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Mobile Advertising Design: Its Communication Effectiveness

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Introduction

Robbs (2008) describes advertising as a form of commercial mass communication, designed to promote the sale of a product or service or message on behalf of an institution, organization, or candidate for political office.

According to Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008):

Advertising is the structured and composed non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media.

As a consumer, one is exposed to hundreds of commercial messages everyday. Depending the target audience, companies and organizations use many different types of advertising to achieve their objectives. Wood (1978) emphasizes the importance of advertising, remarking that doing business without advertising is like winking in the dark, because “the businessman knows what he is doing, but potential customers do not.”

The International Encyclopaedia of Communication (1989), states the basic function of advertising is to establish a presence, to create awareness, as in the case of the large effigy of a shoe over the medieval shoemaker’s door. But advertising also seeks to reinforce the awareness by reminders when the product and the point of sale are remote. This suggests that advertising performs the function of establishing the presence of a product, creating awareness about a product (goods and services) and also serving as reminders. Similarly, Johnson (1978) presents the objectives of advertising in a pyramid:

- Informs
- Brings news
- Calls attention
- Is paid for by someone
- Has a controlled distribution
- Emphasizes desirable qualities
- Helps sell, Persuade Convert
- Promote ideas, goods or services
- Arouses the desire to buy or patronize
- Is published or broadcast, usually in mass media

Adegbeye (2004) opines that advertising expands from local to national and international spheres as a motivating force in gearing economic activity, introducing innovation and encouraging higher technology for increased productivity.

Advertising has contributed to rapid industrialization and expansion processes all over the world. However, the various functions of advertising cannot be achieved without properly channeling the message to the target audience and this is made possible through the adoption of an effective mode of appeal and form of execution.

Advertising involves the use of mass media, but is not restricted to the various forms of mass media. Outdoor advertising plays a prominent role in the dissemination of advertising messages. Popular among outdoor advertising forms are billboards and other advertisements.

Transit advertising is a form of outdoor advertising that uses vehicular platforms to establish a mobile brand presence (www.oaaa.org, 2011). According to Kobliski (2005), transit advertising placement of print ads on buses and other vehicles and in bus shelters and train stations is an important medium for reaching an audience of all ages, backgrounds and incomes. In addition to the corporate identification, the sides of trucks may also be rented out for more general advertising messages. Trucks are becoming moving billboards on our national highways. It is a high frequency medium that lets advertisers get their name in front of a local audience at crucial times, such as rush hour.

Mobile advertising includes the posters seen in bus shelters and train, airport, and subway stations. They are targeted at commuters and travelers. Most of these posters must be designed for quick impression, although posters on subway platforms or bus shelters are often studied by people who are waiting and thus can be more involved or complicated.

Typically, transit or mobile media campaigns are employed in dense urban environments to maximize brand exposure to both pedestrians and to people who are always on the road. Transit media has traditionally been limited to featured advertisements on buses (Kobliski, 2005), but in recent years has extended to various sub categories, such as dedicated car, van or truck advertising.

History of Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising can trace its lineage back to the earliest civilizations. Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians employed a tall stone obelisk to publicize laws and treaties. In 1450, Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type printing and advertising in the modern sense was launched in the form of the handbill (www.oaaa.org, 2011). While formats have certainly changed as advertising ideas have evolved, outdoor is still here.

When the lithographic process was perfected in 1796, the illustrated poster became a reality. Gradually, measures were taken to ensure exposure of a message for a fixed period of time. In order to offer more desirable locations where traffic was heavy, bill posters began to come to the limelight. The large American outdoor poster (more than 50 square feet) originated in New York in Jared Bell's Office, where he printed posters for the circus in 1835.

In the beginning, American roadside advertising was generally local. Merchants painted signs or glued posters on walls and fences to notify the passerby that their establishments up the road sold horse blankets, rheumatism pills, etc.

In 1850, exterior advertising was first used on street railways. The earliest recorded leasings of boards occurred in the U.S. in 1867. By 1870, close to 300 small sign painting and bill posting companies existed. Michigan formed the first state bill posters association in 1871, followed by Indiana, New York, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, all of which had active state associations by 1891. In 1872, the International Bill Posters' Association of North America was formed in St. Louis. In 1891, the Associated Bill Posters' Association of the U.S and Chicago was formed in Chicago. The name was later changed to the Outdoor Advertising Association of America. Their purpose:

- To promote a greater understanding of the poster medium.
- To provide an expanded nationwide organization for coordinating the services offered by member companies.
- To continue to address the ethical concerns of early industry leaders.

