

WHITE PAPER

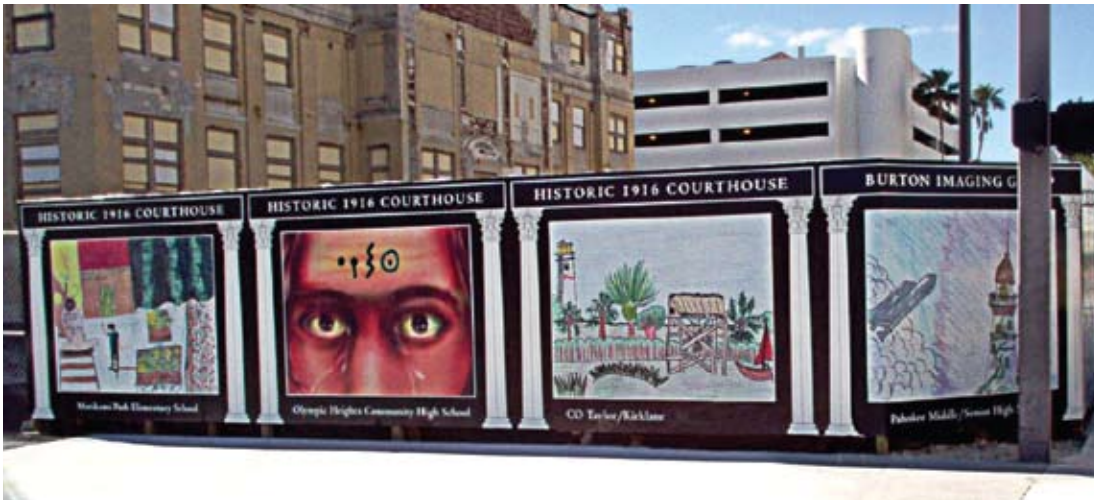


Navigating the Alternative Media Terrain

Let a Creative Application Specialist Be Your Guide

Whether you're making your way through the streets of Manhattan or strolling through a quiet New England town, there's surely more than hustle and bustle and quaintness that meets the eyes.

In New York City, it could be a bus or taxi cab, in suburbia, a billboard or a flashy window graphic. Whatever the platform may be; the tops of cabs, the sides of buses, storefront windows, along with product packaging and the ground beneath one's feet, are now proving grounds for branding anything and everything.



These spaces are indeed the canvases for vibrant colors and graphics as well as innovation, selectivity and repetition that creative application specialists use in an alternative medium from dynamic and equally durable palettes of self-adhesive films.

"Add this to the endangered list: blank spaces," proclaimed a recent article in The New York Times. "Advertisers seem determined to fill every last one of them."

Whether in-store, outdoors, or on the package, the self-adhesive material that ultimately carries the brand message needs to perform under various conditions while continuing to vividly capture the consumer attention.

A creative application specialist knows the capabilities of these self-adhesive materials and stays on the pulse of self-adhesive innovations and developments, which warrants making these experts members of your collaborative teams.

FLEXcon, a creative application specialist and leading manufacturer and supplier of self-adhesive materials, was asked to consult with a label printer and retail candle maker with signature stores throughout the Northeast.

Because the only products the candle producer sells in their stores are their own, they had little competition on the internal landscape – but still needed to keep attracting consumers and influencing their buying decisions. Through a guided discussion by the specialist, representatives from the printing company and candle maker evaluated the store's use of banners and window graphics to advertise.

In reviewing the physical environment, FLEXcon suggested using carpet graphics to attract consumers' attention when they walked into the store. The printer was not aware of an adhesive that worked on carpeting, and the candle producer was impressed with the idea and opted for floor or carpet graphics to fulfill its branding need.

Creative application specialists bring the following material experience and comprehensive understanding of:

- The needs of advertisers and brand owners
- The realities of the advertising campaign budget with suggestions on ways to reduce overall application cost
- How repetition works in affecting consumer action. Most importantly, that an eye-catching advertising campaign needs graphic consistency in order to entice consumers for the life of the promotion
- Responsiveness to the reality of the endangered space and desire of advertisers and brand owners to be at the forefront of alternative media options
- Necessities for effective innovation of graphic applications through the use self-adhesive materials



Perhaps the importance of a particular aforementioned attribute is a creative design specialist's sensitivity to the campaign budget, which is exemplified by a large outdoor apparel retail company seeking to fulfill a point-of-purchase (POP) campaign using metal within its in-store POP displays.

