

CREATING

*Award Winning*

OUTDOOR



A GUIDE FOR DESIGNING EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING

# THE OBIE AWARDS

The OBIE Awards are one of the oldest and most prestigious honors for creative excellence in advertising. The OBIE name is derived from the ancient Egyptian Obelisk, a tall stone structure that was used to publicize laws and treaties thousands of years ago. Historians consider the obelisk the first true form of advertising.

Sometimes a picture is enough to express an emotion or idea. Sometimes a picture can say more than a thousand words. In fact, sometimes a picture can be worth an OBIE Award. These winning pictures need no explanation.



Apple Computer - Think different. **BULLETIN**



VW — Roundest Car In Its Class **BULLETIN**



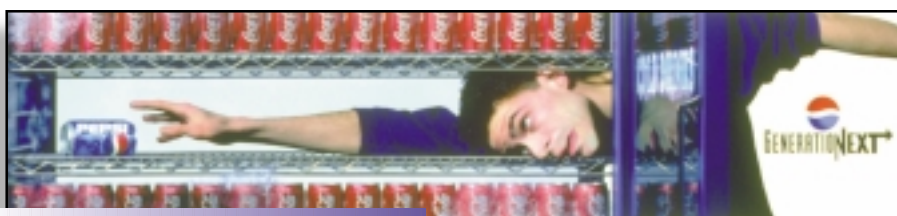
Kodak - Motion Picture Imaging **VINYL BUS WRAP**



Chick-fil-A - FRIENDZ DONT LET FRIENDZ EAT BEEF **BULLETIN**



Perrier - Drink **EUROPEAN STREET FURNATURE**



Pepsi - GenerationNext **KING-SIZE BUS SIDE POSTER**

# THE CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Designing outdoor advertising is visual storytelling. The expression of an idea can surprise viewers with words or excite them with pictures. Through the use of humor or drama, outdoor designs can influence consumer decisions and sell products. However, designing for the outdoor medium is a challenging communication task that

## INTERPRETATION

**RATIONAL** The viewer rationally interprets a message.

**EMOTIONAL** The viewer instinctively reacts to a message with emotion.

**CULTURAL** The viewer will determine if a message is relevant to them personally and will choose to either accept or reject the message.

requires the expression of a concept with clarity and austere focus. When outdoor advertising is well designed, it will entertain and intrigue consumers with arresting impact.

Outdoor designs depicting positive product or social benefits generally achieve better recall responses among viewers than designs with inaccurate or misleading product information. A

call to action is an effective technique for engaging a viewer. Outdoor displays that include Internet addresses, telephone numbers and special offers can produce impressive results.

Humor is a powerful design choice for outdoor executions. Both humorous and intriguing designs require less media weight to build awareness than mundane executions. The element of surprise can grab a viewer's attention. Sometimes a serious approach to outdoor design is appropriate and the results can be striking.

*"You know you've achieved perfection in design, not when you have nothing more to add, but when you have nothing more to take away."*

Antoine de Saint Exupery, Artist

The environment where outdoor advertising appears is considerably different from that of other media, since there is usually no programming or editorial associated with the medium. It is pure advertising. That's why innovative, aesthetic or humorous outdoor design executions are usually more memorable than literal advertising. People are intelligent, and good outdoor designs involve viewers by stimulating their imagination to solicit a response. A viewer interprets the impact of a message on three different levels: rational, emotional and cultural.



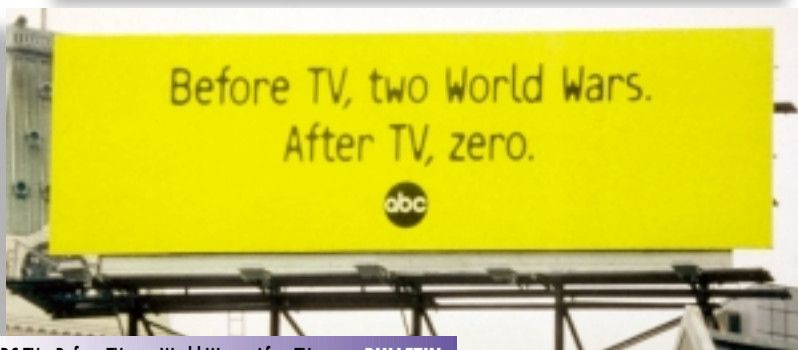
Apple Computer - Think different. WALL MURAL