In 1900, a standardized billboard structure was created in America and ushered in a boom in national billboard campaigns. Confident that the same ad would be useful in Connecticut and Kansas, big advertisers like Palmolive, Kelloggs and Coca-Cola began mass production of bill-

boards for the national market. By 1912, standardized outdoor service was at the disposal of national advertisers in nearly every major urban center. In 1913, the Association established an education committee which served to encourage the industry to donate public service advertising (www.oaaa.org, 2011).

The National Outdoor Advertising Bureau (NOAB) was formed in 1915 in the United States, to serve the outdoor advertising needs that advertising agencies had with their various clients and to regularly inspect the showings in the field.

In 1931, Outdoor Advertising, Inc. (OAI) was formed to sell the concept of outdoor advertising. In 1925, the Poster Advertising Association and the Painted Outdoor Advertising Association merged to become the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA), combining the interests of posters and bulletins into one association. In February 1934, the industry established the Traffic Audit Bureau (TAB) to provide advertisers with data to determine outdoor audience size.

In 1958, the US congress passed the first federal legislation to voluntarily control billboards along interstate highways. The law was known as the Bonus Act because states were given bonus incentives to control signs. In 1962, French Outdoor Company JC Deaux invented the bus stop shelter. On October 22, 1965, the Highway Beautification Act was signed into law by President Johnson. It controlled billboards on Interstate and federal aid primary highways, by limiting billboards to commercial and industrial areas and by requiring states to set size, lighting and spacing standards and requiring just compensation for removal of lawfully erected signs.

In the 21st century, digital technology had transformed the industry. Hard painted boards were replaced by computer printed outdoor advertising formats. Outdoor companies offered an increasingly diverse selection of advertising formats including bus shelters; transit and kiosks; airport advertising; and mall displays and taxis. In 2005, the first digital networks were installed in the U.S and in 2008, the OAAA launched the Environmental Responsibility Committee.

History in Nigeria

The Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAN) started with double and quad crown posters on walls in 1928. There were also few metal signs which were commonly for Goodyear. In the 50s, other sizes of structures like 8 sheet, 16 sheet and a few bulletin boards at Iddo

were erected for such clients as Nigeria Tobacco Company, Nigeria Breweries, and Langucy Stores. In 1957, all billboards on railway property were landed to M.R.S Fremont.

In July 1958, Mr. J.W. Mills, Chairman and Managing Director of Mills and Rockely, a U.K based outdoor advertising company, and Mr. G.C. Campbell of Franco Signs Limited, visited Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu, for assessment of the country's potential. A year later, Afro media Nigeria limited was registered precisely on the 28th of October, 1959 (Akinbobola, 2006)

When West Africa Publicity changed its name, outdoor advertising started in earnest. The first 40 sheet was erected at the junction of Apapa road and Denfor street, with number LA1, and a 16 sheet board was erected on the wall of 4, Custom street corner of Phoenix lane, numbered LA2.

West Africa Publicity Limited, set up in 1928, was divided into Afro media and Lintas in 1959. Though Outdoor Advertisement Contractor of Nigeria came into being in 1954, the name was changed to Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAN) in 1986. The OAN is one of the recognized sectorial associations, through which the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) regulates the practice of advertising. According to the APCON code (2005:35,36):

All outdoor boards and structures shall be sited and maintained with due regard for the local bye-laws, state and federal laws, and industry guidelines, including the rules of the recognized sectorial associations, the regulations of APCON and the provision of the code of Advertising practice and the Oath of Advertising practice.

Behind the hub of commercial activities in Nigeria, outdoor advertising in Lagos has been more engaged than anywhere in the country (www.courtvilleinvestment.com, 2011). With an estimated two million registered vehicles and with about 500,000 of them branded, it is obvious that the average Lagos commuter is a captive to the diverse messages on these branded buses (www.Thisday.com). The Lagos State Signage and Advertisements Agency (LASAA) was established in 2006, to introduce new measures to rid Lagos City of obnoxious practices that were inimical to modern development. Among other things, the regulatory body was bent on transforming the landscape of the outdoor media, integrating the billboard with the streetscape to enhance it and not detract from it and improving the look and feel of Lagos.

