

# THINKING OUTSIDE THE BILLBOARD

Unlocking the Creative Potential  
of Out-of-Home Advertising

February 2024

AUTHOR

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GAME CHANGERS



The creative power of OOH sits in crafting compelling narratives, leveraging the environment, and seamlessly integrating with the surroundings to create an immersive and unforgettable brand experience. ”

The potential for creativity in advertising seems boundless, yet out of home (OOH) often finds itself overshadowed by other media channels in campaign planning. OOH has the potential to deliver more reach than other major media channels but despite this, it is unexplored terrain for many advertisers<sup>1</sup>.

OOH advertising presents a remarkable opportunity for brands to connect with their target audience in a dynamic and impactful manner. And contrary to the perception as a declining medium, digital OOH advertising is experiencing growth and remains a powerful channel to reach consumers<sup>2</sup>.

Why then is OOH often creatively overlooked in campaign planning? Is it due to a preconceived notion about its limited creative possibilities? Or perhaps a lack of understanding regarding the advantages that it can offer? To unlock the potential of OOH advertising, we must better understand the experience it delivers to the audience and how this has the potential to increase end sales for brand growth.

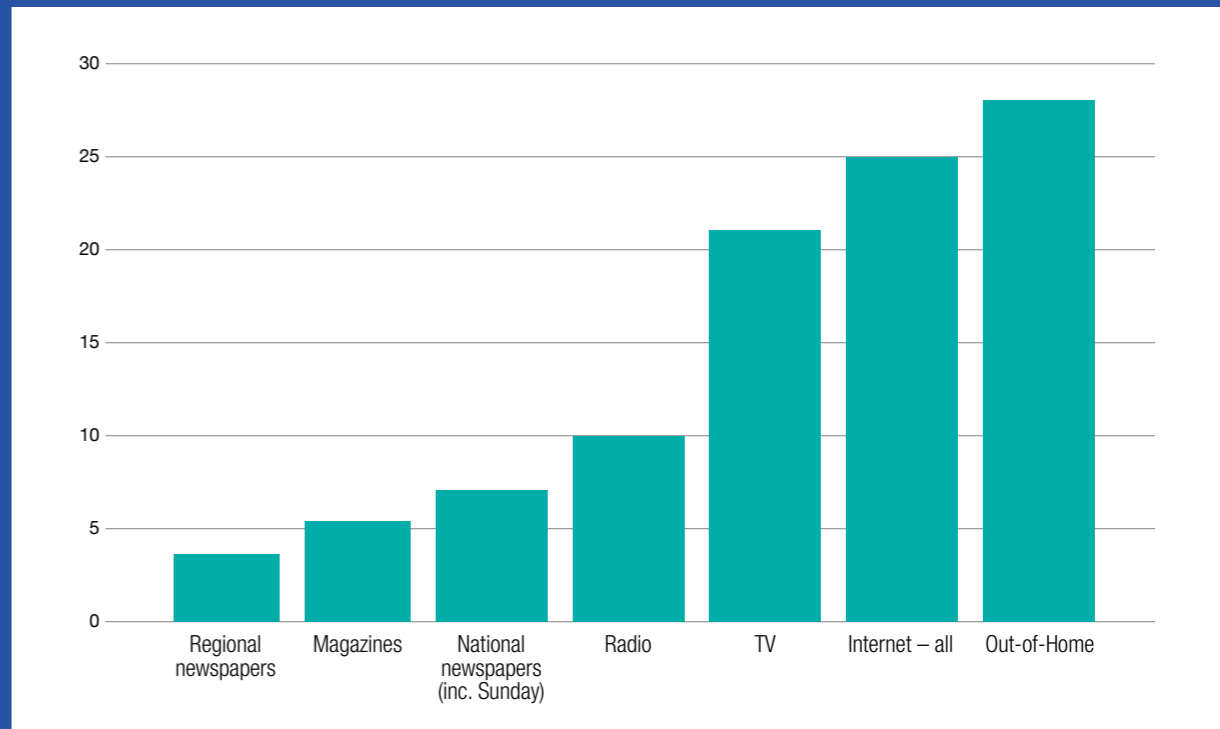
By thinking outside the traditional advertising box, brands can captivate audiences and create memorable experiences. The key lies in leveraging the unique characteristics of OOH, such as strategic ad placements, eye-catching visuals, and engaging storytelling. The creative power of OOH sits in crafting compelling narratives, leveraging the environment, and seamlessly integrating with the surroundings to create an immersive and unforgettable brand experience. In this paper we will expand on why OOH is a valuable media channel for advertising effectiveness and explore how brands can unleash the full potential of OOH to forge meaningful connections with their target audience.

