



NIGERIAN OUTDOOR
ADVERTISING:
CONCEPTS, CONSTRUCTS,
ISSUES AND TRENDS



Adeolu Tejumade





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Part III



OUT DOOR ADVERTISING IN NIGERIA

CHAPTER NINE

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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One of the most visible activities in business in the contemporary world is advertising. This assertion is based on the premise that the product you produce quietly in your factory suddenly becomes known the moment you advertise it. Advertising turns a Mr. nobody to a Mr. somebody the moment it is used to promote a business concern. Advertising has assumed a notable position in the contemporary time; that is, it is not just a mere means of getting to know product features, how to use product/product benefits and where to buy products among other uses, but also, how we know who we are (Tejumaiye 2003). There is hardly anyone living and working in the contemporary world that is not influenced (positively or negatively) by advertisement.

Advertising has become ubiquitous; that is, every day, and for most part of our lives, we see, read and hear many advertisements. Even if you do not read newspapers, do not

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watch television, or do not listen to radio or you walk around the streets with your eyes down, you will find advertising almost unavoidable. According to Mandel (1974), "of all business activities, probably none is better known, more widely discussed and more highly criticised by the American public than advertising". The reason, according to Mandel, is that advertising has become the spokesman of American business. This assertion, no doubt, is applicable to other countries which practise either free market or regulated economy, including Nigeria and even Cuba and China.

As the world industrial output has grown, so has the socioeconomic, political, environmental, cultural and educational uses and effects of advertising. Perhaps, the effect of advertising can be likened to the opening shot in a pool or billiards game (Billiard Ball Principle). The principle states that the moment a company begins to advertise, a chain reaction of economic (possibly, uneconomic events as well) events takes place. Usually, the extent of the chain reaction is very difficult to measure; but like in billiards game, its scope is certainly related to the force of the shot; and because it inevitably occurs at the same time as a host of other events, even the direction of the chain reaction is often in dispute.

Some of the questions the billiard ball principle have raised include: Does advertising affect the value of products? Does advertising raise or lower prices? Does advertising promote competition or discourage it and what is the effect of advertising on the total demand? Other questions arising from the Billiard ball principle include: does advertising make more consumer's choices available or less? How does advertising influence the business cycle? What role does advertising play in national income and what role does advertising play in national development? A tangentially related question to the questions raised above is: Of what environmental impact(s) is advertising?

This chapter is poised to answer the last question with particular emphasis on outdoor advertising in Nigeria.

Perhaps, it needs to be stated herein that the significance of the environment to man cannot be over emphasised. The environment represents the totality of the capability and capacity of man. It is the sum total of all external conditions which may act upon an organism of community to influence its development or existence (Faniran, 1997). Faniran stressed that the surrounding air, light, moisture, temperature, wind, soil and other organisms are part of the environment, or environmental factors. The environment comprises a complicated system of social activities originating from culture or civilisation Faniran concluded.

Adegoroye (1997), described the environment as "the aggregate of the physical and biological entities of man and supporting the existence of man on land, in water and air". According to Ogwu (2002), the environment is the sum of all external conditions which may act upon an organism of community to influence its development or existence. Ogwu emphasised that air, light, moisture, temperature, wind, soil and other organisms are part of the environment. There is no doubt that the environment does not exist in a vacuum, just as it does not exist in isolation of other organisms or community. The environment surrounds something (an organism or community) with which it has close interactions. According to Ogwu (2002), the environment is the totality of organisms (natural, man made, living, non living, happenings and influences); the aggregate of these organisms forms the totality and on them is survival and life dependent.

The environment of citizens of a country is diverse, and it encompasses: [1] Individual environment:(men, women and children) related to one another as members of families, societies, groups etc. [2] Artificial environment (man made) objects such as

clothing, furniture, utensils, decorative materials, tools, machines, bridges, cities, villages, irrigation, canals, factories, transport etc. [3] Plants and animals environment - domestic and wild. [4] Natural environment comprising physical or biotic environment; lithosphere rock such as minerals, land forms etc; atmospheric gases such as moisture, weather, climate, atmospheric processes and elements; hydrosphere such as water vapor, liquid, solid ice; biological or biotic environment; plants; animals [5] The sociological environment comprising everything around us both living and nonliving developed by mankind through his skills, social institutions etc. The sociological environment comprises things, artifact and phenomena developed by man to facilitate his existence on the earth. Advertising can be classified under this category.

