



Messages with Impact: Creativity in Traditional Outdoor Advertising Platforms in Castellón (Spain) and Warrington (UK)

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Introduction

Outdoor advertising is currently undergoing a transformation as both the variety and popularity of digital platforms increases. This will inevitably involve significant changes in both the conception and production of advertising materials designed for digital platforms, including ‘smartboards’. Notwithstanding the technological advantages of outdoor digital advertising platforms (such as the means to incorporate motion) in attracting the attention of audiences, as a consequence of the cost of this technology as well as logistical restrictions and strategic obstacles, it is expected that not all outdoor advertising supports will be digitalized. As explained by Creative Director David Thompson of *Telling Stories*:

With the rise of digital technology, one might expect more animation and moving image to be attracting our attention. The fact is however that many companies won't spend a lot of money on expensive and expensive alternatives because the production of posters is much less expensive to roll-out across tens, hundreds or thousands of spots. Perhaps the fact that there is not yet any concrete evidence that expensive high tech solutions offer an adequate Return on Investment (ROI) explains why it isn't happening. (Thompson, 2012)

Accordingly, traditional (reflective, print-based) materials and their (non-digital) platforms will continue to be widely used in outdoor advertising. It is necessary therefore, to recognise and exploit the unique characteristics of this medium in the design of the materials for non-digital platforms.

To provide both advertisers (sponsors) and creatives with a set of guidelines to maximise the effectiveness of both traditional materials and non-digital platforms, this project has attempted to identify the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of these traditional materials and platforms, as well as the extent to which these factors are shaped by the cultural environments and contexts in which they are employed.

Sánchez (2001) emphasizes that, due to the locations and context in which such materials are viewed, the message must be easily and quickly understood: “The power of outdoor media rests in its capacity to summarise the idea of an advertisement, a message, or a campaign – and so creativity is fundamental”. Sánchez (2001:12)

José María Pujol, Executive Creative Director of The Farm described outdoor advertising as the only medium that permits a brand name to be incorporated into that audience’s physical environment, and that this feature has significant implications for the influence of the medium (and, by extension, the messages it carries) on the consumer (Pujol, 2003:11). Senior creative José Luis Esteo of the Remo advertising agency believes that the major problem with the effective use of outdoor advertising is in the way in which it is viewed by advertisers (sponsors):

Being out in the street, outdoor platforms are fundamentally different than other advertising media. When the advertiser understands both the opportunities and challenges this presents, they may be prepared to allow creatives to propose much more effective uses of outdoors platforms. (Esteo, 2003:11)

As a result, García (2001) observes that outdoor media demand more simplicity and economy in both visual design and language, both of which are the attributes of a good idea. He suggests that, “advertisers (sponsors) are also to blame as they expect only a physical multiplication of their logo or their product from this media”, and that therefore, these materials often fail to engender sufficient emotional resonance for their brand name. Exacerbating the situation, he also asserts that owners/operators of outdoor advertising supports are also implicated because, as a direct consequence of the high fees charged, they discourage experimentation with more innovative applications of the medium. “We should place a bouquet of flowers under all billboards, shelters etc., because we have effectively killed this medium. But, who cares anyway? Creatives want to film.” (García, 2001:18)

In order to identify and understand the differences in the way(s) in which traditional reflective print-based materials and their platforms are used for outdoor advertising in two different cultural environments, this research project undertook a comparative analysis of the creative strategies employed in the conception and design of outdoor advertising materials in two distinct cultural environments. This research centred on two towns of comparable size and population: Castellón

in Spain and Warrington in the UK. This research was undertaken in collaboration between academics at the Universitat Jaume I of Castellón (Spain) and the University of Chester (UK).

This project considered the Creative Strategies employed in outdoor advertising in Spain and in the UK: the ‘message’ to be conveyed to the target audience (TA) and the specific tactics employed to convey this message. (While these tactics include the visual and linguistic ‘tone of voice’ deemed appropriate for the particular TA and the media vehicle(s) to be utilised, this project considered only the design of materials for outdoor advertising.

Castellón is located in the east of Spain on the Mediterranean coast north of Valencia, has 180,000 inhabitants and a surface area of 107 km². Warrington is located in NW England between Liverpool and Manchester, has 198,900 inhabitants and a surface area of 180 km².

