



OOH Creative **Best Practices**

oaaa.org



Out of Home Advertising Association of America



Forward By
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Ideas.

Ideas turn mediums into experiences.

Experiences connect people.

Have you ever wished you had that one idea? You know the idea. The one that caused people to stop and notice. The one that caused your clients to openly praise you. The one that made your mom, spouse and loved ones beyond proud of you. The idea was complex and yet simple. It was memorable and caused someone to feel something. Amazingly, the one idea came to life and sparked other ideas that then got displayed in various mediums.

When we create from a blank slate, the possibilities are endless, ideas can turn mediums into experiences that

connect with people in a very real and honest way. Sometimes we see the work in a digital format on our smart phone or on a billboard, and other times the work is on the side of a semi truck. When we create from what can be done, there is no limit to what we can do to engage consumers where they live, work, and play.

This is the power of out-of-home. I am proud to bring OAAA's latest Creative Best Practices Guide to the industry. Marketers and brands will find the foundation for bringing ideas to life to create memorable ads that grab the attention of the consumer.

I encourage creatives, big idea thinkers, technologists, media planners, programmers, designers and storytellers to dig into the guide before starting the next campaign and be open to never ending change and new possibilities.



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Out of home is a foundation, the screaming out, the backbone of campaigns that drive audiences



OOH Creative Best Practices

Out of home (OOH) advertising isn't a billboard, it isn't a bus shelter, or a subway ad. OOH encompasses so many formats, canvases, and experiences. From roadside posters and digital screens, to augmented reality and experiential installations, there is no single form that defines this industry. At its core, OOH should be approached as a foundational start, the elemental expression of an idea, the backbone of a campaign from which a broader ad campaign can flourish.

When considering the creative process, OOH can be a tool that helps guide and distill messages down to a single, succinct, powerful expression

that speaks directly to people engaged in their daily activities. It is the job OOH to evoke emotion, and if done right, to inspire an audience to act.

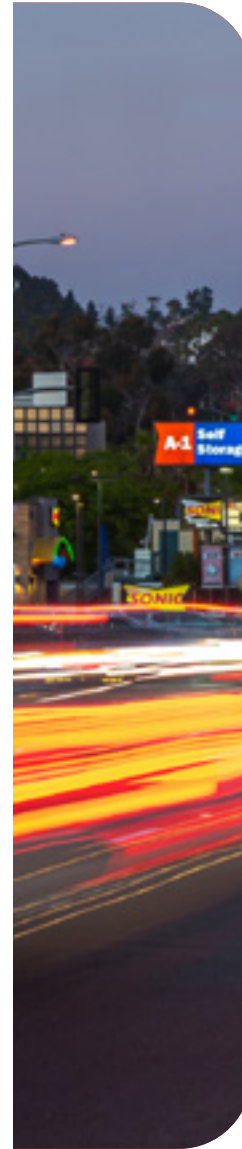
This document is called "OOH Best Practices" but should really be regarded as legacy suggestions to consider before starting the design of an OOH campaign. The information provided is a checklist for creating memorable and engaging ads that connect with audiences in ways that entice them to notice, remember, and favor brands.



Before You Start, **Consider This**

Start at the Beginning

- Who is the specific audience the ad campaign is meant to inspire?
- What is the core message of the ad campaign and what are the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) the ad campaign is expected to achieve?
- When will the ad campaign be seen (e.g., time of day, time of year)?
- Where will the ad campaign be seen (e.g., targeted communities, specific venues)?
- Why should an audience care about the ad campaign (e.g, benefit to consumers)?
- How should the audience respond to the ad campaign? (e.g, build brand affinity, transaction)?



Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe. – Abraham Lincoln

Shaping the Campaign



75%
of an ads
effectiveness is
determined
by its
creative

SOURCE: The Advertising Research Federation



Shaping the Campaign

Be Inspired

- Change your perceptions about OOH. It is a medium offering enormous flexibility. In the words of creative pioneer Bob Wingo, "OOH is only limited by your own imagination."
- There are decades of creative examples produced by people who have learned valuable lessons while designing for OOH. Take a few minutes to study great examples of past OOH campaigns.
- Consider past OBIE Award winners (found at www.obieawards.org).
- Check out Muse by Clio, Communication Arts, The One Club, Cannes Lions and other creative award shows that include OOH categories.
- Ask your trusted media partners to share their favorite OOH campaigns.
- Consider how competitors in the same industry are utilizing OOH.