We believe this thriving medium offers three key areas of opportunity: efficiency, effectiveness, and creativity.

**EFFICIENCY:**

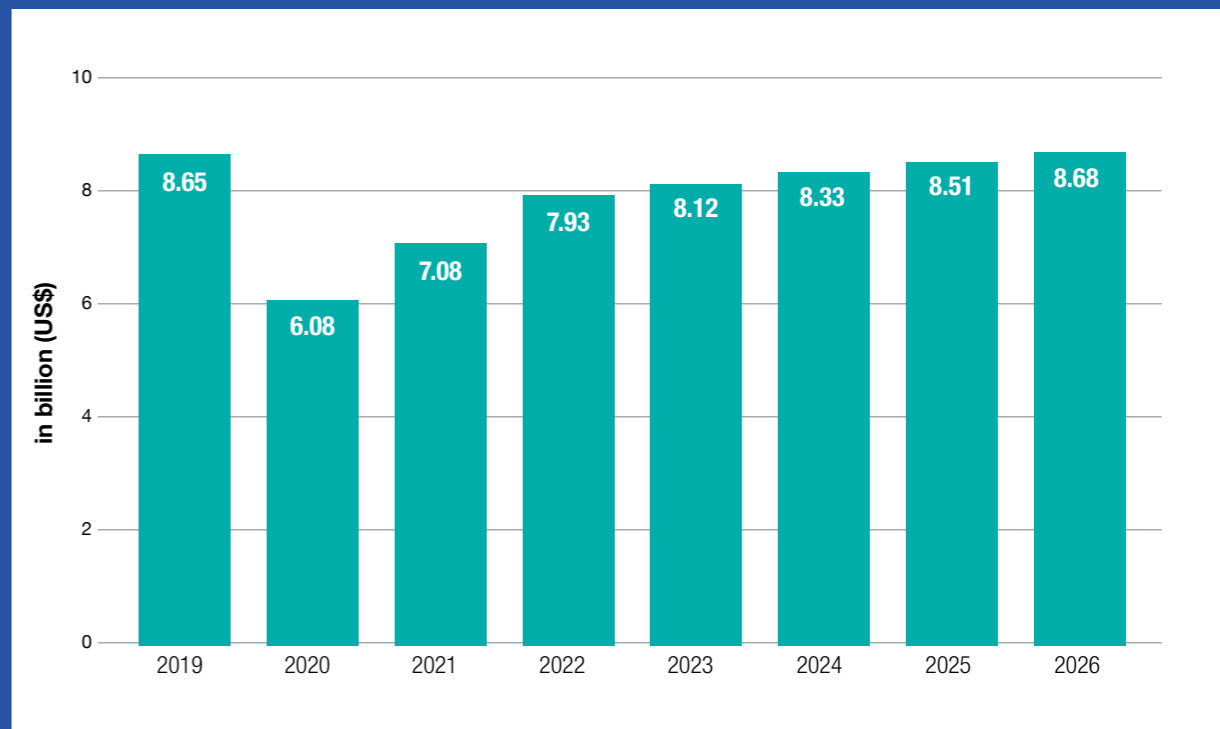
OOH advertising can be cost-effective compared to other advertising channels, such as television or print media. According to data from WARC’s

Figure 1: Out-Of-Home provides a higher % reach than other major media



Source: “Out and About...Under the influence”, Route

Figure 2: US Out-Of-Home (OOH) ad spending, 2019-2026 (billion \$USD)



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272415/outdoor-advertising-spending-in-the-us/>

Media costs database, globally the average cost per thousand for an OOH ad with an 18+ aged target audience is \$6.41 compared to the all-media average of \$12.20 for the same audience<sup>3</sup>. OOH advertising also allows brands to reach specific target audiences in specific locations, such as commuters, shoppers, and tourists. This helps to increase the efficiency of the advertising campaign by delivering the message to the right people at the right time and in the right place.