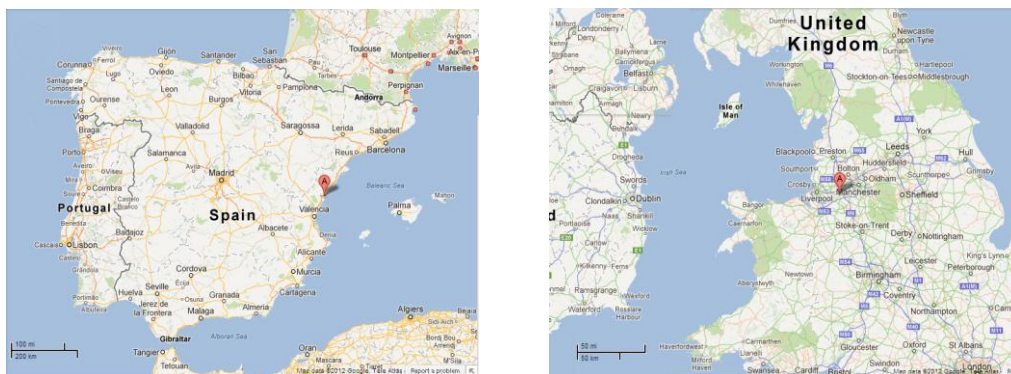


Figure 1: maps of Castellón (Spain) and Warrington (UK) Maps courtesy of Google Maps

Ad Spending in Spain, by Media, 2000-2013						
<i>millions</i>						
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
TV	\$3,061	\$3,909	\$3,274	\$3,290	\$3,378	\$3,510
Newspapers	\$2,396	\$2,365	\$1,585	\$1,553	\$1,526	\$1,539
Internet	\$71	\$214	\$1,046	\$1,229	\$1,474	\$1,769
Radio	\$665	\$808	\$726	\$728	\$736	\$754
Outdoor	\$408	\$654	\$557	\$560	\$571	\$594
Magazines	\$819	\$893	\$526	\$508	\$508	\$513
Cinema	\$73	\$57	\$32	\$30	\$29	\$30
Total	\$7,492	\$8,900	\$7,747	\$7,898	\$8,223	\$8,710

Note: converted at the exchange rate of US\$1=€0.76; numbers may not add up to total due to rounding
Source: ZenithOptimedia, July 2011; provided by Starcom MediaVest Group, July 2011

130715 www.emarketer.com

Figure 2: Ad spending in Spain by media July 2011 – source: <http://www.emarketer.com/PressRelease.aspx?R=1008642>

UK Ad Spending, by Media, 2000-2013						
<i>millions</i>						
	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Internet	\$171	\$1,796	\$5,311	\$5,751	\$6,350	\$6,877
TV	\$5,144	\$5,342	\$5,037	\$5,087	\$5,240	\$5,345
Newspapers	\$6,591	\$6,447	\$4,242	\$4,121	\$4,129	\$4,132
Magazines	\$2,667	\$2,485	\$1,411	\$1,396	\$1,396	\$1,402
Outdoor	\$916	\$1,178	\$1,156	\$1,167	\$1,226	\$1,238
Radio	\$700	\$806	\$688	\$694	\$701	\$708
Cinema	\$122	\$207	\$240	\$244	\$249	\$252
Total	\$16,311	\$18,261	\$18,086	\$18,461	\$19,291	\$19,954

Note: converted at the exchange rate of US\$1=£0.65; numbers may not add up to total due to rounding
Source: ZenithOptimedia, July 2011; provided by Starcom MediaVest Group, July 2011

130714 www.eMarketer.com

Figure 3: Ad spending in UK by media July 2011

<http://www.emarketer.com/PressRelease.aspx?R=1008642>

Source: www.emarketer.com

A brief review of theories of ‘creativity’ relevant to outdoor advertising

Due to the unique challenges of outdoor advertising platforms identified in the previous section, if this medium is to remain viable and effective, it is necessary to ensure that, when and where it is employed, both the messages it carries as well as the specific creative tactics used to convey this message must be appropriate for this medium, and not simply adapted from the tactics developed for other media vehicles. It is therefore necessary to identify the most effective tactics for this medium by considering how creative strategies can be developed that reflect and exploit the unique characteristics of this medium in order to ensure effective results.

According to the widely accepted principles of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), all signals that a company sends out to the market must reflect and reinforce a single, coherent message through all promotional channels.