Corporate bodies and religious organizations make use of vehicle advertising as means of advertising their products.

History of Bus Advertising in the United States and United Kingdom

Leo Houck was the original owner of Houck Motor Coach Advertising in the United States. He worked for the Twin City Street Railway Company as a schedule checker and as dance hall manager at Wildwood Park, which was owned by the streetcar company (www.houckads.com, 2011).

After several years in the marines, Leo started working with his brothers, Joe and Pete, selling ads on the stage curtains of all Vaudeville theaters in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In 1919, first bus line, Brown Bus Company, began a transit service between St. Paul and Minneapolis. The Houck Brothers contracted with Brown Bus Company to expand their business and this lasted till 1925, when the Brown Bus Company was purchased by the Twin City Rapid Transit Company. With the combined ownership of buses and streetcars, there were now two different companies handling bus advertising: Murray and Malone on the Street cars and Houck on the buses. After the introduction of movies, the Vaudeville theatres in the Twin Cities closed, and bus advertising became the brothers' main business. Houck Motor Coach Advertising Company was established (www.houckads.com, 2011).

As buses became a more lucrative mode of transportation, Houck Motor Coach Advertising was able to solicit bus companies on which to place advertisements. One of the first bus companies approached was AG Bus Andy in Hibbing, Minnesota. The AG Bus Andy was established by Anderson and Carl Eric Wickrnan, to transport workers from the city of Ribbing into the local mines. The bus service expanded and became known nationally as Greyhound Corporation. The 1-bucks placed color advertising projectors in all 3,000 of the nation's Greyhound buses. It projected a different ad in the front of the bus every 20 seconds. However, after a complete installation and thirty-days of operation, a law was passed in the State of Texas preventing the transportation of film in buses. Hence, this bus advertising venture was short lived.

In the late 1930s, Houck Motor Coach Advertising was the first to introduce pamphlet boxes on the back of each seat of all the Twin City Buses. With this, commuters could pick pamphlets and go through the ads while on the bus. Because practically everyone used public transportation at that time, business owners were most anx-

ious to purchase space in the vehicles and 1-buck Motor Coach Advertising enjoyed this most prosperous time well into the late 1940s and 1950s, before exterior bus advertising was introduced.

The first of these exterior bus displays made by a UK based company called Litelogic, were introduced in London on buses owned by CBS Outdoor. Titan, an American based agency, introduced exterior bus displays to New York and Chicago.

Recently, advertising on the exterior of buses is gradually pushing aside conventional boundaries of static media with the introduction of LED displays (www.houckads.coni, 2011). This allows the site owner to generate higher revenue as they can rotate ads and also schedule ads by GPS location, allowing advertisers to target their audience more effectively. In the U.S, the most commonly used passenger vehicle in transit advertising media fleets is the smart car made by Mercedes Benz. Other popular vehicle models used are the mini (ironically used by the Red Bull energy drink company) and the VW Beetle.

Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising is essentially any type of advertising that reaches the consumer while he or she is outside the home. It is focused on marketing to consumers when they are “on the job”, in public places, in transit, waiting and/or in specific commercial locations.

Outdoor advertising plays an integral role as a communication media within any multimedia advertising campaign. Outdoor advertising can be used across the product communication processes from a launch (high impact, large format) strategy, to a maintenance/support (smaller format, high frequency) strategy (www.primediaoutdoor.com 2011).

Outdoor advertising is very powerful with the capability to target consumers quickly and since studies have shown that consumers spend time driving or in buses/cars and on foot in the cities (www.siualbusinessideas.com 2011), customers are readily exposed to outdoor advertising. Therefore, it is possible that the use of outdoor advertising can increase the chance of attracting more customers. Outdoor advertising has the advantage of reinforcing the core message of a campaign or advertisement objective, which might have been relayed through broadcast or the print media. The nature of outdoor advertising is a clear message, a strong brand identity and rapid effect (www.smallbusinessideas.com 2011).

