

# OOH: The ever-evolving medium with staying power

While it's certainly not a new medium, out-of-home (OOH) is one of the most innovative, tech-savvy and fastest-growing mediums there is. Even during these turbulent economic times, OOH has more than held its own. In fact, according to data from TNS Media Intelligence, the measured ad spending on outdoor declined by significantly less than it did on harder-hit mediums like radio, newspaper and magazine during the first half of 2009.

There's a reason advertisers keep coming back to OOH, even during tough times. "The thing that makes it stronger than TV, radio and print is quite simple: you can't turn the page or switch it off," says Tom Murphy, Creative Director at St. John's-based agency Target, which has crafted award-winning OOH work for clients like Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism.

As other media becomes more fragmented, OOH remains a consistently reliable way to reach the masses. "OOH is a medium you can't avoid," says Luc Sabbatini, president of Astral Media Outdoor. "It's the last mass medium, but it's also very targeted."

Nancy Green, president of Fairway Media Sales, points to OOH's ability to reach people at all times. "OOH catches people when they're in the midst of living their lives," she says. "People are out more than they are sitting at home watching TV."

As technology helps OOH become an even more targeted medium, industry insiders predict that the category will continue to surpass other media. "Outdoor is about to grow in an explosive fashion," says Qadeer Ahmed, president of Pinpoint Media Group.

As the category grows, savvy OOH media providers are constantly innovating to offer you solutions you may not have even thought of.

## BEYOND BILLBOARDS

With bylaws restricting billboards like the one recently passed in Toronto, many media suppliers are looking beyond the traditional OOH staple.

For example, Astral Media Outdoor aggressively pursued the street furniture contract in Toronto two years ago, and won. It's a win Astral is proud of, and takes very seriously. "We have great designs for the columns and the shelters and the benches," says Sabbatini. "We want to not only beautify the city, but to also be very efficient for the advertisers. Our shelters are clean and well-maintained. We work very hard on the upkeep."

Sabbatini says Astral's research into global best-practices led the company to pursue the street furniture contract. "If you look at Europe, where there are many restrictions, what's left is street furniture," he says. "We'd like to bid for more street furniture in Montreal and Ottawa."



Above: Cadbury Chocolate branded coffee sleeves from Fairway Media Sales  
Below: branded coffee sleeves promoting an "enter to win" contest

Fairway Media Sales is another company that thinks beyond billboards. It provides a network of independent and micro-chain cafes across Canada with branded coffee sleeves. Telus, Sephora, GM, RBC, Rogers, Canwest and many more have run more than one campaign with Fairway. "We can put your message in front of your target for 30 minutes or more with no competition," says Green. The advertising sleeves can double as coupons or ballots for in-store promotions. They can even have small samples like gum or mints attached to them. "I am anxious to have a Canadian advertiser use the thermo ink sleeves that reveal the message when hot liquid hits the cup" says Green.

Pinpoint Media Group has an extensive network of both static and digital signs in retail stores across Canada. Its most impressive selling point, though, is its unrivalled library of data that can correlate 850 data points to every OOH sign across North America. "I can tell you where your best customers are, and I can tie that to media, one sign at a time," says Ahmed.

## MICRO-TARGETING

Pinpoint's ability to micro-target OOH signs, both digital and static, has broad appeal – from large companies that want to

## FAIRWAY PUTS YOUR AD IN THEIR HANDS

Does your target group frequent cafés while going about their daily lives? You may want to enlist the services of Fairway Media Sales. The company provides branded coffee sleeves to a targeted network of independent and micro-chain cafes across the country. "We can put your message in front of your target for 30 minutes or more with no competition," says Nancy Green, Fairway's president. Fairway can even attach samples to coffee sleeves, like mints, gum or shampoo. The sleeves are clean and small, so consumers can remove them and take them home to refer to later. Thermo ink applications reveal the message when hot liquid fills the cup.

Fairway hand-delivers the coffee sleeves to its network of cafes across the country. "We have one-on-one relationships with the cafes," says Green. "They become brand ambassadors for your product."



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## SPONSORED SUPPLEMENT

grow sales in specific areas to small companies that only want to buy 7 signs. In the latter scenario, if you're only buying a handful of signs, you want to make sure they're highly targeted to make it worth your while.

Pinpoint has data aggregated from a combination of 35 years worth of private data, as well as 850 categories derived from public data sources. Pinpoint maps out the data so clients can see exactly which neighborhoods are over-consuming their products as well as under-consuming. "There has never been micro-targeted data like this that has been actionable," says Ahmed. Clients, including large multinational corporations, pay for monthly subscriptions to access Pinpoint's data to find the optimal areas to buy their OOH signs. Pinpoint sells clients space within its own inventory, and also works with other media companies to help clients secure the best space possible. "We think we can work with media buyers to aggregate the space," says Ahmed. "Other outdoor companies are our friends."

Fairway can also offer clients highly targeted campaigns. "We can do unique distributions," says Green. For example, one client wanted a presence in sports facilities in B.C. So, Green placed sponsored sleeves in hockey rinks, swimming pools and community fitness centers across the province. And when cosmetics giant Sephora wanted to promote a new store

opening in Ottawa's Rideau Centre it enlisted Fairway to place coffee sleeves in close proximity to the location. It was so successful they ran again for the Vancouver openings.

