



OOH Case Study

Manhattanville College

Problem

How can Manhattanville College boost enrollment and build recognition after a name change?

Solution

By placing socially-relevant ads in key targeted areas.



Background

Manhattanville College was looking for a new way to increase awareness and grow enrollment. “Westchester County in NY is home to 22 colleges, and it has become increasingly difficult to compete with other institutions offering similar programs,” said Laura Persky, Associate Dean of the School of Professional Studies (SPS). The Manhattanville College School of Professional Studies was also facing a formidable challenge when they changed their name in late 2018 from the School of Business. There was a clear-cut need to raise awareness about the name change. How could the school inform the community of the name change, and also reignite enrollment growth? The marketing team at Manhattanville SPS began by creating a strategy that promoted the five business master’s degree programs, relying on social media and digital advertising. To enhance the reach to their target market, they turned to OOH to raise awareness of their programs and to engage prospective graduate students. They understood that OOH advertising at a central train station would reach a large volume of potential students commuting to and from work or play. It would also reach key influencers of prospective students: the parents and relatives of these potential students. The team recognized the flexibility of digital live boards at the White Plains train station, so they wanted to create a unique advertising campaign to capitalize on this opportunity.

Objective

The central objective was to break through the clutter and gain the attention of a generation known for short attention spans. The plan was to connect consumers to the brand during their daily commutes. The target market was those who would benefit from a graduate business degree from Manhattanville College, which included millennials with college degrees living within driving distance to the school. It is a well-known fact that millennials have a unique passion for avocado. In fact, a recent viral meme featured a quote from a millionaire telling millennials, “If you want a house, stop buying avocado toast.” Driving the dual goal of developing brand awareness and generating higher interest in program enrollment, Manhattanville created a unique “avocado” campaign based on the notion that a graduate degree will allow recipients to, “Have your avocado toast and eat it, too.” Displayed on digital live boards at the White Plains train station, the campaign featured an oversized, colorful avocado to grab the audience’s attention. The campaign was paired with digital in-app messaging that geo-fenced all mobile phones at the train station, while saturating geo-targeted millennials with proximity-based mobile display ads. Implementing this out of home media campaign alongside a digital marketing campaign created powerful amplification of the reach and frequency of the message.



Strategy

The plan was to start with three flights of liveboards at the White Plains Train Station and two flights of mobile in specific zip codes. The White Plains liveboards were selected because a majority of Manhattanville students, alums, and friends of the college reside around that neighborhood. By doing liveboards and geofencing surrounding zip codes, the plan was to geo-target the area and raise further awareness about Manhattanville College SPS programs.

Plan Details

Markets: New York City

Flight Dates: May 2019 - YTD

OOH Formats Used: Digital Transit Subway Liveboards

Target Audience: Recent College Graduates and Young Professionals



Results

In a world of likes, comments and clicks, Manhattanville recognized that the value of OOH media that can't be blocked or skipped. Since it went live in June, friends and potential students have been calling and writing staff and faculty about the creative, out-of-the-box "dancing avocado" seen at the train station. They take photos of the avocado and share them on social media. Placing these highly creative and playful ads in front of Manhattanville's audience at the train station, and amplifying the message with highly targeted mobile ads proved to be a successful, integrated ad campaign, extending the reach and frequency beyond former levels. As Manhattanville SPS strives to measure the effectiveness of this campaign in terms of more leads and applications to the various graduate programs, they are confident that working with an agency helped them achieve the goal of delivering the right message, at the right time and place, to the right audience.

The mobile SAR rate performed 37% above benchmark. They have also received many encouraging messages about their liveboard presence at White Plains via emails, letters, and social media postings. Manhattanville College is absolutely thrilled with how their creative vision was turned into reality. They've extended the campaign and are discussing options for more periods.