The company researched the possibility of buying metal to utilize for its display to demonstrate the durability of their product and found it would be an incredibly costly proposition for the size of the nationwide campaign and a possible hindrance.

FLEXcon recommended a metalized flexible film instead. This film has a brushed aluminum look and performed as needed in the graphic advertising applications, saving production and delivery costs for printed ad materials, ultimately allowing the creativity of the advertising campaign and branding of the product to be implemented. The metalized film was bonded to a foam board, giving the appearance of heavy-gauge stainless steel without the weight, cost, and shipping charges.

Capturing Consumer Consciousness

Alternative media deployment by candle makers and outdoor clothiers alike are changes your clients will mostly likely want to make, for no matter what the strategy, the ultimate goal is to build brand recognition and driving consumer purchases.

From on container packaging to at-retail marketing to in-home product experience to out-of-home alternative media, advertisers and brand owners have a challenge. All of these types of advertising mediums build brand recognition, the right materials and applications make the effort successful. You may be well-versed on a multitude of media options, but knowing all the possibilities to execute the desired result is difficult. By adding a creative application specialist to the team in the early stages of strategic development, advertisers and brand owners can more effectively meet the challenge.



Claiming Your Alternative Media Homestead

An influx of advertisements and growth in alternative media are dominating the growing consumerism of the 21st century. Advertisers continue to beat the path of least resistance with an in-your-face attempt to quickly and effectively catch consumer attention.



The New York Times reported that consumer “viewing and reading habits are so scattershot now that many advertisers say the best way to reach time-pressed consumers is to try to catch their eye literally at every turn.” This is a far cry from the traditional way of engaging the consumer at home with TV spots, magazine and newspaper advertisements and it explains the \$363 million growth in alternative media, including out-of-home advertising, since 2000.

With current advertising and branding strategies focused on alternative outlets, the landscape of these surfaces, spaces, and places is continually evolving, and the increase of advertising locations also creates incredible opportunity for innovation, selectivity and repetition – keys to success in advertising and building brand awareness.

Innovation

An advertiser and brand owner ultimately stands out because of the creativity and innovation of the campaign.

While dependent on multiple factors for success, including the effective placement of that innovative campaign, it still begins with the idea and the successful graphic application developed from that concept. Masterfoods, a division of Mars Inc., employed these elements when it launched an advertising and branding campaign for the popular chocolate bar, Snickers.

The initial campaign featured two TV spots and a viral component, but for the first time, the Snickers promotion would also incorporate heavy outdoor marketing in the forms of billboards, taxi tops and buses in seven U.S. cities, including Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles.



The ads featured a play on the recognizable brown, red and blue-lettered logo, substituting the name brand with words capitalizing on Snickers' best features: "Peanutopolis, Hungerectomy, Nougatocity, Substantialicious and Satisfectellent."

The phonetic play on words was the work of the New York City office of TBWA/Chiat/Day, an international advertising agency that was awarded the

estimated \$40 million campaign, while FLEXcon's self-adhesive film materials for outdoor applications were chosen by a FLEXcon client to complete the NFL campaign pieces.

According to Vic Walia, senior marketing manager for the Snickers brand, sales jumped an average of 10 percent in the outdoor markets where the campaign initially ran. FLEXcon's out-of-home materials carried such branding messages for Snickers, as "the official chocolate bar sponsor of the National Football League." The ads extended to other outdoor advertising locations, including bus shelters and people movers. The NFL component expanded the outdoor campaign success, bringing the message to a concentrated audience of more than 70,000 during the Super Bowl.

The success of the campaign could well be due to the innovative way it played solely on the well-known Snickers logo, but it capitalized on consumer recognition of the brand through its signature colors and design. In essence, as recognizable as the logo was to the consumer, the innovative way it was used created more attention.

Here, the choice of placement and materials played a critical role in projecting brand image and message. The outdoor components of the innovative Snickers campaign, including a wrapped transit bus and a decorated bus shelter, were made possible using self-adhesive film. Self-adhesive film allows for unique graphics, while providing consistency for the brand look from application to application and creating highly effective campaign collateral.

The quality of the advertisement and relative impact of the brand logo and design remain eye-popping through proper color matching and ink decisions. Used in combination with an effective adhesive as well as a protective laminate, self-adhesive film can carry brand messages repeatedly to consumers in challenging locations, ultimately demonstrating consistency of the brand.

Selectivity and Repetition

Strategically selecting the best media to reach a target audience and then repeating that message through a comprehensive campaign, advertisers and brand owners are geared up for successful implementation of an innovative idea.