However, due to a lack of research into:

- i) the characteristics and features that are unique to outdoor advertising, and
 - ii) how these unique characteristics might be successfully and profitably exploited,
- the creative strategies often employed in the conception, design and execution of outdoor

advertising materials often do not adequately exploit its unique properties (Esteo, 2003:11) to contribute to this ‘single, coherent message’, but are instead adapted (with varying degrees of effectiveness) from other media vehicles (e.g. stills from television commercials, or images from magazine or newspaper advertisements). As a consequence, it may be that the visual and communicative power of outdoor advertising is undermined and therefore does not adequately fulfil its role within the Promotion Mix.



Figure 4: An example of UK outdoor advertising that exploits the unique characteristics of the medium

In the following, we will briefly summarise the factors that must be considered if designers (and their sponsors) are to exploit and maximise the communicative power of outdoor advertising. Based on the study undertaken by Rey (2007), the factors to be considered are:

- i. The unique characteristics and features of outdoor advertising
- ii. The appearance of the materials (including the relationship of text to image, the use of colour, the use of typography, size and location)
- iii. The use of language
- iv. Message style

The Unique Characteristics/Features of Outdoor Advertising

The most significant characteristic of outdoor advertising is its capacity to deliver a targeted message to target markets in specific geographic areas (spatial reach) (Lichtenthal et. al. 2006, Bhargava & Donthu, 1999, Kaufman, 1989) and to raise awareness very rapidly (Belch & Belch, 1998, Bhargava & Donthu, 1999) In addition, “your audience can’t zap, discard or even click away from it” and this medium also differs in that it targets a ‘market in motion’ and thus

requires a special technique of presentation. (Lichtenthala et. al., 2005:237-238)

The Appearance of the Materials

Relationship of text to image

In the majority of outdoor advertising materials, visuals predominate. Yet, as Rey has established, the ‘message’ conveyed by the image must be clearly and easily understandable to minimise misinterpretation. A picture is worth a thousand words; therefore, the image must be of good quality and must clearly transmit the desired message (Breva, 2008:69). On a scale of comprehension, photographs are the easiest images to interpret, followed by drawings and lastly by paintings. (Rey, 2007:226-231).

Colour

Given the brevity of the time frame in which outdoor advertising has to attract sufficient attention in order to convey its message, bright or primary colours have a greater impact when used against a light or neutral background. (Rey, 2007:226-231). Colour is a powerful factor in the impact of the advertisement, and the use of bright, contrasting colours increases its legibility and encourages the TA to associate the product with the desired feelings and/or emotions (Breva, 2008:69).

Typography

An essential consideration in the use of text is that it operates on two levels simultaneously: as a source of ‘logical’ information (subject to the influence of the ‘tone of voice’ used) decoded by the left hemisphere, and as an element of the visual design (as determined by the choice of typeface used as well as its positioning – both relative and absolute – within the frame).

Gestalt psychology proposes that the brain is holistic with self-organising tendencies [...] capable of organising and structuring individual elements, shapes or forms into a coherent, organised whole. Although the individual elements may contain some meaning, the coherent whole will have a greater meaning than the sum of the parts. This satisfies the human brain’s need to find, or impose, meaning to situations. (Jackson, 2008:66)

Size

The large size of outdoor advertisements, and the fact that they tend to be isolated from other similar visual materials allows the advertisement to stand out from its surroundings and to attract



attention. While decisions about the size and dimensions of the supports are not under the control of the designer, they are under the control of the advertising agency. This issue was explored in a previous research project by the authors. (See <http://www.aepe.org/jornadas.cfm>)

Location

The location of advertising supports is also a significant factor in both the probability and frequency of audience exposure. As Bhargava & Donthu have observed, “the traffic patterns in any city are not random; there are geographic limits to where people tend to travel for work and shopping” (Bhargava & Donthu, 1999:8), and these patterns are reflected in the strategic choice for the locations at which outdoor advertising supports are erected. It is also necessary to consider the place where the advertisement is to be located because depending on the message’s degree of perpendicularity in relation to the receiver’s line of vision, the positioning and height of its impact will be affected (Rey, 1997:226-231).

Additional guidelines about the selection of locations used for outdoor advertising and can be found on web sites of international outdoor advertising associations such as: Outdoor Advertising Association of America <http://www.oaaa.org/>, Out of Home Marketing Association of Canada <http://www.omaccanada.ca/en/default.omac>, and the Outdoor Media Association (Australia) <http://oma.org.au/>.