### EFFECTIVENESS:

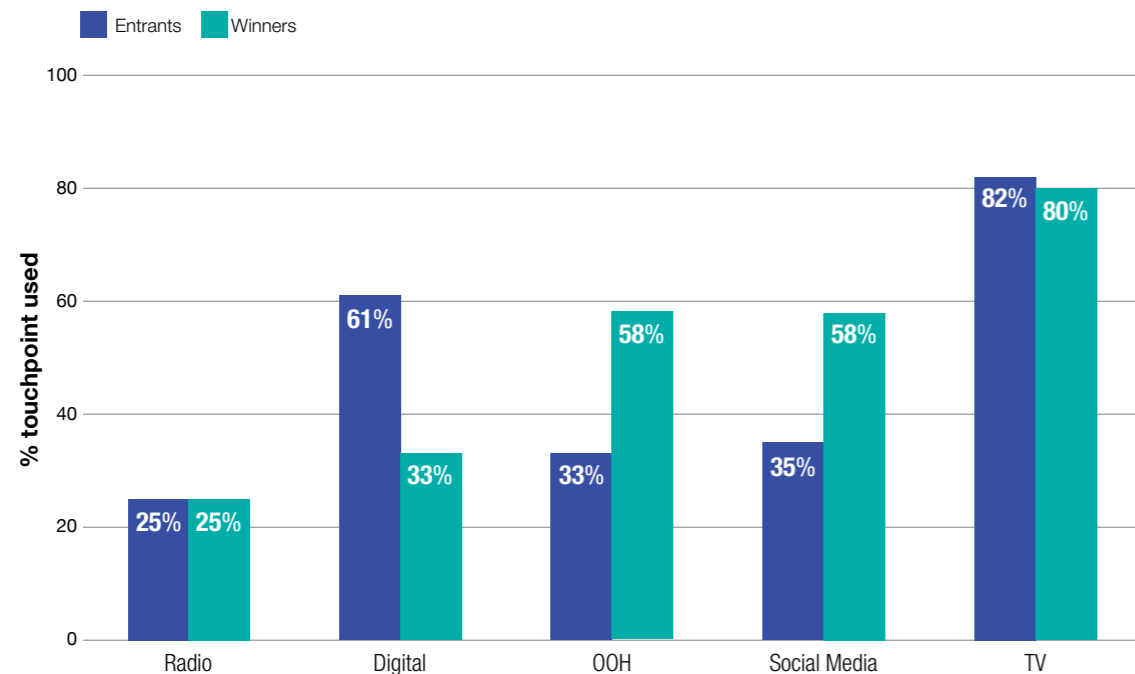
OOH's effectiveness lies in its ability to increase brand visibility and brand association. It helps to increase brand visibility and exposure by reaching a large audience outside of their homes. It provides an opportunity for brands to highlight their products and services to a

broader audience who may not be exposed to the brands traditional advertising methods such as television, radio or print media. And it distinguishes itself from other media by not being subject to the same form of ad blocking. OOH advertising can also help to establish a brand association with specific locations, such as landmarks or popular tourist attractions. This can help to reinforce the brand message and create a lasting impression on consumers.

The 2022 Effie report reveals that the usage and effectiveness of OOH advertising in marketing campaigns is linked to stronger end business effects. According to the report, 33% of entrants included OOH in their media mix, indicating a notable presence of this advertising channel among participants. However, 58% of the campaigns that emerged as winners incorporated OOH in their media mix, suggesting



Figure 3: Main Touchpoints Used



Source: Data from Effie 2020 Entries, Main Touchpoints utilized

a higher propensity for success when OOH is utilized<sup>4</sup>.