Concept First, Placement Second

- Let the idea guide the placement of media.

- Don't worry about the shape and size of specific OOH formats. Instead adapt the scale of OOH applications once an idea has crystallized.
- Stay true to the idea and the rest will follow.

Share The Creative Brief

Great ideas can come from anywhere but, sharing those perceptions with others can improve a creative concept even further. Media partners can offer a different perspective based on years of experiences with other brands. They want every OOH campaign to work as much as their client. Sharing the creative brief with media partners will shed light on the campaign objectives, and in turn, will help them provide recommendations when it comes to:

- Identifying contextual applications in a specific markets of regions
- Recognizing special opportunities with communities
- Understanding local requirements or restrictions



Consider ALL Media

Implement a single campaign, not a conglomeration of multichannel executions. The OOH, broadcast, digital, and print campaign elements should share a single focus. When designed correctly, overall campaign Cost per thousand (CPM) impressions will be optimized.

OOH should be the core of an ad campaign from which all other message elements are built on and are additive. Consider ways to augment the momentum of an OOH campaign, such as:

- Augmented reality experiences tied into the more traditional parts of an OOH campaign by using scalable and layers code
- Social media activations linked to the messaging
- Digital OOH used to repurpose social posts on a larger scale Experiential elements to generate buzz and help boost social sharing (e.g., street teams, special events, custom installations)
- Influencers who can share the campaign through their channels
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) aligned with the core campaign message

Ask "What if?"

- Don't let big ideas die without first exploring the feasibility of real-world applications.
- Depend on media partners to help find solutions or to offer alternate approaches to achieve similar results.



In honor of all
the brave nurses,
Now and forever.

Monaghan |   

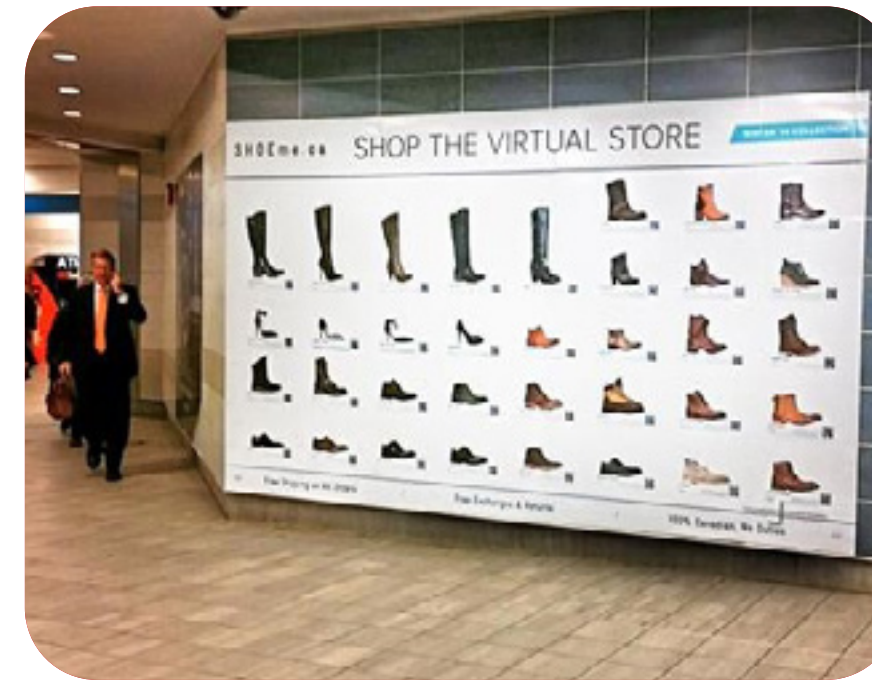
Different Canvases Have Different Strengths



Understanding What Canvas To Use For Which Message

Large Print Format

- Located roadside, these are standardized displays intended for viewing from extended distances, generally more than 50 feet.
- Large format displays are ideal for bold branding.
- Common enhancements include:
 - 2D extensions
 - 3D props
 - Pole Wraps
 - Smoke Machines
 - Spangles
 - Lighting Effects (e.g., spot lights, neon, backlightsing)
 - Projection
 - Successive messaging along roadways