Unlike other forms of display advertising (newspapers, magazines, internet banner advertising, flyers etc.), a large proportion of the audience for outdoor advertising materials does not have control over their length of exposure. Navarro (2006:197) states that, if three or four seconds are needed to read a message presented in other media, then it is reasonable to say that, in the street, this time must be halved, and that “outdoors, the message blends in with the setting, so [is often] not perceived”. Outdoor advertising is seen in the street and passers-by will often not or pay direct attention to them or stop to read its texts, but will instead see it while walking, driving or passing it on a bus, oftentimes while their attention is otherwise engaged. (Hepner, 2000:147)

The Use of Language

To be effective, “outdoor advertisements must be understood at a glance” (Enel, 1997:16), “the idea has to be conveyed in a matter of seconds” (Hepner, 2000:147, Lozano, 2005:108). To make the desired impression on the minds or imaginations of the TA therefore, the text used in outdoor

advertising must require minimal time to read to make sense of the accompanying image. The AEPE recommend the use of a maximum of ten words and Business Wire recommends a maximum of seven (Business Wire, 2002 a, b, c) as that is the most that can be read in the time available in the street (Breva, 2008:69). Text should therefore be restricted to one clear and simple concept that extends and reinforces the message by correcting any ambiguity that may arise based on the image alone. The choice of typeface must therefore not only enable the text to be read quickly and easily (Breva, 2008:69), but reflect and support the nature of the message and the tone of voice through which it is to be conveyed to the TA. Like Hegarty, Bernstein (2004) emphasises the necessity of simple messages and designs by making it “as simple as a traffic sign”.

Message Style

Based on the results of research into the Attitude, Level of Awareness, Perceived Knowledge and Behaviour of the target audience, the Message to be conveyed may be expressed in one of a number of different ‘message styles’, including:

- *‘Straight Sell’ or ‘Factual’ message* in which the advertisement offers ostensibly rational appeals based on the practical advantages or benefits of the product
- *Scientific/Technical evidence message* in which the advertisement offers the results of laboratory studies, endorsements by scientific groups or other technical information in support advertising claims
- *Demonstration* in which the product is shown in actual use or in a staged situation
- *Comparison* in which the product or service is favourably compared to that of competitors
- *Testimonial* in which the product or service is praised by a trusted ‘source’ based on his/her personal experience with it
- *Slice of Life (a.k.a. “Slice of Death”)* in which the advertisement illustrates how the product/service can ‘solve’ a problem (body odour, bad breath, dandruff, laundry etc.) that the target market has identified as a source of fear (based on information discovered through qualitative market research)
- *Dramatisation* – similar to “Slice of Life” - but with a more dramatic or emotional situations (such as fear or love scenes)
- *Fantasy* in which the product or service is linked with escapist/fantasy situation
- *Animation* using cartoons characters or computer-generated images, including a mix of animation live action
- *Cultural symbol*, in which the product or service is visually associated with a (universal,



cultural or corporate) symbol known (via market research) to evoke positive – and appropriate – associations in the imagination of the target audience

Methodology

At the outset of this project, the following definition of ‘outdoor advertising’ was agreed:

[Those] set up outdoors, in the street, in such a way that they are encountered by their audience [in] areas of public use (streets, road communications, vehicles and public transport installations, sports grounds, etc.). Pacheco (2000:21)

To provide both advertisers (sponsors) and creatives with a set of guidelines to maximise the effectiveness of both traditional materials and non-digital platforms, this project investigated:

The supports investigated in this project have been divided into three categories:

1. Billboards and single posts
2. Bus shelters & 6-sheets
3. Advertisements affixed to buses.

The decision was made to investigate these types of supports as they are the most common in both towns, and therefore offered a basis on which to compare the majority of outdoor advertisements in both towns.