This finding shows that OOH advertising has proven to be a valuable component in campaigns that achieved recognition and excellence. The higher percentage of OOH presence among Effie winners indicates its efficacy in delivering impactful messages and resonating with target audiences. The data further suggests brands

### CREATIVITY:

**So how can brands unleash this overlooked creative opportunity?**

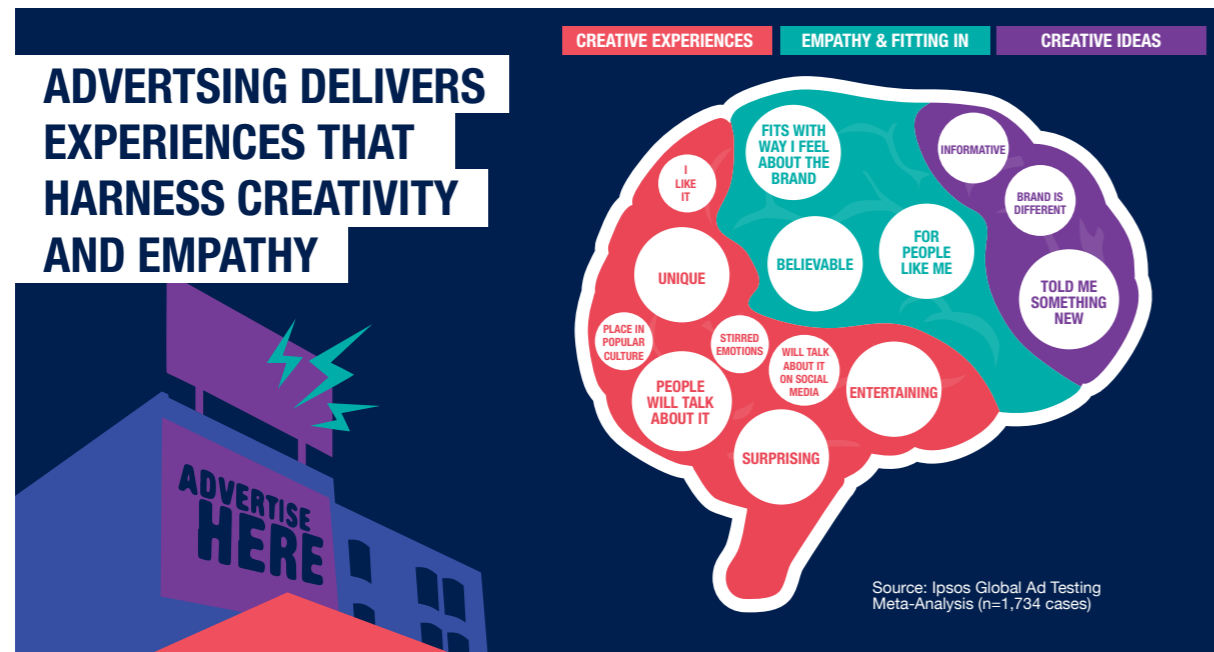
The Ipsos publication *Misfits: How creativity in advertising sparks brand growth* highlights the significance of creativity in advertising and emphasizes that it plays a crucial role. Drawing on a robust database of audience responses to video advertising, we observe that creativity combines three different experiences (Creative Experience, Creative Ideas and Empathy/Fitting

that integrate OOH into their media mix have a higher likelihood of achieving favorable results and receiving industry recognition. By harnessing the unique strengths of OOH, such as its wide reach, creative potential, and ability to engage audiences in real-world settings, marketers can unlock new opportunities for success and enhance their overall campaign effectiveness.

in), it enhances its capacity to be encoded in memory, leading to both short-term and long-term brand impact.

*Creative Experiences* emphasizes the importance of creating advertising experiences that are perceived by the audience as unique, surprising, entertaining, and worth talking about. This approach aims to capture the audience's attention.

Figure 4: Main Touchpoints Used



Source: Ipsos Global Ad Testing Meta-Analysis (n=1,734 cases)

*Creative Ideas* focuses on delivering experiences where the audience learns something new, and as a result, perceives the advertised brand as distinct from others. This approach seeks to provide value to the audience by offering new insights or perspectives while establishing a differentiated brand image.