ADVERTISING PROCESS AND ADVERTISING MEDIA

Advertising begins from the brief of the advertisers. After the brief has been given by the advertiser, advertising agencies go into research and eventually come out with a solution. The process is thus: **Client Brief-->Research-->Objectives Strategies-->Implementation-->Budget-->Evaluation-->Contingency**. Aside the first step, the other six steps are the purview of the advertising agencies though the steps are implemented by the advertising agencies with due consultation with the advertiser.

There are four participants in the advertising process. These are: the advertiser, the advertising agency, the media and the suppliers. The functions of these participants overlap to the extent that their functions can hardly be separated. This study dwells more on the advertising media because the out-of-home media are one of the major media of advertising. The other media include: the print media, the electronic media, direct mail and digital interactive media (internet). However, technology has

spawned a host of other new advertising media in the contemporary world that even the most astute media planner and buyer has to be confounded. For instance, in the contemporary world, advertising appears on video cassettes and computer disks. Similarly, computers dial telephones and deliver messages by stimulating speech or even playing a prerecorded message. Equally, computers are being used in the contemporary time to put callers on hold and prerecorded advertising messages are played. Also, today advertisers copiously make use of cyberspace to advertise products.

The major categories of the out-of-home media in Nigeria are outdoor advertising (billboards), transit media (advertisements on buses and taxis), posters, flying banners, mobile billboards and lately visual billboards in key industrial and populated cities such as Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Ikeja and Surulere. Globally, outdoor advertising is the first advertising medium ever used in advertising history. According to Arens [2004, p583], "the use of outdoor advertising dates back to 5,000 years ago when hieroglyphics on obelisks directed travellers". Outdoor advertising is today very widely used all over the world. Its wide use is due to the advantages inherent in it which include: accessibility, reach, frequency, geographical flexibility, demographic flexibility, creative flexibility, impact and low cost relative to other media.

THEORETICAL SETTING OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

The environment we inhabit is a mass of visual, aural and other stimuli. Several thousands of signals and messages compete for our attention not just on daily basis but on minute basis. This explains why it is said that our present global society is in the age of an information super highway. No advertisement whatever its ultimate objective can succeed unless it can stand out

from the crowd of other advertisements. An attempt at discussing theories of advertising is an attempt at examining how advertising works; just as it is an attempt at examining the models of advertising because in actual sense, there is no theory of advertising but models on how advertising works. There is no theory of advertising because all the various models on how advertising works do not completely fulfill the criteria of theory such as: heuristic provocativeness, clear cut explanation of cause and effect, predictability and thoroughness, among others. Albeit, for an advertisement to be successful, it must be seen, remembered, believed and acted upon. This assertion is based on the generally accepted maxim that "it is not enough for an advertisement to arrest attention; it must make people want to read, want to listen, want to watch and eventually want to purchase and repurchase regularly."

Various models on how advertising works have been proposed. These models include: [1]. Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA), [2]. Defining Advertising Goals for Measure Advertising Results (DAGMAR), [3]. Everett Roger's six stages model: Unawareness, Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Trial and Repeat Purchase, [4], the Inherent drama model of Leo Burnett, [5], the Unique selling proposition model of Roser Reeves, [6], the Appeal to Passions model of Bill Berbach and [7], the brand image model of David Ogilvy.

While the AIDA model chronicled the stages through which an advertisement must take the prospective audience to be successful, the DAGMAR model lays down that all communication that aims at the ultimate objective of setting a sale must move the prospect. These stages are referred to as the four levels of understanding. The levels according to the model Defining Advertising Goals for Measure Advertising Results (DAGMAR) are: unawareness- the prospect must first be aware of the existence of the brand or company; comprehension- the

prospect must arrive at an understanding of what the product is, what it can do for him/her; conviction- the prospect must gain a mental disposition to want to buy the product, and lastly action- the prospect is compelled to put his/her money down.

Everett Roger's model prescribes six stages. These are from unawareness to awareness; to eliciting interest; to producing evaluation; to stimulating trial and lastly, to ensuring that product trial leads to repeat purchase that will crystallise into a habit, that is adoption of the product/brand. Albeit, instructive as the above mentioned models are, they are a bit oversimplified. The models presuppose that an advertisement or an advertising campaign has to work linearly. Research has however shown that a lot of would-be consumers do not reach decisions or behave in a logical way; that is, they do not necessarily gather all the information they can relating to a product; they wait for their feelings or desires to surface and then take some form of action concerning the product (Evans, 1992). Research has shown that some consumers do not need to be taken through cognitive steps, conative steps and behavioural steps before they take action. Some consumers are highly impulsive; therefore, they do not really need much convincing before making purchases (Evans, 1992).