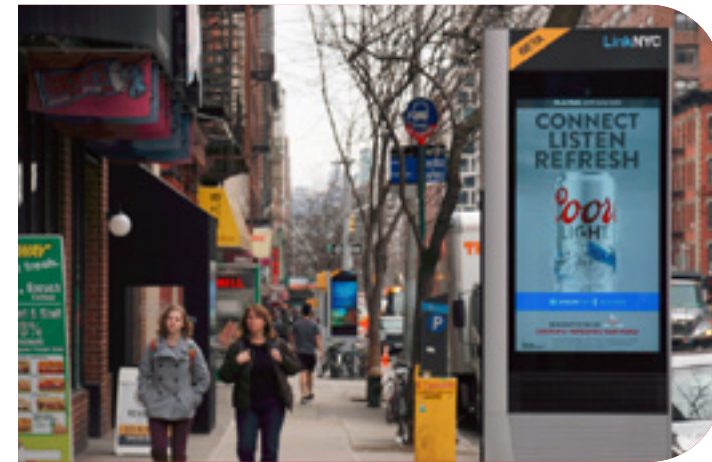
Street Furniture and Transit Formats

- Positioned in close proximity to pedestrians and shoppers, these standardized displays are viewed at eye-level and are often located curbside to influence vehicular traffic.
- Common enhancements include:
 - custom built props on bus shelters structures or other street furniture
 - custom
 - wrapped buses, taxis or other vehicles



Place-Based Formats

- This segment comprises a wide and expanding range of new and innovative display formats located within retail locations and commercial venues.
- Common enhancements include:
 - Custom build installations found in airports, malls, stadiums or other venues
 - Street teams or sponsored events



Digital OOH Formats

All OOH segments include digital applications and formats. Common benefits include:

- Nimble messaging which means content can change frequently
- Flexible messaging which allows for multiple content delivery at the same time
- Video content where permitted
- No print production cost
- Highly customizable applications including:
 - Location specific messages
 - Countdowns
 - RSS/RTD feeds
 - Situational triggers (e.g., weather conditions, traffic flow)
 - Touchscreen and interactive applications where permitted (e.g., pedestrian accessible screens)
 - Tease and reveals stunts



Basics for Designing OOH



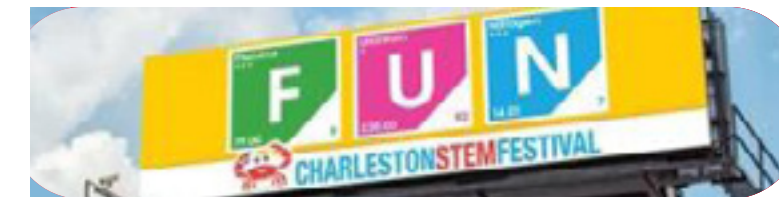
Basics for Designing OOH

The following tips are all relative to the placement of media. For example, designing an ad for a billboard located on the side of a business interstate highway should be treated differently than designing for an ad on a subway train card that has a captive audience and dwell-times from 5-20 minutes. However, all people want to be entertained.

People want to be entertained.

Research shows ads with two message elements are 21% more likely to be noticed than ads with five message elements.

-Journal of Advertising Research



Contrast

Color:

- What colors contrast best with OOH? Same colors that contrast in the everyday world
- Side note, when designing for digital, and using an all white background, it's good practice to make the white a 10% black

Typeface

- Be sure to make typeface legible from a far distance if it will be viewed from father away
- If you're not sure, click this link to use the [OAAA Creative Mockup Generator](#)

Subject Matter/Visuals

- The imagery and copy lines themselves should stand out, not so much being bold in the literal sense, but also figuratively
- The topic can have a punch, or grab at the heart strings...using contrast in this way is how we pull at the emotions
- Select photos that have a strong focal point.

Helpful tip...if the image is larger than a billboard in real life, it's not going to look impressive shrunken down. Whereas, if something is smaller than a billboard, and is blown up to be three times its original size or more... it will be very impressive to look at.

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Short & to the point

Copy

- For most OOH applications, messages should be short and to the point.
- Adding too many elements creates more competition within OOH ad itself.
- 7 words or less is a proven benchmark... but if an ad can be purely visible... that can be very powerful.
- Contextual messages are often more memorable (e.g., content related to physical surroundings)
- The right tone can elicit a specific response.
- Typeface and visuals can trigger reactions.