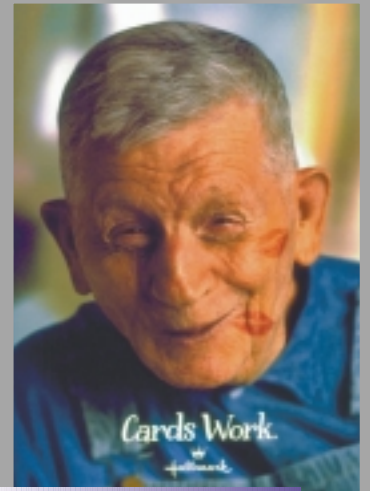
**HUMOR** Humor arouses the most favorable response among viewers. Humor often includes wit, an essential component for ensuring an effective response to intriguing or aesthetic designs.



Wisconsin State Fair - Bet You Can't **BULLETIN**



ABC TV - Before TV, two World Wars. After TV, zero. **BULLETIN**



Hallmark - Cards Work. **TRANSIT SHELTER**



United Way - Tunnel Light **TRANSIT SHELTER**



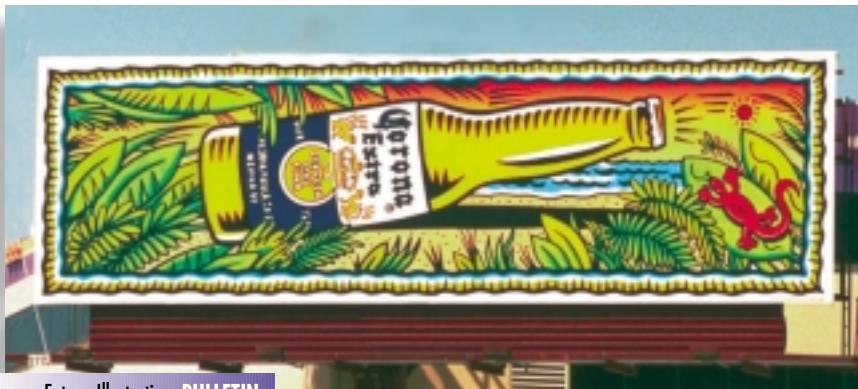
Levi's - OUR MODELS CAN BEAT UP THEIR MODELS. **PREMIERE SQUARE**

**INTRIGUE** Intrigue involves a viewer by using words or pictures that are not immediately comprehensible. Intrigue will often present a puzzle and solution relationship that requires mental focus. A single, intriguing design might be used to captivate a viewer. However, a message could also be conveyed using a series of related images that involve the viewer in a saga that unfolds over time.



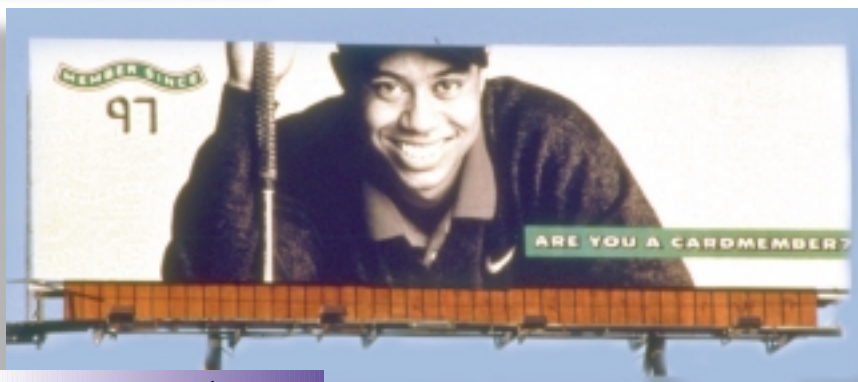
CDHS Anti-Smoking - I miss my lung, Bob. BULLETIN

**SURPRISE** Surprise stimulates a viewer using unexpected or unusual design elements. A surprised viewer will do a “double-take” and will generally experience an emotional response once the essence of the message is understood. Sometimes the message is serious, so a powerful image with a searing headline can be an effective design choice.



Corona Extra - Illustration BULLETIN

**AESTHETIC** Aesthetic designs present pleasurable images or ideas to a viewer. They may be soothing to observe or enjoyable to study in detail. Aesthetic designs are often more dependent on pictures than on words. Although vivid, colorful photography can aesthetically enhance outdoor designs, high quality illustrative artwork can be an even more effective design choice.