Astral is no stranger to targeting, either. "At Astral, we have GIS, which is a geo-targeting system with research that can tell you specific characteristics about your demo," says Sabbatini. "We can determine where they work, live and play



Pinpoint Digital Media at Point of Sale

so when you do an OOH campaign, there's less waste when you don't have to buy OOH everywhere in the city, province or country." Astral can identify optimal areas, and set you up with its inventory in the relevant locations.

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### EMBRACING NEW TECHNOLOGY

Astral is constantly looking for ways to leverage new technology. Three years ago, it started working on a plan for exterior digital billboards. "It was a dream, and now it's a reality," says Sabbatini. Astral has a network in Montreal of 10 screens that has been up and running since June. "We have a broadcast centre. It's new terminology for OOH - usually it's just plywood and posters. Now we have a broadcast centre with a full wall of screens where we can see each one of our billboards across Canada." Astral has just launched a nine face digital network in Vancouver too, just in time for the Olympics. It will launch a similar network in Toronto soon.

Even Fairway is leveraging technology with its coffee sleeves, having partnered with Bluetooth and wifi providers to match the message appearing on the sleeves.

### GREEN & CLEAN

Astral remains committed to being green and clean. It now has 40 solar transit ad shelters across Toronto. "We're the only company in Canada to have solar-powered ad shelters," says Sabbatini. Astral has also partnered with BIXI, Montreal's new public bike-sharing network. Astral has the rights to the 200 ad spaces on BIXI locations throughout Montreal - most of them downtown. "We're very eco-friendly. That's why we're using solar, that's why we've partnered with BIXI, that's why the vinyl on our superboards is recycled vinyl," says Sabbatini.

Fairway is also environmentally conscientious, and offers a compostable product made with recycled materials.

### OOH IS HERE TO STAY

While the future of other advertising media is unclear as they become more fragmented, there's nothing uncertain about the continued strength of OOH.



Astral Media Outdoor's Transit Shelter Network

"OOH is still a powerful medium because it presents an amazing and challenging creative opportunity," notes Target's Murphy. "It's a quiet medium that allows the consumer to break away from the near-constant noise pollution in their environment and concentrate on what's in front of them."

Sabbatini points out OOH's edge over fragmentation in other categories. "I think the number of TV stations there are now is about 10 times higher than it was 10 years ago," he says.

"Same with radio, newspaper and magazines. With outdoor, it's the same as it was, but circulation is growing as people are outside more."

Ahmed expects increased access to targeted data will help accelerate OOH's growth. "Outdoor in general is going to be very data-driven," he predicts. Green highlights OOH's unique ability to reach consumers in the "real" world. "I can put your ad right into the hands of the consumer," says Green. "How many other mediums can you say that about?"

Green's point is well taken; there are only so many things you can do with less flexible mediums like TV and radio. But with OOH, the possibilities are truly limitless. ♦



Astral Media Outdoor's Digital Network

### ASTRAL: ALWAYS INNOVATING

Astral Media Outdoor is constantly focused on finding new ways to serve its clients better.

Innovation, creativity and business intelligence hallmark how Astral Media Outdoor serves its clients.

Astral Media Outdoor is always on the lookout for ways to harness new technology. In Montreal and Quebec City airports, Astral has built a Bluetooth network that works in conjunction with the advances in mobile technology. When people pass a Bluetooth enabled ad, they are beamed a message to their phone. In other technology advancements, Astral has been testing 2D/QR codes in conjunction with its street furniture inventory in Toronto. Advertisers can increase

their audiences' engagement levels by including a QR code within their ad. Audiences are invited to take a picture of the QR code with their mobile phone paving a gateway to mobile information and interactivity.

At a time when the new Toronto bylaw places restrictions on traditional billboard space, Astral is placing its bets both on digital billboards and scrolling ads. Digital provides advertisers the ability to change their messaging in real time leading to a world of creative possibilities. And, rather than selling the three scrolling panels in shelters and columns to three different clients, Astral is offering them all to the same client to give them more creative opportunities. Clients can run the same execution one after the other, tell a story with three different panels, or run different time-sensitive panels throughout the day. "Our goal wasn't to add more inventory, it was to give creative people more flexibility," says Sabbatini. Astral is also leading eco-friendly innovations, with 40 solar-powered Transit Shelters in Toronto.

### PINPOINT TAKES TARGETING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

"Picture every sign in North America being surrounded by 850 categories of data," says Qadeer Ahmed, president of Pinpoint Media Group. "There has never been micro-targeted data like this that has been actionable."

Until Pinpoint came along, that is. It boasts 35 years worth of private data, and 850 categories of data gleaned from public sources. This level of data, coupled with Pinpoint's ability to hone in on exact locations, means marketers can see which neighborhoods consume more rutabagas, for example, and in turn run a billboard about rutabaga recipes in that area. "This lets people get all the specificity of the internet times ten," says Ahmed.

Pinpoint's clients pay a monthly subscription fee to access the intricate data. Pinpoint has a significant network of retail signage across North America, and also works closely with other outdoor media sellers to make sure its clients - both large and small businesses - have maximum exposure in optimal areas.



Pinpoint Wallmedia - targeted, large format media behind cash counter

## The 30 Minute Ad

Coffee Sleeve Advertising by Fairway Media Sales can give you 30 minutes in the hands of your target group. Here's how:

**Exclusivity:** You are the only advertiser on the sleeve in that café for the campaign duration.

**Geographic Targeting:** Narrow your reach to postal FSA's or a radius around a specific location.

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