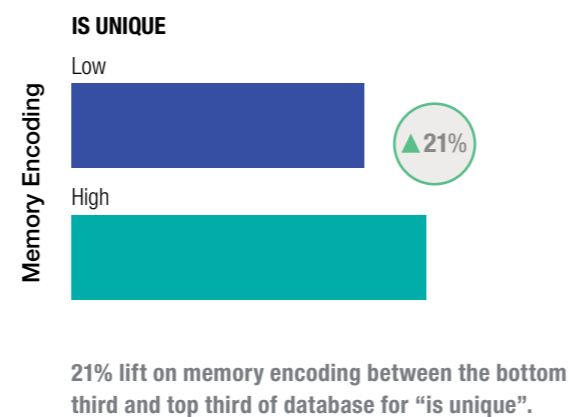
*Empathy & Fitting In* emphasizes the significance of creating advertising that aligns with the audience's preferences and needs. It emphasizes a people-first approach, where advertising is crafted with the audience in mind, ensuring it resonates and connects on a personal level.

Having observed the importance of these experiences and creativity in video advertising, what is the relative importance of each one for OOH and how do they contribute to their overall effectiveness?

### MEMORY ENCODING:

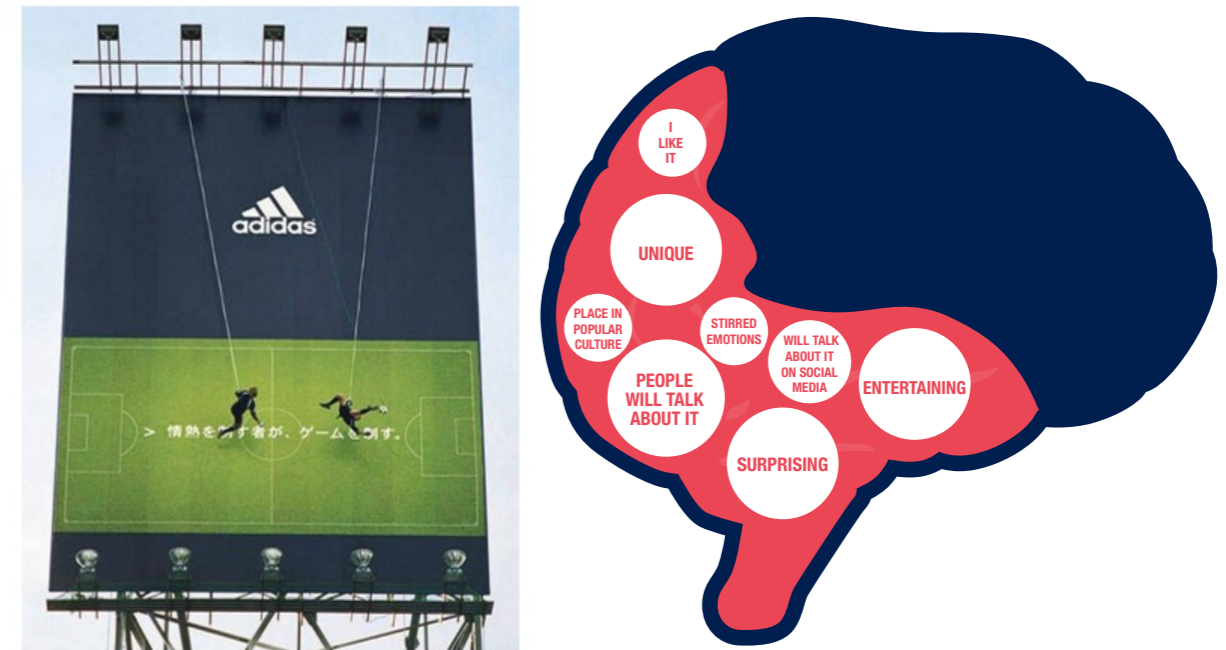
In our OOH dataset we have found that when ads are perceived as “unique,” a key element of *Creative Experiences*, they have the potential to significantly impact memory encoding with

Figure 5: Memory Encoding



Source: Ipsos database of 191 ads (US, UK, FR),

Figure 6: Adidas “Vertical Football”



Source: <https://adsspot.me/media/prints/adidas-football-campaign-vertical-football-5eb6a3c76e5c>

a 21% lift<sup>6</sup>. This highlights the importance of creating advertising experiences that stand out and provide different experiences for audiences.