American Express - Tiger Woods BULLETIN



Yahoo! - Las Vegas Motel Sign BULLETIN



**SIMPLE IDEA** The outdoor viewing audience is mostly mobile. People travel swiftly in vehicles or walk at a brisk pace while they perform the activities of daily life. Mobility limits the potential viewing time of an outdoor message to only a few seconds. Because of limited exposure time, outdoor designs require a disciplined and succinct creative approach. However, high frequency is a fundamental strength of the medium and repeated exposures will ensure that a message is absorbed and retained over time. Less is more, much more when using outdoor advertising to communicate a message. The most effective designs focus

*“Solve the creative brief on a poster and you’ll have an idea that will work in virtually any medium.”*

David Bernstein



Godzilla - SIZE DOES MATTER. BULLETIN



NCAA Basketball - Long Shot BULLETINS

**BREVITY** Less than 7 words. Less than 3 elements.



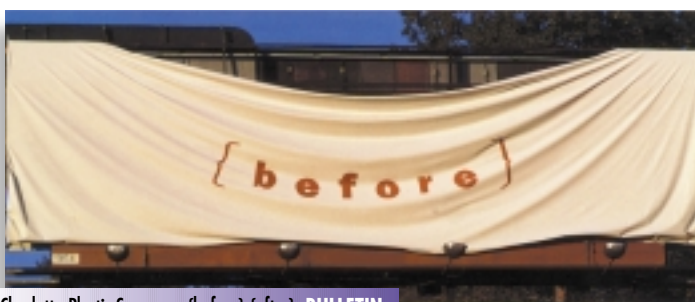
### THE KILLER B'S

#### BRANDING

Brand positioning is an important consideration and can effect product recall. The bottom right is a good location for outdoor units with a horizontal orientation. The top half of a design is the best location for a vertically oriented unit.



**BORDERS** Don't be confined by the boundaries of a frame. Crop generously and extend the elements of design beyond the physical restraints of an outdoor unit. Extensions or other three-dimensional embellishments will enhance an overall design by producing greater impact.



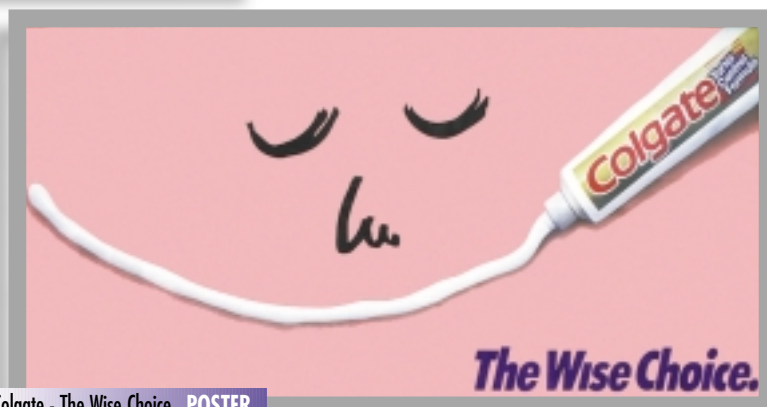
Charlotte Plastic Surgery - {before} {after} BULLETIN



on a single idea. An advertiser should consider the most important product benefit to communicate and express that message to consumers. Outdoor advertising should be a quick burst of essential information. Additional messages dilute the essence of the primary benefit and reduce the impact of the advertising. It is equally important to limit design elements. Too many elements may confuse a viewer or make them work too hard to understand the meaning of the message.