Arthur (2011) describes outdoor advertising as a medium that involves posting messages and promotional items outside where people can see them. In the middle ages, bill posting was an accepted form of advertising in Europe. In the nineteenth century, it evolved into a serious art form. According to Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008), outdoor advertising enhances awareness of, or reinforces the advertiser’s core messages, with high frequency at a very reasonable cost. Outdoor advertising is generally attractive and uses several tools and techniques to attract the outdoor consumers.

The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 controls outdoor advertising in the United States’ Interstate highways and other federally subsidized highways. Likewise, the Outdoor Advertisers Association of America (OAAA), regulates the practice of outdoor advertising in the United States.

In Nigeria, the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON, which was established by Act 55 of 1985, as amended by Act 93 of 1992, is charged with the responsibilities of determining advertising practitioners; setting the standards of knowledge and skills required; compiling and maintaining a register; regulating and controlling the practice of advertising in all its aspects and ramifications; and conducting examinations in the profession (APCON 2005:1). The Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria, (OAAN) is one of the recognized sectorial associations’ through which APCON regulates the practice of advertising in the country.

Types of Outdoor Advertising

According to l3runeau (2011), outdoor advertising reaches its activities as an element of the environment. There are various types of outdoor advertising. Common are billboards, posters (though there is a ban on pasting of posters and bills in some cities in Nigeria like Lagos) and transit ads:

Billboards are pervasive and are regarded as traditional outdoor advertising forms. According to Arens, Areris and Weigold (2008), billboards are in three basic forms: bulletins, 30-sheet panels, and eight-sheet posters. For extra impact, some companies may use the non-standard spectacular (though spectaculars are not in wide use in Nigeria) and other types of billboards.

Bulletins measure 14-by-48 feet and may carry either painted or printed messages. They are created in sections and then taken to the site where they are assembled and hung on the billboard structure. Some bulletins are three-

dimensional or embellished by extensions that stretch beyond the frames of the structure.

Poster Panels. Thirty-sheet poster panel (standard billboard) is regarded as the basic outdoor advertising structure (Arens, Arens and Weigold 2008). A poster consists of blank panels with a standardized size and border. Its message is first printed by lithography or screen on large sheets of paper, then mounted by hand on the panel. Poster sizes are referred to in terms of sheets. The poster sheets are mounted in a board with a total surface of 12-by-25 feet.

Eight-Sheet Posters. Many advertisers use smaller poster sizes. Called eight-sheet posters (or junior panels), these offer a 5-by-11-foot printing area on a panel surface six feet high by twelve feet wide. They are typically concentrated in urban areas, where they can reach pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic.

Spectaculars are giant electronic signs that incorporate movement, color, and flashy graphics to grab attention in high-traffic areas. Spectaculars are very expensive to produce and are found primarily in the world's largest cities.

Mobile Billboards are a cross between traditional billboards and transit advertising. It was conceived as advertising on the sides of tractor-trailer trucks. In some large cities specifically designed flatbed trucks carry long billboards up and down busy thoroughfares.

Electronic Signs and Display Panels display text and graphic messages much like the big screens in sports stadiums. The signs transmit commercial messages to retail stores, where shoppers see them. The stores pay nothing for the signs and receive 25 percent of the advertising revenue. This is not in wide use in Nigeria.

Posters are mass-produced advertisements or announcements, usually printed on large sheets of paper for public display. According to Robbs (2008), posters usually have a commercial purpose to advertise products or publicize entertainment events. They also occasionally appear as public education announcements, propaganda instruments or pure works of art with no overt message.

Advantages of Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor media is considered to be one of the oldest advertising media and recent technology has provided the opportunity to develop creative, eye-catching messages to the target audience.

Hassam (2011) is of the opinion that outdoor advertising, having existed for hundreds of years, is considered to be one of the best methods of advertising in existence.

Given all inventions of modern media, outdoor advertising signs have reached new technological levels and attract a broader audience range than ever. Several advantages occur when utilizing outdoor advertising to develop marketing campaigns. These advantages as presented in www.hubpages.com (2011) are:

24 Hours A Day. Advertising anything outdoor means 24-hour exposure to the public eye. Outdoor advertising signs are not temporary. Rather, are consistent and non-stop. They are always in sight for the public night or day, rain or shine. Radio, television and print ads and most other media are all momentary and sporadic.

