



## Ambient Advertising: A Perfect Blend of Creativity and Uniqueness

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### ABSTRACT

Companies trying to sell a product will do anything to cram their ads down the prospective customer's throat, but it's always nice when they show a bit of creativity and taste when trying to get their attention. Ambient ads are one such specific form of advertisement, which seeks at once to become a part of its environment and to draw the attention to it. Whether it's a spoof product, a well-placed and designed billboard, or something else, the point is to get the attention and make audiences think. Ambient advertising is about placing ads on unusual items or in unusual places people wouldn't normally see an ad. An ambient ad doesn't have to be placed outside. Ambient advertising can be found anywhere and everywhere. The key to a successful ambient media campaign is to choose the best media format available and combined with effective message. These kinds of ads often make someone think about a certain place or thing differently. This paper sets out to define what is actually meant by ambient advertising and is contrasted to out-of-home advertising.

### KEYWORDS

Ambient Advertising, Media, Message, Advertisement, Customer

Ambient Advertising is a form of Guerilla Marketing in which advertising is integrated into our natural surroundings, and catches our attention in places we least expect it to. It's fun, exciting, targeted and therefore engaging for targeted audiences. Not only that, ambient advertising represents a clever way for brands to get the precious attention of consumers already saturated by (or even switched-off to) advertising through traditional channels.

Ambient Advertising is about placing ads on unusual objects or in unusual places where we wouldn't expect to have an advertisement. Ambient advertising evolved as a concept because it has a lasting impact on the minds of consumers which makes it more effective. Ambient advertising is all about creativity, and how effectively the advertiser is able to communicate the message to the consumers. The term 'ambient' means placing the ad at unusual places or unconventional places where we wouldn't expect an advertisement. Ambient advertising can be done along with traditional means of advertisement or as a standalone form of communication.

The idea behind ambient advertising is to surprise consumers with its placement. For example, advertising behind a car is not unusual, but using wiper as a part of advertising will look something different and will throw an element of surprise in the minds of consumers. Ambient advertising makes an impact because it is intelligently placed, has a wow factor to it, makes a direct impact on the mind of consumers, effective way of communicating the message across to target consumers etc. The first thing that will catch our eye when we are looking at an ambient advertisement would be its unusual location. The second characteristic of such advertising is the fact that there is no repetition.

Another thing which is important is the execution. How well the ad is being executed, or does it really creating an impact that was required for effective communication. Does it really have a wow factor? All these things are taken into consideration while designing an ambient advertising campaign.

Ambient ads try to break through the clutter by being placed outside of traditional media, often with elaborate set up or "props." Typically, the ad will display some sort of product benefit in a very in-your-face way. When done well, the ads are both visually and intellectually creative. And while viewed by a relatively small audience compared to a television ad, for

instance, ambient ads stand out in that they get noticed and talked about. Furthermore, the best ads get social media buzz and traditional media coverage, helping to boost impressions.

The origins of Ambient can be linked to out-of-home advertising and hence it is appropriate to introduce this for consideration as a potential framework to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and understanding of ambient advertising. 'Out-of-home' is a more general term than its cousin 'outdoor advertising' and refers to all advertising that is literally out-of-home. There are strong similarities between out-of-home and Ambient advertising, especially in terms of locations, rate-setting, effectiveness measurements and similarities in communication effects – that is, useful for a quick prompt (awareness/reminder) – not suited to provision of lengthy information (cognitive engagement). Also, like out-of-home advertising, Ambient is often used in conjunction with other campaigns and is not generally a stand-alone tactic. (Azari & Kamen 1984) Because of the generally low processing time both out-of-home and Ambient requires good creativity to leave a lasting impression. (Maloney 1962, King & Tinkham 1990) Both out of home and Ambient can be very cost effective, have broad reach, be difficult to avoid, and Ambient can also lead to mainstream media coverage (PR effects). However, they can also be visually polluting, difficult to measure effectiveness (isolate effects) (Bhargava & Donthu 1999), have wastage, limited message capabilities, and Ambient in particular can also have negative associations (intrusive/tasteless), and the medium may overshadow the message ('fantastic ad but can't remember what for').

Newness, creativity, novelty and timing are key themes in ambient advertising. This definition is deliberately narrow and attempts to exclude 'mainstream' advertising as referred to earlier. Implicit in this definition is that Ambient is a moveable and somewhat subjective term and will shift according to the advertising norms of the day.

One of the fundamental premises of Ambient is that the world is an advertising stage. Everything is a potential advertising medium—sides of cows, rockets, golf-hole cups etc.

As more and more markets are maturing they had started focusing on small targets in terms of growth of sales, profits etc. They were driving the factors of various market segments. This was pushing all these markets to come up with solutions for

the short term from the marketing point of view. Thus most of the marketing initiatives were planned to help the marketers fulfil those short term targets to save their own jobs.

With the consumers becoming highly aware with the rise of media and the increasing competition, the sales margins were becoming thinner each day. Thus to increase profitability, the only place that the companies could work on is to decrease various costs involved. Gone were the days when marketers could spend as much money as they wanted in the name of brand building, advertising budgets were becoming much more controlled, thus making marketers prove the effectiveness of various initiatives that they launched. Return on investment became the key, which led to the increase of low investment initiatives.

### Conclusion

Consumers and advertising messages have evolved and become more sophisticated. From this background has risen ambient advertising. The 'communications and technology revolution' has given us omnipresent information. Ambient advertising is a new arena for both marketer and consumer engagement, and one still very much in need of exploration.

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