McDonalds - MMM POSTER



Colgate - The Wise Choice. POSTER



Trident - When you can't brush, chew. TRANSIT SHELTER



Target Stores - Fishing Cats. Now At The Minnesota Zoo. BULLETIN

*"Oh how difficult it is to be simple."*

Vincent Van Gogh

*"With an apple, I will astonish Paris."*

Paul Cezanne



Target Stores - Tasty New School Clothes. BULLETIN

# How to save up for a Porsche.



VW circa 1960's - How to save up for a Porsche. POSTER

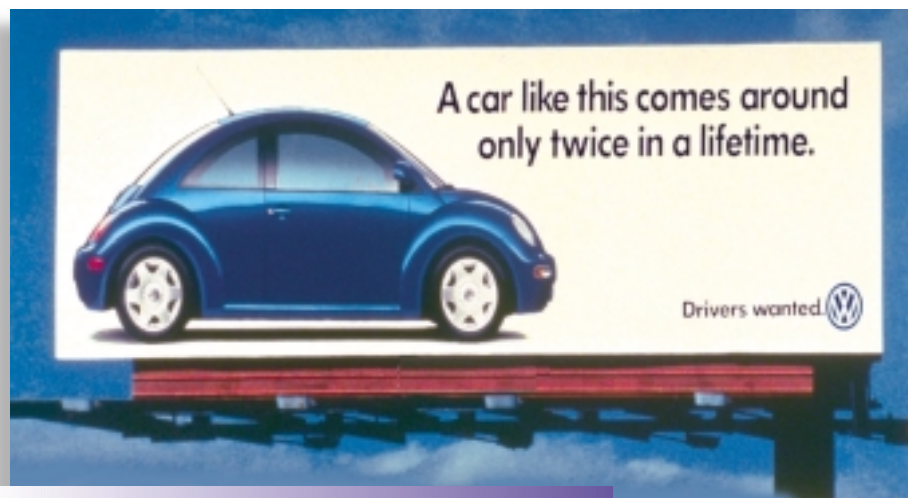
**ACCURACY** Express the most important idea concisely.

## THE ABC'S OF SIMPLICITY

**BOLDNESS** Present dynamic or provocative messages.

**CLARITY** Limit the number of words and pictures.

WHAT'S OLD  
IS NEW AGAIN...  
WELL DESIGNED  
OUTDOOR  
ADVERTISING IS  
TIMELESS.



VW circa 1990's — A car like this comes around only twice in a lifetime BULLETIN

### AN OLD TALE



*An apprentice hatter was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome signboard. He composed the words, John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money. The image of a hat was included.*

*He thought he would submit it to his friends for amendments. The first man thought the word hatter was redundant, because the words makes hats showed he was a hatter. The word was removed. The next man observed that the word makes should be omitted, because customers wouldn't care who made the hats. A third man thought the words for ready money were useless, because it was not the custom to sell on credit.*

*Sells hats exclaimed another man! No one expected that the hats would be given away. It was stricken out. So the inscription was reduced ultimately to John Thompson with the figure of a hat.*

Thomas Jefferson, Biographical Sketches, 1818



# SEEING IS BELIEVING

## COLOR

The spectrum of full color, vividly and faithfully reproduced, is one of outdoor advertising's distinct advantages. Designs bursting with brilliant color can evoke emotional responses that will inspire lasting impressions.

It is essential that outdoor designs are easy to read. Choose colors with high contrast in both hue and value. Contrasting colors are viewed well from great distances while colors with low contrast will blend together and obscure a message. In fact, research demonstrates that high color contrast can improve outdoor advertising recall by 38 percent.

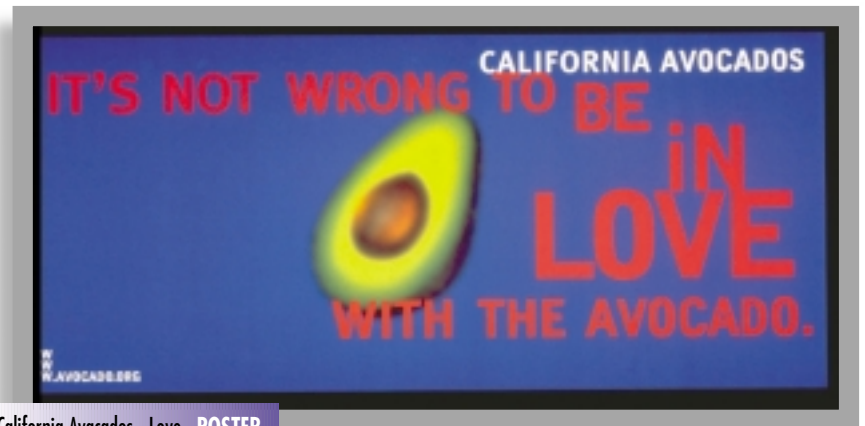
A standard color wheel clearly illustrates the importance of contrast in hue and value. Opposite colors on the wheel are complementary. An example is red and green. They represent a good contrast in hue, but their values are similar. It is difficult for the cones and rods of the human eye to process the wavelength variations associated with complementary colors. Therefore, a quivering or optical distortion is sometimes detected when two complementary colors are used in tandem.

Adjacent colors, such as blue and green, make especially poor combinations since their contrast is similar in both hue and value. As a result, adjacent colors create contrast that is hard to discern.