Attention Span. The majority of humans will quite naturally focus on an outdoor advertisement in comparison to the same ad on newspapers, television or on the radio. Stuck in traffic, or waiting at the bus-stop, most individuals are looking for something to pass time. The human eye will rapidly fixate on an outdoor ad sign to help pass time and avoid boredom. Thus said, positioning ads at bus stops, busy intersections and/or along highways prone to high volume can be ingenious.

Flexibility. Outdoor advertising can be located in any approved areas where it would most likely be effective.

State of the Art. The latest technology now available is such that can create incredibly eye-catching advertisements. Billboards are now interactive rotating ads to be displayed on one sign. Additionally, the time needed to create and print ads has been cut in half, as a result of new state of the art computer inkjet printers.

Outdoor advertising cannot be discarded or blocked and there is no channel to change. According to Denver Online Business Journal (1998):

Outdoor advertising is a form of advertising that can be experienced 24 hours a day, seven days a week, not surrounded by editorial, programming or photographs and can be targeted to reach specific audiences by neighborhood.

Similarly, Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008) present the following factors as some of the advantages of outdoor advertising:

Accessibility. Outdoor carries the message 24 hours per day and cannot be fast-forwarded, put aside or tuned off.

Reach. Outdoor delivers wide reach of advertising messages.

Geographic Flexibility. Outdoor advertisers can place their ads where they want it nationally, regionally or locally.

Demographic Flexibility. Messages can be concentrated in areas frequented by young people, upper income people, or people of specific ethnic background.

Creative Flexibility. Outdoor offers a large display with the spectacular features of lights, animation and brilliant color.

Location. Outdoor can target consumers by activity, reaching shoppers on their ways to the store, business people on their way to work, or travellers on their way to the airport.

Limitations of Outdoor Advertising

Though outdoor advertising has a lot of flexibility and economic advantages, Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008), present the following as some of the limitations of outdoor advertising:

Fleeting Message. Customers pass quickly, so outdoor advertising must intrude to be effective. The design and copy must tell a story briefly and crisply and the words must sell.

Environmental Influence. Outdoor messages are influenced by their environment. Placement in a run-down area can detract from a product's image.

Audience Measurement. Audience demographics are difficult to measure. Not every passerby sees or reads the ads, so some media buyers distrust estimates.

Control. Unlike print and broadcast ads, it is hard to physically inspect each outdoor poster panel.

Visual Pollution. Some people see outdoor advertising as visual pollution, hence may have a negative reaction to advertisers who use it.

In brand Pro Services (2011) offered some additional disadvantages:

Creative Limitations. Outdoor advertising cannot tell a story. Most advertising professionals warn against using more than seven or 10 words in an outdoor message. An advertising message that does not lend itself to a visual interpretation may probably be unsuitable for outdoor.

Little Audience Selectivity. While certain areas of a market might be pinpointed, outdoor is basically a mass medium.

Availability can be a problem. In many communities, demand is greater than available poster sites.

Teleanu (2011) presents the following additional limitations of outdoor advertising: 1) limited segmentation (generally limited to geographic features), 2) problems with the availability of outdoor advertising spaces, 3) limits in terms of message design, 4) due to the nature of the environment, marketers may be placed in a position to negotiate with several companies to devise a campaign.

Mobile or Transit Advertising

Businesses have to use some forms of advertising to make prospects aware of their products and services. Transit advertising is a category of outdoor advertising that includes bus and taxi cab advertising, as well as posters on transit shelters, terminals and subways (Arens, Arens and Weigold 2008). Although transit is not considered a major medium by many advertising practitioners; standardization and better research have made transit advertising more attractive to big advertisers (Arens, Arens and Weigold 2008).

Forms of Transit Advertising

There are various forms of transit advertising. These forms are:

Transit Shelters. In cities with mass transit systems, advertisers can buy space on bus shelters and on the backs of bus-stop seats. Transit shelter advertising according to Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008) is a relatively new outdoor form. It reaches virtually everyone who is outdoors. In areas where billboard advertising is restricted, shelter advertising is sometimes the only outdoor form of advertisement permitted.

Terminal Posters. In many bus, subway and commuter train stations, space is sold for terminal posters. Major train and airline terminals offer such special advertising forms as floor cards, dioramas (3-D screens) and clocks with special lighting and moving messages.