Another observation from the models above is the idea that the task of advertising is one of missionary conversion, that is, making unaware non-buyers into purchasers. While it is true in some cases, the objectives of a lot of advertising messages are, however, much narrower and much more specific. For instance, advertising messages aimed at reinforcing brand loyalty, or aim at reminding and reassuring consumers, will as well aim at projecting brand or corporate images. The other four models of advertising that will be discussed below are closer to being called theory than the "three models discussed earlier". The aforesaid is premised on the fact that the "three models discussed earlier"

merely draw attention to sound principles inherent in advertising campaigns.

Rosser Reeves USP: The USP model of how advertising works is based on the conviction that the consumer tends to remember one thing from the advertisement of a product, that is, one strong claim or concept. The belief includes that for an advertisement to be successful, such advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer and the proposition must be strong that it can move mass millions to the product (Daramola, 1993). According to Reeves, a USP is a distinctive claim that sells a brand (Evans, 1992). USP is based on some physical differentiation of the brands advertised. Reeves stressed that once an important physical differentiation point is identified, then the brand advertising is used to present this difference in a meaningful and persuasive way to the target audience.

Reeves maintained that a brand could not be effectively advertised unless the consumer is offered a distinctive reason to buy the product or service. According to Reeves, it is, however, the job of the advertising team to examine the product in order to find and articulate reasons for the consumer to buy. Reeves emphasised that USP could not be developed for all brands and that those brands without a USP are doomed for failure in the market place. He suggested three guidelines for developing a USP strategy. [1] The claim must be specific; [2] the claim must be unique, that is, it must be a benefit competition that others can not or do not offer, and lastly [3] the claim must be regarded by consumers as important and thus one that will sell the brand. One big problem with the USP approach of Rosser Reeves is the assumption that consumers behave rationally. This however is not true in all cases. Besides, in this highly competitive contemporary society we inhabit, getting a truly unique product may not be possible. This is because ideas and concepts cannot be patented.

The Inherent Drama of Leo Burnett. According to Burnett, there is what is called inherent drama in products or services, and that it is the duty of advertising practitioners to identify this drama and capitalise on it through advertising (Evans, 1992). Burnett is of the opinion that drama is the most direct route to the mind of the consumer, and that every product has that inherent drama in it. He stressed that the advertiser must lay the drama in the minds of the target audience with great simplicity, believability and directness without tricks or obvious borrowed interest. According to Burnett, the inherent drama is what the producer had in mind in the first place when he/she conceived the product. Burnett stressed that advertising that draws on this drama gives the effect of news, even in an old product and has about it a feeling of naturalness, which gives the audience an emotional reward and makes him/her feel good about it. The problem with this model is that drama is not universal; what is dramatic to one person may not be to another person. Therefore, the advertiser is confronted with identifying the drama that appeals to a large number of targeted audiences; this is not an easy task.

Appeal to Passions of Bill Bernbach. According to Bill Bernbach, advertising does not work unless you feel it in the gut. This statement underlies Bernbach belief that the most effective advertising appeals to underlying motivations. Bernbach pointed out that the average person does not reach a decision on purely intellectual or rational basis; that it is necessary to appeal to both the head and the heart (ration and emotion). He stated that an appeal to underlying emotional drives is by far the most important. Bernbach stressed that the brain is not an instrument of logic at all, and that it is an organ of survival like fangs and claws.

Bernbach analysis of human nature and advertising led him to the conclusion that human behaviour is motivated by a set of basic drives or ruling passions that are unchanging. He concluded that

when you burrow deep enough into any fashionable, carefully rationalised, socially approved proposition, you will always find one of these Neanderthal drives lurking at the bottom, which is why appeal to logic seldom works. He was also of the opinion that research plays a limited role in the process of developing outstanding advertising. The question with Bill Bernbach's appeal to passions includes his conclusion that the average person does not reach a decision to buy on purely intellectual or rational basis. This may not be as accurate as he thinks.