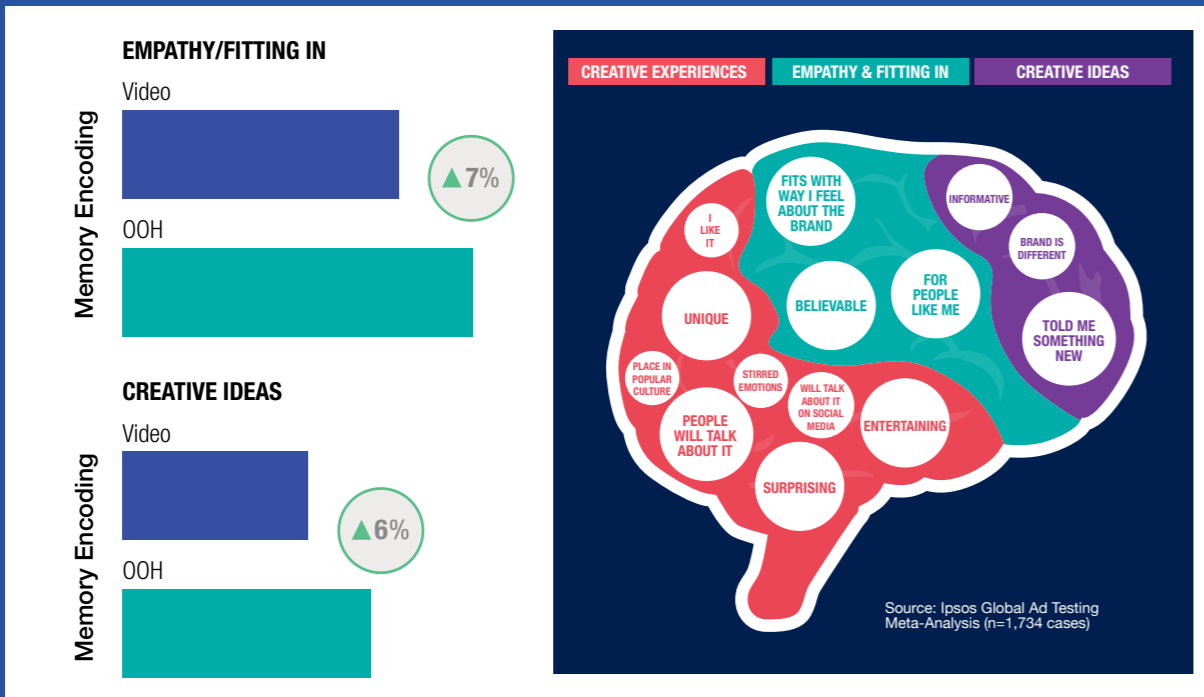
An example of the value of uniqueness and Creative Experiences in OOH is the “Vertical Football” campaign for Adidas. They attracted large crowds in Japan through an innovative and unique marketing campaign. They set up billboards featuring two people playing brief soccer matches multiple times a day. These billboards were suspended by ropes, 12 stories above the ground, in trendy retail areas around Tokyo and Osaka. The players, along with a ball, played soccer at a 90-degree angle to a vertical soccer field displayed behind them as a giant billboard. The headline, “Own the passion and you own the game,” adds to the excitement. Weather-permitting, these 10-to-15-minute matches attracted passersby who gather below

to watch. Omnicom Group’s TBWA Worldwide in Tokyo developed the award-winning campaign.

This observation in the dataset and these types of campaigns suggest that brands and advertisers should strive to create advertising experiences that are unique and surprising to maximize their potential impact. By standing out from the advertising clutter and providing a distinct experience, brands can enhance memory encoding and increase the chances of being remembered by the audience.