The Inside Cards. Inside cards are placed in a wall rack above the vehicle windows. Cost-conscious advertisers print on both sides of the card so that it could be reversed to change the message. Inside car-end posters (in bulk-head positions) are usually larger than inside cards, but sizes vary. The end and side positions carry premium rates.

Outside Posters. Outside posters are printed on high-grade cardboard and often varnished for weather resis-

tance. The most widely used outside posters are on the side, rear and front of a bus.

Bus Exteriors. Advertisers may also buy space on bus exteriors. There are various forms of bus exterior ads namely: 1) *Full Wrap*: The full wrap allows the advertiser to cover the entire bus with vinyl. 2) *% Wrap*: Vinyl will cover all sides of the bus and up to three windows on each side. With many similarities to the full wrap, this product allows the advertiser to display the message and make the desired impact. 3) *Half Wrap*: Half wrap ads cover the entire side of the bus from the bottom of the bus to the bottom of the windows. 4) *Back Attack*: The back attack ads cover the entire back of the bus with vinyl. 5) *Street Size (King Size)*: Street size ads are positioned to be viewed by all commuters/viewers that are positioned on the street side of the bus. It is a premium ad space which usually measures 30 x 140-inches. 6) *Curb Size (Queen Size)*: Curb size ads are positioned in between the sides of buses. Typically, curb size ads are 30 x 120-inches. 7) *Tail Light Ads*: Tail light ads usually measure 21 x 72-inches.

Transit advertising is seen as having the potential to reach a broad cross section of consumers. As the case is, transit advertising places products in direct sight of local consumers, because many consumers take the same route on a regular basis.

According to Kobliski (2005):

Transit advert cannot be zapped, ignored or tuned off like the television. It reaches drivers and passengers . . . The large, colourful, innovative designs, command attention and it delivers to a varied audience, offering flexibility of advert(isement) size and location.

An Online U.S. Marketing Board— www.smallbusinessideas.com (2011), presents the following points as some of the advantages of transit advertising:

Exposure. Exposure to one ad can be long.

Frequency. The number of times a viewer is exposed to an ad may be high, if the viewer uses the same means of transportation repeatedly. 1) Advertisements on the exterior of buses and cabs are seen by large and diverse audiences. 2) The advertisement can be timely because persons riding mass transit may be on their way for shopping. 3) Advertisements can be geographically targeted because the consumers that a product is meant for could be in a particular area. 4) Advertisements can be targeted in some instances and this method of advertising can be inexpensive in both absolute and relative terms.

Also, another business oriented website, www.slideshare.net (2011), stated that transit advertisements have high visibility and high impact, the message gets better exposure and transit ads can be placed on certain routes to reach an upscale of audience of commuters. Likewise, transit ads are advertising in motion, whose messages are carried to different audiences throughout the day.

Aren, Arens and Weigold (2008), add more to the advantages of transit advertising:

Creative Flexibility. Special constructions and color effects are available on transit advertising.

Need Satisfying. Transit advertising can target the needs of riders.

Environmentally Sensitive. Because of various environmental laws, transit advertising is well positioned as an environment friendly medium. This is so because ads are in or on buses/cabs, shelters and terminals.

Limitations of Transit or Mobile Advertising

Certainly, alongside the advantages of transit advertising, there are several drawbacks. As posted on www.houckads.com (2011), the major disadvantage of transit advertising is the mood of the audience, who are likely to be in low spirit due to the transit situation itself. People on transit may not even notice such advertisements because they might have become used to transit advertising. Moreover, many of those people may not be interested in the company and the product. Hence, transit ads are not easy to target, despite the high level of reach.

Furthermore, if an advertiser chooses only this method, he may not be able to reach those would-be-customers who may not have to use mass transit systems regularly.

An article on www.smallbusinessideas.com (2011) indicates the following disadvantages of transit advertising: 1) The advertisement design is usually limited and 2) The whole transit situation may spoil the image of the product being advertised.

In addition to the above mentioned disadvantages, [slide-share.net](http://slideshare.net) (2011) reveals that because the ads are in motion, the audience has just very few seconds to absorb the message. Also, transit advertisements are subject to damage by the elements or by vandals. Likewise, transit ads may not be useful for every kind of product.

Arens, Arens and Weigold (2008), present the following limitations of transit advertising:

Status. In some countries, transit lacks the status of the major advertising media like the broadcast and print media.

