by switching on to other the channel but one cannot avoid an outdoor ad by staying at home and not going out. The compelling viewership of audiences is one of the major features of an outdoor advertising campaign.
- **Potential to reach intended customers:** Outdoor brand promotion practices such as airport advertising, mall advertising etc have potentials to reach the targeted customers. Airport advertising is also one of the foremost common practices or choices of outdoor advertising. An advertising campaign is successful only if it reaches out to the target audience in the proper manner. On this ground, outdoor advertisements have the potential to reach and influence a defined target group with an affluent brand experience.
- **Scope for creativity and longevity:** Outdoor advertising provides more scope for creativity and longevity while promoting a brand, service, and idea or business activity. The scope for creativity and longevity makes outdoor advertising an effective and reliable tool for brand promotion.
- **Constant or non-stop exposure to public:** Outdoor ads whether airport advertising or mall advertising provide constant exposure about the brand to the general public. This is

another benefit of outdoor advertising. Maximum exposure in the market place means attracting a larger part of target audience. Advertising is a customer-centric affair and attracting customers is equally important for an advertiser to promote the brand.

4.0 Common Outdoor Advertising Methods:

Amongst the different tools of advertising, outdoor advertising is one of the most effective techniques used by advertisers to keep businesses afloat and also to increase product awareness and sales. Wide ranges of outdoor advertisers have so far created a huge impact with their advertisements. Various types of outdoor advertising are available such as banner ads, billboard ads, kiosk ads, lamp post ads etc.

- (a) Banner ads are fixed on the roads, in public places like restaurants and shopping outlets and at various traffic points. Banner ads are helpful for advertisers to target those customers who don't have time to see television and read newspapers. Such category of potential customers can be informed about the different products that are flooded in the market through banner ads.
- (b) Billboard Advertising is another form of outdoor advertising. Due to their effectiveness, billboards ads are an extremely popular form of outdoor advertising. When one considers the attraction of target audience, billboard ads may be the one of the best ways to do so with their attractive logos which provides an eye-catching look to onlookers. With their colorful and attractive graphics billboard ads provide an attention grabbing look to target audiences.
- (c) Other methods of out of home advertising such as kiosk ads, lamp post ads also create the same impact like banner and billboard ads. Currently, Digital billboards, LCD, LED etc are the latest available alternatives for outdoor advertising.

Various alternative modes of outdoor Advertising in India are:

- Airport advertising
- Metro advertising
- Mall advertising etc.

5.0 Latest Tools Used in Outdoor Advertising:

For decades, outside advertising practices have been used by numerous brand managers. Even in contemporary branding outdoor advertising still works as one of the best means to promote a brand. The adoption of technologically rich tools and techniques has garnered the Outdoor advertising practices to a great extent. Delivering the brand message to the target audiences through a reachable medium is one of the assets of an Outdoor Advertising campaign. A rich and improved use of technology has made it easier for advertisers to launch their outdoor advertising ad campaigns in a hassle free manner. Some of the latest tools of **outdoor advertising** can be stated as follows:

1. **Backlit Translit-** Backlit translits are electronic tools used in Outdoor Advertising campaigns. Found at various spots such as metro stations, airports, shopping malls etc, backlit translits are one of the widely used tools of modern Outdoor Advertising.
2. **Aero Bridges-** Aero Bridges are mostly used at airport areas especially at the terminals. The product name or its features are displayed through these bridges with an asset to provide good brand recall value.
3. **Pillar Kiosk-** Pillar Kiosks are usually attached to the street lamps at the roadside, highways, streets etc. Pillar Kiosks are widely in use as they provide repeated information about the brand.
4. **Pillar Wraps-** Pillar-Wraps are a subset of poster ads. The only difference is that these ads are usually enfolded around the pillars at a particular public place. The main objective of using this type of outdoor advertising tool is to provide good brand recall value to customers.
5. **Scroller-** A scroller is a form of billboard which works upon electricity. As the name suggests, the brand message is scrolled from beginning to the end again and again. This **outdoor advertising** tool is widely used at present.
6. **Tree Guard/ Tree mesh-** A tree guard is mostly seen at the roadside, in gardens or in parks. The name of the brand or product which sponsors the tree guard is displayed with its logo in a clearly visible manner. Tree guards are widely used by outdoor advertisers as one of the effective tools of brand promotion.
7. **Time & Temperature Board-** Time and temperature board is again a subset of billboard. This tool is usually seen at cross- roads or at particular places that are usually crowded.
8. **Flight Information Display-** A flight information display board is usually seen in and around the airport area. This display board informs viewers about flight related information whether its arrival/ departure timing is re-scheduled or on time. They are usually meant to inform air-passengers. This outdoor advertising tool is used especially by airport advertisers.
9. **Show Window-** A show window is usually seen in a shopping mall. The product or brand information is displayed through this media to grab the attention of customers who visit the particular shopping mall.

6.0 Mall Advertising in India:

Mall Advertising is one of the emerging modes of outdoor brand promotion. With a big leap in outdoor advertising activities, mall ads have also become quite popular in India. Mall Advertising in India is currently in demand and widely adopted by various outdoor advertisers and brand owners. The widespread adoption of mall culture in India has brought about major changes in outdoor Advertising practices. Most of the outdoor advertisers have expanded or diversified their brand advertising expertise at malls or shopping outlets.

Rationale behind choosing Mall Advertisement:

- a) More and more advertising spaces available at the various malls.
- b) Mall advertising entertains and informs customers about available brands.
- c) Mall advertising prompts the potential consumer and customer to inform and purchase.

In brand advertising, what is important is to devise the right strategies of promotion and deploy the brand message through an effective media channel. No brand advertising media is superior or inferior from other mediums. It is just the requirement of the promotion campaign for which brand advertisers adopt various mediums of advertising. Advertisers select and launch their promotion campaign through a particular medium or media after massive survey or market research.

8.0 Conclusion

The growing trend of outdoor advertising is felt in Indian advertising world. With the introduction of various practices of outdoor advertising such as airport advertising, mall advertising, metro advertising etc, outdoor advertising has carved a niche amongst the other modes of brand promotion. The changing face of modern advertising pleads for the adoption of outdoor advertising methods as another mode of brand promotion. Quite recently, it has been observed that many more brand owners have adopted outdoor advertising means to promote and position their brands in the market. Outdoor advertising domain is growing at a fast pace in various avenues such as airports, metro stations, shopping malls, outdoors etc.

With proper concentration on the outdoor advertising perspectives, higher market share of the market can be grabbed by the marketers. In the past few years, the mindset of the customers has changed a lot. Therefore, a need for the transformational change in the advertising spectrum is also felt. With detailed analysis, marketers have come up with the concept of modern tools of outdoor advertising. Needless to say outdoor advertising is providing great assistance to the organizations in acquiring and retaining their market share.

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