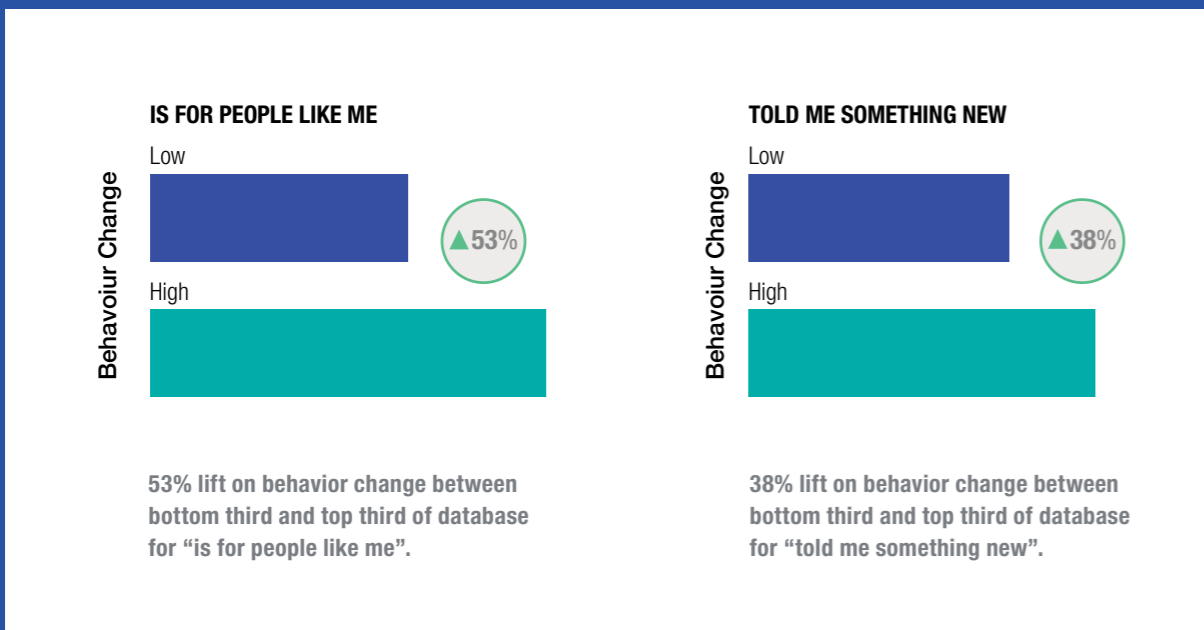
We also observe that *Empathy & Fitting In* and *Creative Ideas* appear to be relatively more important experiences for OOH advertising to achieve memory encoding effects than video. This suggests that emotional connections and impactful messaging play an even more crucial role in enhancing memory retention for OOH ads.

Figure 7: Relative level of importance for Memory Encoding effects by format



Source: Ipsos database of 191 ads (US, UK, FR)

Figure 8: Empathy & Fitting In and Creative Ideas impact on Behavior Change



Source: Ipsos database of 191 ads (US, UK, FR)