The data collected was then analysed in terms of the following factors:

1. Type of support/platform (billboards and single posts, bus shelters & 6-sheets, advertisements affixed to buses) in order to determine the prevalence of each
2. Location of supports
3. Type of advertiser/sponsor
4. Type of campaign
5. Type/class of product/service advertised
6. Creative tactics
 - a. Proportional use of visual illustrations and text within designs
 - b. Dominant colours used
7. Message style

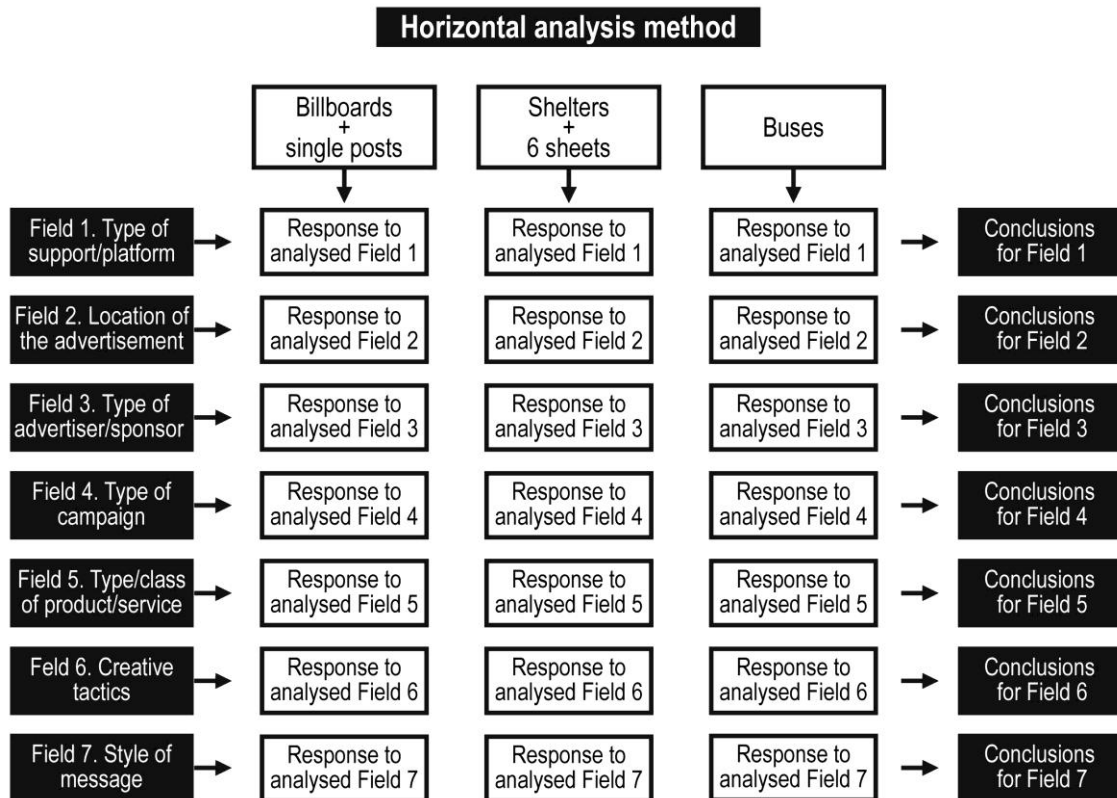


Figure 5: the horizontal analysis model used for the data

The analysis of the supports was done horizontally because we were interested in analyzing creativity in the media in general terms and not in analyzing supports, which will be the subject of future research.

The collected data was interpreted using Horizontal Analysis. The collected examples were genuine tool of the fieldwork, which is valid for the final conclusion, is the total formed by the sum of all the fields analyzed of the various supports. Each field analyzed of each support acquires all its power for this research when it is placed, analyzed and summed to the same field of another support, and so on until we analyze seven fields for the three group of supports included in this study (billboards and single post, shelters and 6 sheets and buses).

The work was carried out in three phases:

Phase 1:

- Identify the range/diversity of the outdoor platforms used in each of the two towns

(billboards, shelters, 6 sheet, telephone boxes, transport, single posts, partitioning walls, etc.) These platforms are the formats recognized by the outdoor media national associations in both countries (the *Asociación Española de Empresas de Publicidad Exterior*, Spain and the *Outdoor Media Centre*, UK)

- To establish a basis for comparison of the types platforms and creative materials prevalent in each of the two towns.
- Gather data by documenting (photographing) the platforms and materials used in both towns.

Phase 2:

- To determine the type of advertisers (local, national or international) that use outdoor advertising in the two towns.
- Identify the creative techniques/strategies employed in the design of the materials used in each of the two towns based on similarities and/or differences (in terms of the relationship of text to image, the use of colour and the type of message, and the role/importance of each in conveying the message).