Font Size

Regarding font sizes...appropriate sizing related direction to specific applications. Generally, font point sizes are more easily read at the following scales:

DISTANCE	MEDIA TYPE	FONT SIZE
5'-50'	Malls, Airports	1" - 2"
50'-100'	Window, Street Furniture	2"-4"
100'-200'	Posters, Surface Streets	4"-8"
200'-350'	Highway Bulletins, Walls	8"-15"
350'-500'	Highways	15"-20"
500'-600'	Highways	20"-24"
600'+	Highways	24"-40"



Campaigns

- Develop suites of different OOH messages as part of an overall campaign to add more elements without encumbering the clarity of individual messages.
- Design for multiple sized canvases and in multiple places.
- Don't just deploy an OOH campaign for both coasts. Use scale and the power of OOH to reach consumers in big and small cities, towns, and in rural areas. OOH can reach people everywhere.
- Don't rely on a stunt to communicate a brand message. Support stunts with adequate OOH media weight.
- Geofencing key zip codes or trading areas against core audience demographics will ensure OOH messages are more accurately targeted to desired consumers.



Call to action

Research shows people react to OOH messages. Most people carry a mobile device wherever they go and will search immediately when triggered by an OOH ad.

- 46% of people look up information after seeing something interests them on on a billboard
- 70% of decision-making is emotional
- Every OOH ad today is essentially a call to action. Consider using triggers and codes:
 - Use an easy to remember URL or hashtag
 - If a phone number is necessary be sure it's an easy to remember vanity number
 - Consider using scan codes (ee.g., QR codes) on OOH displays located with pedestrian-friendly areas

Social media integration

It is often true that OOH campaigns will initiate social conversations. That's why OOH and social media are ideal media complements.

- 48% of people are more likely to click a banner ad after seeing an OOH ad first
- 1 in 4 Americans have posted a picture of themselves with an OOH ad to their social media

Context

If you live in France you speak French. If you live in New York, speak like a New Yorker. Understand the unique characteristics of locales.

- The more an OOH campaign reflects the flavor of a community or place the more it will resonate with the people in those places.
- Use the actual OOH canvas to inspire viewers (e.g., a subway message addressing the pitfalls of daily commuting).

Creative wear out

OOH messaging builds substantial brand awareness over time. Refreshing ad creative over time improves overall ad retention. For best results, change creative elements every 2-months.

- 50% of people continue to notice the same OOH ad after 1 month
- 25% of people continue to notice the same OOH ad after 3 months

A stylized illustration of a highway interchange with a sign that says "next exit". The scene is rendered in a dark red color scheme. The sign is a large, rectangular sign with the words "next exit" written in a bold, sans-serif font. The background of the sign is a lighter shade of red, and the text is a darker shade. The sign is positioned on the right side of the road, and the road curves to the right. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

Final Things To Consider

next exit

Final Things To Consider

Create a reasonable timeline

- Be realistic about what's to achieve in the time allotted.
- If a complex experiential application is part of the plan, think ahead.
- Allow at least 7 working days for basic print production. Customized printing could take longer.
- The fabrication of props usually takes no less than 6 weeks of lead time.
- Custom installations (e.g., subway station domination, experiential installation) can take weeks.
- When designing digital experiences there are different timelines based on the complexity of various applications, including video.
- If consumer research is part of the plan, work with research firms to ensure appropriate time is allocated for pre-campaign testing and post campaign analysis.

Be sure to check

- Confirm delivery deadlines with manufacturers, fabricators, printers, and editors.
- Align important SEOs with the campaign messaging.
The call to action may change over time as campaign messaging changes.



- Align important URLs, hashtags, vanity numbers or other triggers with OOH messaging.
- Ensure all online and social media triggers are functioning properly prior to an OOH campaign launch.

Touch base with the experts

You know your brand best. But OOH professionals understand the medium best. If uncertain about a design decision, consult with a trusted media partner.

Be open to things changing

OOH is a flexible medium. Keep campaign messages fresh and relevant. Don't be afraid to change the direction or approach of a campaign if adjustments are needed. Take advantage of changing market conditions.



OOH Creative Best Practices