**YES**

**NO**

Alternating colors, such as blue and yellow, produce the best combinations since they have good contrast in both hue and value. Black contrasts well with any color of light value and white is a good contrast with colors of dark value. For example, yellow and black are dissimilar in the contrast of both hue and value. White and blue are also a good color combination.



California Avocados - Love POSTER

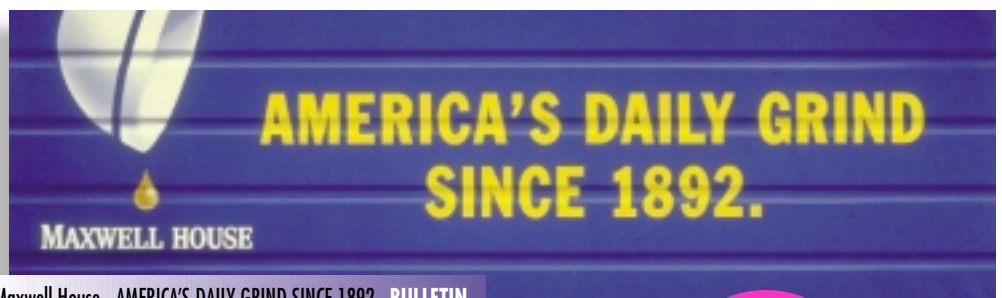
**HUE** is the identity of color, such as red, yellow or blue.

**VALUE** is the measure of lightness or darkness and can be separated into shades and tints.

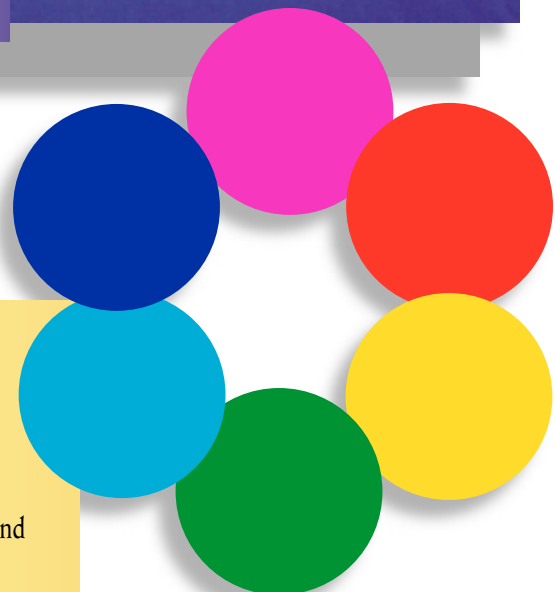
**CONTRAST**

**SHADE** are the relative darkness of colors.

**TINT** are the relative lightness of colors.



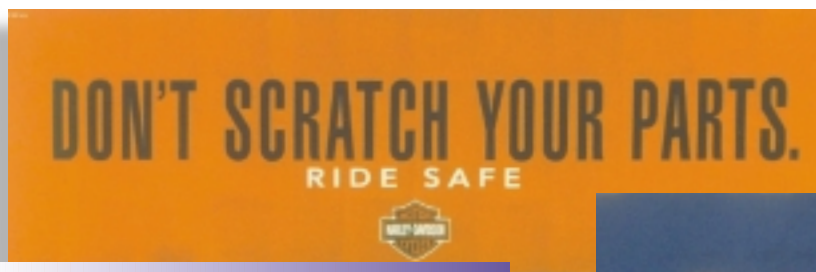
Maxwell House - AMERICA'S DAILY GRIND SINCE 1892. BULLETIN



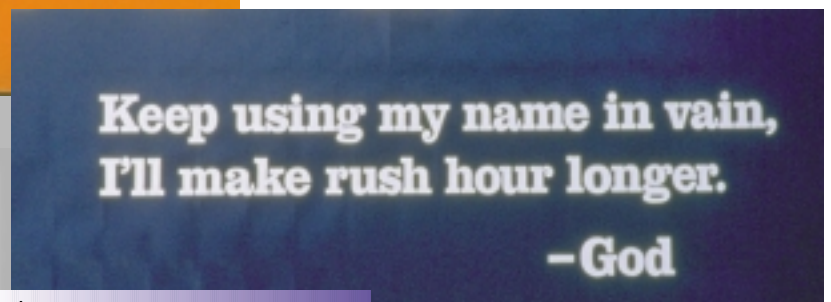
**FONTS** selected for outdoor designs must be easy to read from variable distances. Adequate spacing between letters, words and lines will enhance visibility. The relative size of letter characters is also an important consideration. Words comprised of both upper and lower characters are generally easier to read than words constructed solely of capital letters.