Phase 3:

Draw conclusions based on the data collected.

In order to identify differences in the uses of outdoor advertising in the two towns (Castellón, Spain) and Warrington, UK), data was collected by documenting (by photography) examples of outdoor advertising in the two town centres at four co-ordinated periods, timed to coincide with seasonal advertising campaigns: December 2010-January 2011, March-April 2011, May-June 2011, and October-November 2011. A total of 141 examples of outdoor advertising were documented.

To ensure the data sample was representative of the range of materials and platforms encountered by both vehicular (car and bus) and pedestrian traffic, approximately 75% of the examples recorded were those located in the most heavily trafficked areas of each town (based on information from the respective municipal authorities); the remaining 25% were those located in suburban/residential neighbourhoods. The most trafficked areas in both cities are different, while in Warrington is the city centre, in Castellón are the outskirts.

To determine whether there are differences in the creative tactics used in Spain and in the UK, the researchers identified the following objectives for the project:

1. To conduct a review of theories of ‘creativity’ relevant to outdoor advertising, including the unique properties or characteristics of outdoor advertising
2. To identify and compare what types of advertisers (sponsors) use outdoor media in the two towns, and for what kind of products and services.
3. To identify and compare the type of campaign (local, national or international) for which this medium is used in the two towns.
4. To identify and compare the creative techniques/strategies used in outdoor advertising materials in the two towns.
5. To establish a basis on which to identify any correlations between 2, 3 and 4 (above)
6. To identify the reason(s) for any differences between these two cultures based on the use of these creative techniques/strategies in the design of materials for their respective audiences.

Results and Findings

The following tables provide the results of the horizontal analysis of the data.

1. Type of support	Castellón	Warrington
Support type 1: Billboards + single posts	84.2%	44.1%
Support type 2: Bus shelters + 6 sheets	12.6%	33.8%
Support type 3: Posters on buses	3.2%	22%

The results of this study show that, while billboards, single posts and single posts are more widely used in Castellón than in Warrington, whereas bus shelters and the use of posters on buses are more widely used in Warrington than in Castellón

2. Location of advertisements	Castellón	Warrington
City centre	20%	83%
Suburbs	80%	17%

Due to municipal by-laws, the use of billboards and single posts is not permitted in the town centre of Castellon; instead, most of these supports are located in the ring road, that they are the most heavily trafficked roads. For legal reasons, that could change city by city, in each one have

their laws about outdoors, that's the main reason for the different figures. It is not a contradiction, these data only shows the difference between the structure of both cities and their laws.

In Castellón, the primary audience for outdoor advertising are drivers rather than pedestrians. Accordingly, it can be seen that the majority of outdoor advertisements are located outside of the town centre, whereas the majority of OPPIS supports are located within town centres. Bus shelters are distributed throughout both – with a higher proportion located outside of both town centres. Support 3 (buses) were not included in the analysis of this criteria due to the (obvious) fact that they move between the two.

3. Type of advertiser/sponsor	Castellón	Warrington
International	28.4%	23.5%
Local	56.8%	29.4%
National	14.7%	47%

It was found that, in Castellón, this medium is used primarily by local advertisers (56.8% of all the supports analyzed), followed by international advertisers (28.4%) and national advertisers (14.7%). In Warrington, national advertisers are the highest users of outdoor advertising (47%), followed by local advertisers (29.4%) and international advertisers (23.5%). The percentage of outdoor advertising employed by international advertisers in both towns is similar.

4. Type of campaign	Castellón	Warrington
Branding	30.6%	26.5%
On behalf of local venues	7.1%	1.9%
Product launch	9.2%	12.3%
Products	17.4%	32.7%
Promotions	34.7%	16%
Public or local Information	1%	10.5%

Three types of campaign are found more frequently in outdoor media supports: those for consumer products (including those for short-term product promotions) and those designed to raise the profile or value of major brands. While short-term product promotion campaigns predominate in Castellón, product-based campaigns are more common in Warrington. In both towns, the second most frequent type of campaign are those on behalf of high profile brand

names. The least common type of campaign in Castellón are those providing information to the local community, while in Warrington, the least common type of campaign are those for local venues or other specific locations.