Crowded Environment. Rush-hour crowds limit the opportunity and ease of reading. The vehicle itself, if dirty, may tarnish the product's image.

Selectivity. Transit reaches a non-selective audiences, which may not meet the needs of some advertisers.

Clutter. Cards (inside cards) may be numerous and look so similar that they may be confusing or hard to remember.

Creative Restriction. Copy is still limited in transit adverts, despite the fact that they carry longer messages.

Supporting Studies and Theories

In Ibadan Metropolis in 2009, Kareem Oluwatoyin Latifat conducted research on "Effectiveness of the Billboard As a Medium of Advertising." The study adopted the content analysis and survey design. The study population was divided into two categories: Billboard advertisements and respondents. The billboard advertisements analyzed were selected based on their prominence and location in Ibadan city. Respondents were stratified into two categories: academic and non-academic respondents.

Her instruments included the questionnaire which had 25 items and content categories, and an adaptation of the seven principles of outdoor advertising design as proposed by the Institute of Outdoor Advertising (IOA). The categories included: visibility; product identification; illustrations; background; short copy; legible type; and color. The findings revealed that a large percentage of the respondents viewed the billboard as an effective medium of advertising on a range of products including alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, telecommunications, banking, and industry.

Perception Theory

According to Burgoon and Ruffner (1978), perception is the process of making sense out of experience. To Corner and Hawthorn (1980), it is how the individual makes sense of his or her world. Folarin (1998) points out that perception depends on a complex of variables such as psychological disposition, past experiences, cultural expectations and social relationships. All these in conjunction with language constraints and the "limited experience factor," result in the selective process, which takes

place in a "stop-gate" fashion with selective exposure, attention, and retention (Folarin 1998).

While selective exposure has to do with people seeking out information that caters for their own interest, confirms their beliefs and adds to their ego, selective attention has to do with which information the human brain pays attention to at any given time, in order to avoid confusion (Folarin 1998). To ensure that the attention of consumers is caught and retained, advertisers use a combination of modes of appeal and forms of execution in creating advertisements. In the case of selective retention, Folarin (1998) makes it clear that none of us can retain all the messages we receive for later recall. Laying emphasis on the fact that some messages are forgotten more quickly than others, Folarin (1998) opines that human beings more accurately remember messages that are favorable to their self-image than messages that are unfavorable.

Another relevant theory is selective perception, which has to do with what individuals perceive and decode in the light of previous experiences and current disappointments. According to Folarin (1998) the study of perception actually led to the discovery of the selectivity process. The language we speak and words we use also tend to circumscribe our perception. As the most powerful selectivity strategy, selective perception makes people interpret messages (including mass mediated messages), not necessarily according to the meanings intended by the source but mainly on the basis of the personal factors (Folarin, 1998). Selective perception normally takes over where selective attention leaves off.

Since creating awareness is one of the objectives of advertising, selective perception helps to elicit consumer reactions to bus advertisements in terms of message comprehension and product/brand awareness and identification. However, response to the advertisement (purchase or use of products/services) may be the result from exposure to the ad on other forms of media.

Uses and Gratification Theory

According to Folarin (1998:65), uses and Gratification Theory perceives consumers as actively influencing the effect process, since they selectively choose, attend to, perceive, and retain the ad messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, world views and personal experiences. The theory focuses on the users of media contents, the reasons for the use of the media contents, and the conditions of use. Hence, Kunczik (1988) is of the opinion that an individual has some needs related to communication. He

selects the media that appears likely to satisfy these needs and selectively consumes the content. However, effect may or may not occur. In this case, the media is the exterior of buses. The content is the ad placed on the buses which the masses may decide to pay attention to or discard, either because they have gotten used to the media due to its wide reach, or as a result of needs or personal experiences.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are important for advertisers and advertising scholars:

Copy writers and ad agencies should keep the copy of bus exterior ads short and simple, precisely not more than seven words, which is usually recommended for general outdoor advertisements. This will enable people to grasp the messages as the buses move. Likewise, copy writers and graphic designers should use bold illustrations, as this will facilitate clearer product identification. Academics should endeavor to conduct more research on transit or mobile advertising, as this will help to enrich the literature of this form of outdoor advertising.

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- Scan line drawings at 800 ppi resolution.
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- Graphics should be sized to fit in either one column or across two columns.
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