Cascade Clear Bottled Water - 50% WETTER THAN THE LEADING BRAND! POSTER



Harley Davidson - DON'T SCRATCH YOUR PARTS. RIDE SAFE BULLETIN



God - Keep using my name in vain, ... BULLETIN

**OVERCROWDING** Compressed type or too many words will reduce the clarity of a message.

### THE DON'TS

**EXCESSIVE** Extreme variations between ascending and descending letter segments and serifs greatly reduce legibility.

**ANEMIA** Fine typefaces will fade into a background, becoming indistinguishable as the viewing distance is increased.

**OVERWEIGHT** Heavy typefaces lose their basic shape when the viewing distance is increased.

**ILLEGIBILITY** Ornate and sans serif typefaces can be difficult to read, reducing the effectiveness of an outdoor design.

Fonts selected for outdoor designs must be easy to read from variable distances.

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# TACTICAL DESIGN

The world is a hectic and busy place. Outdoor advertising reaches people whenever and wherever they travel outside of their homes. Over time, outdoor advertising can consistently reinforce a message with crisp immediacy.

## Location, Location, Location

Outdoor advertising conveys the right message, to the right audience, at the right time, in the right place. Understanding the dynamics of the marketplace is essential for designing effective outdoor campaigns. In the case of Apple computer, the side of a bus was the only logical place to feature an image of civil rights icon Rosa Parks. Finding the relevant and hidden relationships between the message and the environment makes the advertising smart.

Although many outdoor panels have a horizontal format, some displays are vertical. The physical orientation of an outdoor unit will significantly affect the placement of design elements such as product identity and the headline. Orientation will also affect the overall balance of a design. It is important to remember that geography, demography and the orientation of a display are all necessary considerations when designing for the outdoor medium.

Another important factor is distance. The impact that an outdoor unit will produce is relative to the distance from where it is viewed. A transit shelter display, when positioned curbside and in close proximity to vehicular traffic and pedestrians, can have the same impact as a bulletin.

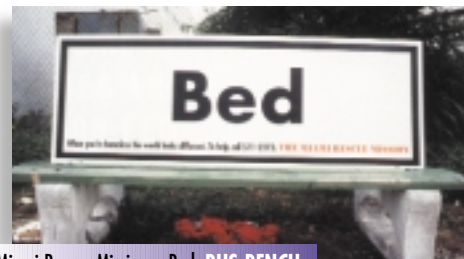
Time is a factor. It is important to consider the amount of time required for a viewer to fully perceive an outdoor message. The actual viewing time for a specific outdoor unit will vary by location and media format. A subway station poster design might contain a complex message, since viewers may have several minutes to reflect on the message while they wait for or ride on a train. Mobile advertisements should generally use fewer design elements than stationary outdoor units.