5. Type of product or service	Castellón	Warrington
Alcohol products	2.1%	22%
Automobiles	9.5%	2.9%
Miscellaneous (incl. PSAs)	25.3%	39.7%
Non-alcoholic beverages	0%	14.7%
Real estate / property development	22.1%	0%
Restaurants	6.3%	2.9%
Retail outlets/shops	31.6%	5.9%
Telephone companies	3.2%	11.8%

While no single category stands out; it was found that, in both towns, outdoor advertising is employed for a wide range of products or services. The type of product advertised varies from one city to another as alcoholic drinks are frequently advertised in Warrington, whereas adverts about builders, estate agents, car franchisees and vehicles abound in Castellón. In Warrington, the largest proportion of products or services advertised on outdoor platforms was miscellaneous 39.7%. In Warrington, the largest products most widely advertised on outdoor platforms was alcoholic beverages (22.0%). As the socio-economic demographic makeup of Warrington is predominantly working class, and further, as the UK continues to struggle with excessive alcohol consumption (particularly by the young), this result was not surprising. In Spain by contrast, there are severe advertising restrictions for this product category. In Castellón, the largest users of outdoor advertising platforms are retail outlets (31.6%).

6a. Creative tactics (dominant elements)	Castellón	Warrington
Image-dominant (illustration)	4.3%	6.9%
Image-dominant (photo)	22%	58.8%
50-50 (text and image)	30.5%	12.2%
Text-dominant	43.2%	22.1%

In the outdoor advertisement in both towns, it was found that text is more commonly used in conjunction with photography than (non-photographic) illustration. As explained in a previous section, due to the unique characteristics of this advertising medium, there is a consensus that its effectiveness depends on the effective use of visual design Rey (2007). It is interesting to note therefore that, while visual design is indeed the dominant feature of a majority (77.9%) of outdoor advertisements in Warrington, nearly half (43.2%) of outdoor advertisements in Castellón are dominated by text. We will return to this factor in our Conclusions.

6b. Creative tactics (dominant colours)	Castellón	Warrington
Black	14.3%	5.5%
Blue	16%	4.1%
Brown	0.9%	1.4%
Flesh	1.3%	1.4%
Gold	0.5%	1.4%
Green	3.1%	1.4%
Grey	0.9%	0%
Navy	2.7%	1.4%
Orange	4.9%	5.5%
Pink	0.9%	0%
Red	13.8%	4.1%
White	33.9%	23.3%
Yellow	6.7%	0%
No one colour dominates	0%	50.7%

In Castellón, the colour most widely employed in outdoor advertising materials is white (33.9%, as opposed to 23.3% in Warrington). The majority (50.7%) of outdoor advertising materials in Warrington have no predominant colour.

7. Message style	Castellón	Warrington
Animation	2.1%	9%
Comparison with competitor(s)	0%	1.8%

Corporate or cultural symbol	6.4%	10.9%
Demonstration	7.5%	5.5%
Dramatisation	3.2%	7.3%
Fantasy	3.2%	5.5%
Scientific/Technical evidence	2.1%	5.5%
Slice of Life	5.3%	10.9%
‘Straight Sell’ or ‘Factual’ Message	63.8%	38.2%
Testimonial	6.4%	5.5%

Finally, in both towns, the most common style of message was found to be direct or factual messages – one which normally requires much more than the seven to ten words most authorities agree is optimal for this medium.

6. Conclusions

Based on the data from these two towns (Castellón and Warrington), it would appear that the way in which outdoor materials are designed corresponds more consistently with the accepted theories in Warrington than in Castellón. This conclusion was also reached with the results obtained; for example, in relation to the use of text and image, as confirmed in the theory on creation for this media, image must prevail over text. Advertisers in Castellón use a much greater proportion of text than is recommended by the authorities cited.

As this medium is used primarily by local advertisers in Castellón, anecdotal evidence gathered by the researchers indicates that, in many instances, the advertising designs are produced by the sponsors themselves. It is believed that this may explain the proportion of designs based primarily on text, despite the consensus by academics and professional practitioners alike that the success of such materials depends on the effective use of visual design. While the cost of contracting the services of professional advertising and design agencies may well be a factor in this situation, the authors submit that such savings may be economically short-sighted and have adverse effects on the long-term viability of the small, local businesses which, in Castellón, constitute the largest sponsors (56.8%) of outdoor advertising. Subsequent research is therefore indicated into the comparative success of those local sponsors in Spain who use advertising/design agencies versus those who do not.



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