Consider this scenario, where a consumer is hit with a multitude of advertising messages and how the selectivity of those placements and repetition is important in standing out:

Jack leaves his 34th floor Manhattan apartment to run some errands. He walks a few blocks to the subway station. As he waits for his train, he observes an ad for a new razor and remembers he received a direct mailer magazine insert on this razor just a few days ago. Upon exiting the station, he sees a number of taxi top advertisements, a flashy window graphic advertising a sale, and a wrapped bus for the new exhibit at the Met. Jack walks into the drugstore with his list. He walks down an aisle, grabs shaving cream and when picking out razors, sees a shelf advertisement of that razor, recalling the previous ad he saw while waiting for his train, and decides to purchase it. As he moves through the store, he walks over a carpet graphic, picks up a coupon at a corner display and decides to buy a new lip balm at the check-out counter after seeing a bright counter mat advertisement, made with a metallic film. While walking back to the subway, Jack sees a bus station kiosk advertising the same Met exhibition. When his friend Jane calls his cell phone to confirm plans for the evening, Jack suggests they go to see the show at the Met and enjoy drinks on the rooftop deck.

This scenario was the very basis for a campaign for a new razor. Along with the assistance of creative application specialists in selecting the proper self-adhesive material, the advertiser was strategic in its selection of where to place messages to reach the target audience.

Further, this simple example shows the clutter of advertising messages a consumer encounters in just a short time period, as well as the influence that repeat messaging has in the consumer's purchase. The example also mirrors the findings of a 2006 study conducted by market research firm Yankelovich, which estimates a person living in the city 30 years ago saw up to 2,000 ad messages in a day. Today, however, that figure is north of 5,000 per day, and each advertising message that Jack encountered was made possible using self-adhesive film. With knowledge and guidance in the capabilities of these films, strategic selection and successful repetition with powerful complementing graphics is made possible.

Fulfilling the Application

While Masterfoods used non traditional outdoor advertising media, advertisers and brand owners sometimes do not fully grasp the benefits of, and opportunities with self-adhesive film in an alternative media market. Additionally, they are sometimes unaware of the benefits of engaging a creative application specialist, with vast knowledge of self-adhesive film as well as campaign experience, brand recognition and knowledge to influence consumer action.

An advertising agency is valuable for their creativity in concept and plan through knowledge of the market and a deep understanding of clientele competition.

Equally important players are the printing companies and the creative application specialist, who ultimately make the advertising campaign concept a reality. When it comes to the material and execution of an advertising and branding campaign, you can rely on these experts to develop the products to make creative advertising ideas solid and effective solutions for innovative, selective and repetitive advertising.

Where to Begin

Bringing in a creative application specialist at the initial stages of an advertising concept is an important step in negotiating the multitude and magnitude of alternative media options and blending them with traditional outlets to fulfill a well-rounded, integrated advertising campaign.

Their experience in creative applications ranging from product packaging to in-store shelf advertising, to outdoor campaigns, to stairwell advertising, expand the possibilities to be considered at the campaign development stage.

Ideas without implementation know-how take time to investigate, but advertisers and brand owners can get these answers quickly with a creative application specialist at the table.

In the end, successful creation of the advertising campaign components also relies on the materials. Self-adhesive films offer an array of capabilities and options – from varying base colors to gloss or textured finishes to a tactile feel. Specialty laminates offer varying surface looks and textures that can be added to the printed graphic, while protecting it. Adhesives provide flexibility as to where a message can be conveyed by allowing complex surfaces to be adhered to. Cement columns outdoors, seat back trays in airlines, advertising in parking lots including parking stripes, luxury suites in arenas and stadiums, and even taxi wheel covers that don't spin while driving– the possibilities are endless.

About FLEXcon

FLEXcon is an ISO 9001:2008 worldwide manufacturer of pressure-sensitive films and adhesives for applications including indoor and outdoor advertising, bonding/mounting, and product identification, safety, hazard, bar-coded, and primary labels. The company's Value-Better-Supreme (VBS) product offering is the most extensive standard product offering in the pressure-sensitive film industry. FLEXcon is also a leader in developing custom solutions to meet unique converting or application needs. FLEXcon's mission is to provide its customers the highest quality products with exceptional service. The company is headquartered in Spencer, Massachusetts, and has operations throughout North America and Europe, with distribution worldwide. For more information on FLEXcon, visit www.FLEXcon.com.



Let's Talk Solutions

Bring your challenges or next big idea to FLEXcon and we will work together to find a solution.

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