Apple Computer - Rosa Parks VINYL BUS WRAP



California Pizza Kitchen - THEY PREFER YOU LAY OFF THE GARLIC... BULLETIN



Miami Rescue Mission - Bed BUS BENCH



Miami Rescue Mission - Kitchen DUMPSTER

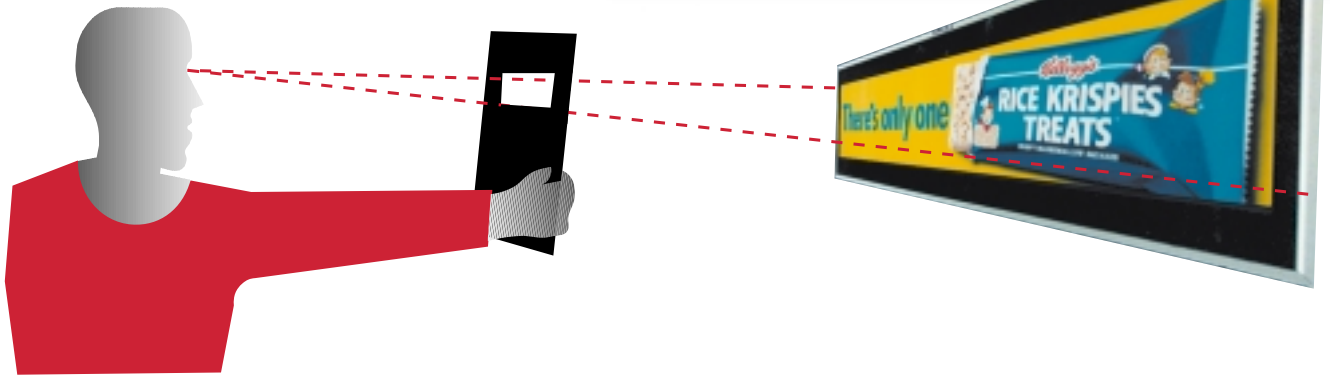


Miami Rescue Mission - House TRANSIT SHELTER

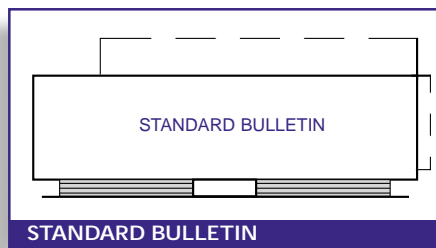
# ADVIEW<sup>SM</sup>

## Consider these important outdoor design guidelines when using the AdView guide:

- *Are the fonts easy to read?*
- *Is the letter size large enough?*
- *Does the spacing between the letters, words and lines aid legibility?*
- *Do the colors properly convey a high contrast of value and hue?*



AdView is an easy and economical method for pre-testing outdoor creative designs. Using the Adview guide, accurate outdoor viewing distances are simulated so that the readability of an advertising message may be evaluated and altered, if necessary, before final production commences.



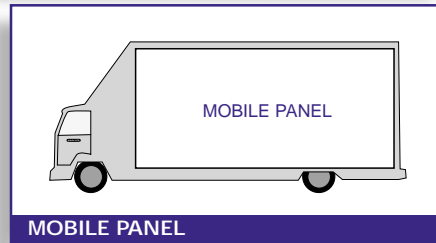
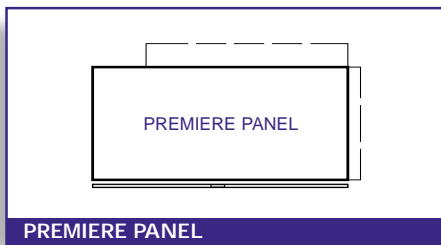
## Size Matters

Size and production specifications for the most common outdoor displays

### Standard Bulletin

Viewing area: 14'h x 48'w

Embellishments are often optional  
Painted or printed on vinyl



### Premiere Panel

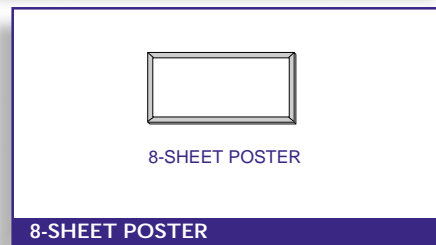
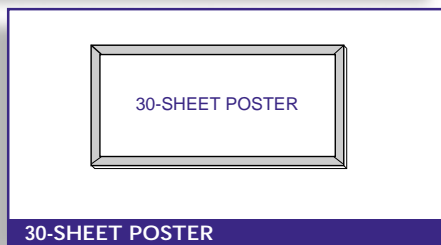
Viewing area: 12'3"h x 24'6"w

Embellishments are often optional  
Painted or printed on vinyl

### Mobile Panel

Viewing area: 10'5"h x 22'8"

Silkscreen or lithography on paper



### 30-Sheet Poster

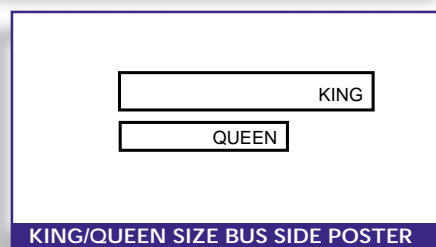
Viewing area: 10'5"h x 22'8"