Brand Image of David Ogilvy. According to Ogilvy, just as persons have images or personalities, so do brands (Evans, 1992). Ogilvy stressed that a key part of framing a creative strategy is deciding what image or personality would best serve a brand. Once this is done, every advertisement should be designed to contribute to the desired brand image. According to Ogilvy, it is wise to associate brands with an image of quality. He stressed that brands be given a first class ticket. In his view, giving the brand a first class ticket is particularly true for products consumed in a visible social setting. He cited examples of Coca Cola, Marlboro cigarette and Schweppes as examples of the application of the brand image concept. Ogilvy emphasised that projecting a personality through advertising is accomplished by surrounding the brand with symbols or context that create the desired aura, image or association. However, brand image advertising focuses on the users of the brand rather than on the product itself. The brand image approach seems to be a particularly viable strategy for products categories characterised by little physical differentiation among competing brands; examples are the GSM industry and beverage (soft drinks) industry.

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The significance of the environment to man's existence cannot be doubted. The environment represents not just the reasons deter of man's individual and cooperate existence, but

man's totality because man's existence is dependent on it. Therefore, there is no doubt that if modern man with his daily technological inventions and landmark scientific discoveries is to live peacefully and in harmony with other men and with nature, there is need to take the issues of the environment seriously. According to Oshuntokun (1997, pv1), "environmental degradation may conceivably lead to the green house effect, unreasonably high temperature, flooding, rise in ocean levels and destruction of the ozone layer, thus leading to direct radiation with dire medical consequences of different kinds of cancers". Oshuntokun stressed that the effect could lead, among other things, to climate change and perhaps a new ice age leading to the end of human existence. However, environmental degradation is man made, and it is due primarily to waste generation as a result of human activities as well as emission of chemicals such as sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and carbon dioxide through the burning of fossils fuels for energy as well as through the internal combustion engines of motor vehicles and through industrialisation.

A discussion of the outdoor advertising industry vis-à-vis the environment involves identifying how the outdoor advertising industry negatively affects the environment. The outdoor advertising industry affects the environment negatively in the following ways: [1] clustering of billboards, [2] placement of billboards in places that affects traffic flow, [3] erection of billboards in unhygienic/unfriendly/unapproved places, [4] erection of billboards in places that obstruct free flow of drainages, [5] erection of environmentally unfriendly billboards, [6] falling billboards constituting nuisance on the roads and to the environment etc.

Clustering billboards. This is about the greatest environmental nuisance constituted by billboards in Nigeria. There is hardly a metropolis in all the states of the federation in

the country that you will not see clustered billboards. The problem has become intense such that even the regulatory body, the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) had to call an emergency meeting of the stakeholders in 2003 to address the issue. Clustering billboards involve a situation where too many billboards are placed closed to one another to the extent that the importance of the messages is lost (the boards may be of competing product or not). Perhaps the issue about clustering billboards vis-à-vis the environment involve the boards crowding the geographical space they occupy that they litter the space as well as inhibit the free flow of natural blowing air, a condition identified as one of the greatest environmental hazards to man. A study in Hong Kong showed that bad air was responsible for a significant jump in children being admitted to hospital for asthma. The six years study conducted by researchers at the University of Hong Kong between 1997 through 2002 using hospital admission records revealed that a total of 26,663 children were admitted into hospital for asthma during the six-year period. Therefore, clustering billboards need to be addressed urgently.

There is no doubt that billboards erected in unhygienic/unfriendly/unapproved places/sites, contribute to the degradation of the environment. Imagine boards erected in dump sites or close to dump sites; boards erected on bridges constructed on seas; boards displaying alcohol or cigarettes erected close to secondary schools; boards erected on canals etc. Obviously, such boards are not only wrongly placed but also constituted environmental nuisance.

Environmentally unfriendly boards are blurred boards; boards which messages are not obviously easily understood, boards erected on bad poles, boards that have lost their shapes, boards which part(s)/is/are falling off, boards which messages have been destroyed or defaced due to one reason or another etc.

The aforementioned types of boards are many in our metropolis that there is need for concern. The need for concern arises from the fact that the main principle of billboards is the transfer of messages (sales or otherwise) to people; therefore, once the aim is not being achieved then such boards need not be erected or need be removed because they constitute nuisance to the environment. Other areas that need to be addressed concerning outdoor advertising and the environment includes: erection of boards that obstruct traffic flow, boards that contain too many messages and placement of boards in a run down area, that is, erection of boards in unsuitable places. Billboards are transit by nature; therefore, the intention is to communicate messages quickly, tersely and directly. A situation where the audience may have to task themselves in order to understand messages on boards is indicative of failure, just as it indicates a possible negative effect on the environment because boards are meant to be impactful to sight.

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