Printed on paper

### 8-Sheet Poster

Viewing area: 5'h x 11'w

Printed on paper



### Transit Shelter Poster

Viewing area: 67'h x 46" w

Printed on transparent paper

### King-Size Bus Side Poster

Viewing area: 30" h x 144" w

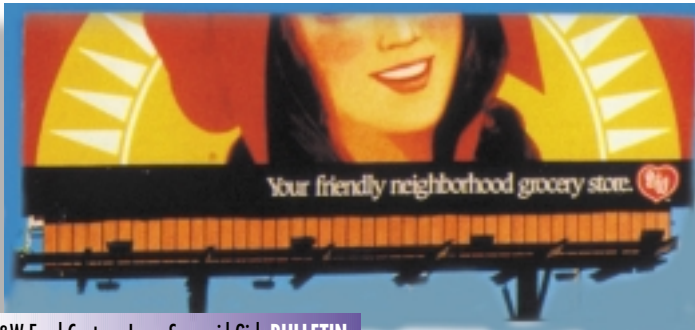
Printed on Fasson vinyl

### Queen-Size Bus Side Poster

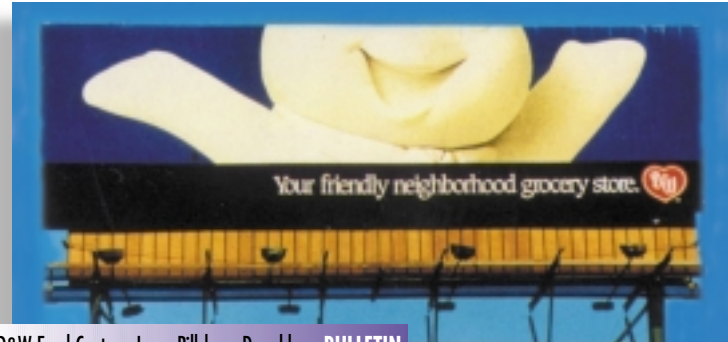
Viewing area: 30" h x 88" w

Printed on Fasson vinyl





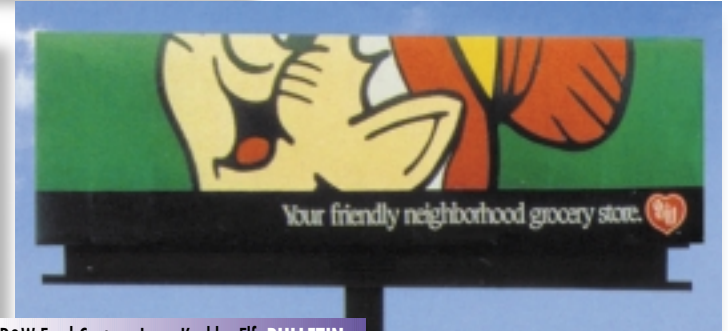
D&W Food Centers, Inc. - Sunmaid Girl **BULLETIN**



D&W Food Centers, Inc. - Pillsbury Doughboy **BULLETIN**



D&W Food Centers, Inc. - Mr. Clean **BULLETIN**



D&W Food Centers, Inc. - Keebler Elf **BULLETIN**

## Recency

Outdoor advertising is a frequency medium that provides multiple exposures to a message throughout the full duration of a campaign period. Recency is another important factor. Defined in the book, *When Ads Work* by John Philip Jones, recency reminds people who are already in the marketplace that a brand, store or service is a good choice. Consistent and repeated exposure to an outdoor message over an extended period of time will maintain high levels of advertising awareness and recall. To avoid memory decline, multiple design executions for a campaign can be implemented simultaneously or introduced at appropriate intervals during the campaign period.

## FACTORS AFFECTING MESSAGE RETENTION

**MULTIPLE EXECUTIONS** Campaigns that use multiple executions and a variety of outdoor display formats deliver impact and continuity that can extend the awareness of a campaign over time.

**MEDIA WEIGHT** Outdoor campaigns with heavy media weight can experience rapid awareness decline once consumers learn the message benefit. However, fresh creative executions introduced over time will continue to build the awareness of a campaign.

**ESTABLISHED PRESENCE** Effective outdoor designs, using an appropriate level of media weight, can sustain awareness after a campaign has ended. Studies have shown there is no significant drop in awareness up to six weeks after a campaign concludes.

**TARGET AUDIENCES** The composite of primary and subsequent target audiences can affect the longevity of an outdoor campaign. By positioning an outdoor message in relation to specified geographic locations, the message will more accurately impact the intended demographic audiences.

**COMPETITION** Competitive influences can affect the longevity of an outdoor campaign. Competitors who advertise similar product benefits or use similar design elements in a campaign will confuse a viewer.

**SEASONALITY** People are mobile year-round, so outdoor advertising is not affected by seasonal cycle of behavior. However, it may be unwise to select design elements that are associated with Christmas as part of a June campaign.



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