## BEHAVIOR CHANGE

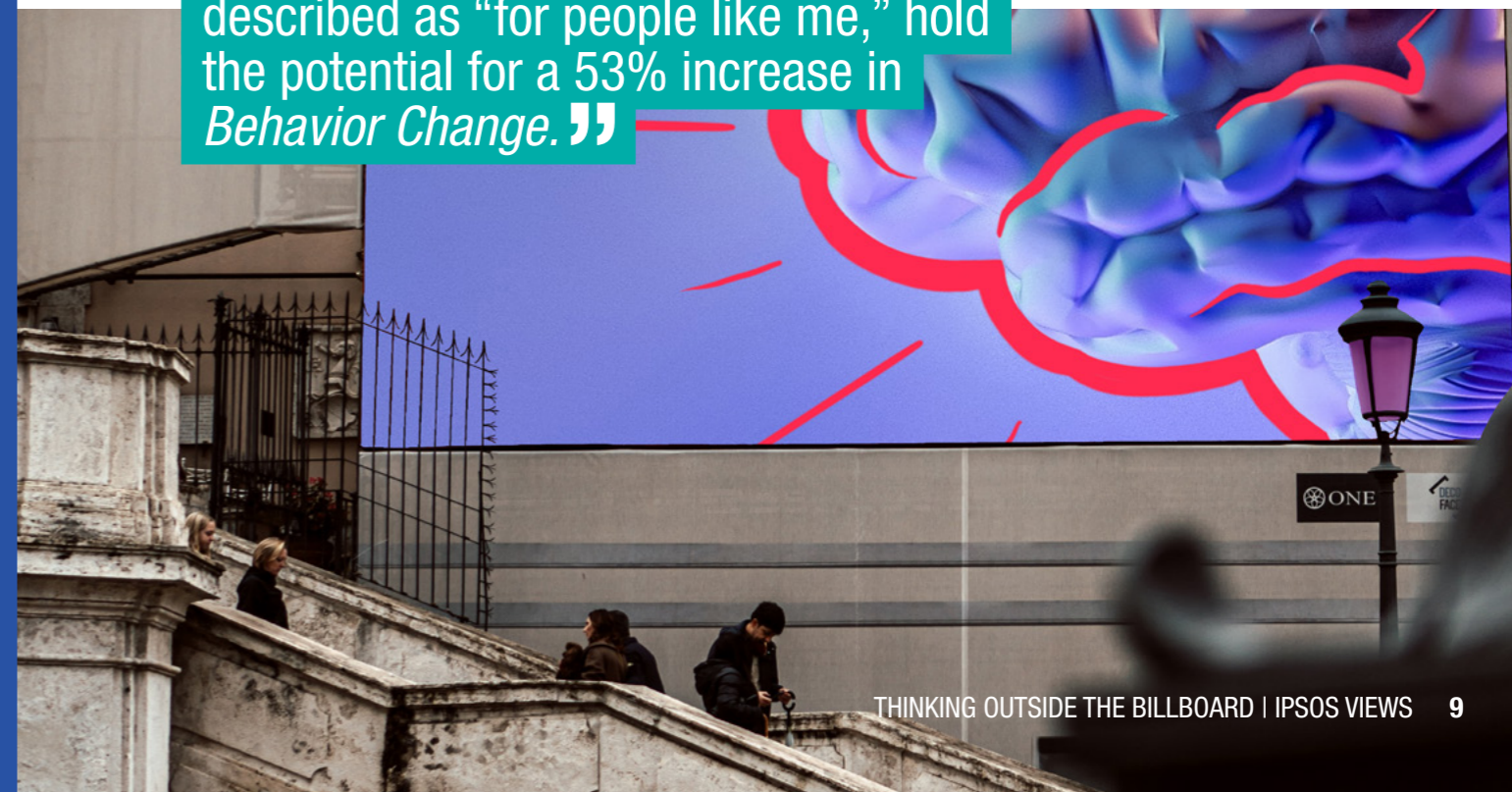
Empathy & Fitting In and Creative Ideas are also crucial for behavior change for OOH, at similar levels to video. Specifically, we discovered that advertisements that evoke empathy or resonate as relatable to the viewer, also described as “for people like me,” hold the potential for a 53% increase in *behavior change*<sup>6</sup>. When an advertisement elicits empathy, it taps into the emotions and experiences of the audience, creating a sense of connection and relatability. By portraying situations, characters, or narratives that the audience can identify with, these ads establish a personal relevance that increases their effectiveness in driving behavior change.

In addition to the previous observation, we also noted that OOH ads presenting a new message offer an opportunity to achieve a 38% increase in *Behavior Change*<sup>6</sup>.

For brands and advertisers, this data point emphasizes the importance of showing people new ideas and values that make them think or reframe what they think they already know. By harnessing the power of novelty and introducing fresh perspectives, brands can leverage the unique characteristics of OOH advertising to influence consumer decisions, preferences, and actions.

Overall, *Empathy & Fitting In* and *Creative Ideas* play a significant role in OOH advertising for memory encoding and behavior change. This is because OOH relies more on the ability to connect and communicate ideas rather than just entertaining the audience, considering the static nature of the format.

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OOH advertising enables creative flexibility that allows brands to create unique, and attention-grabbing ads. ”

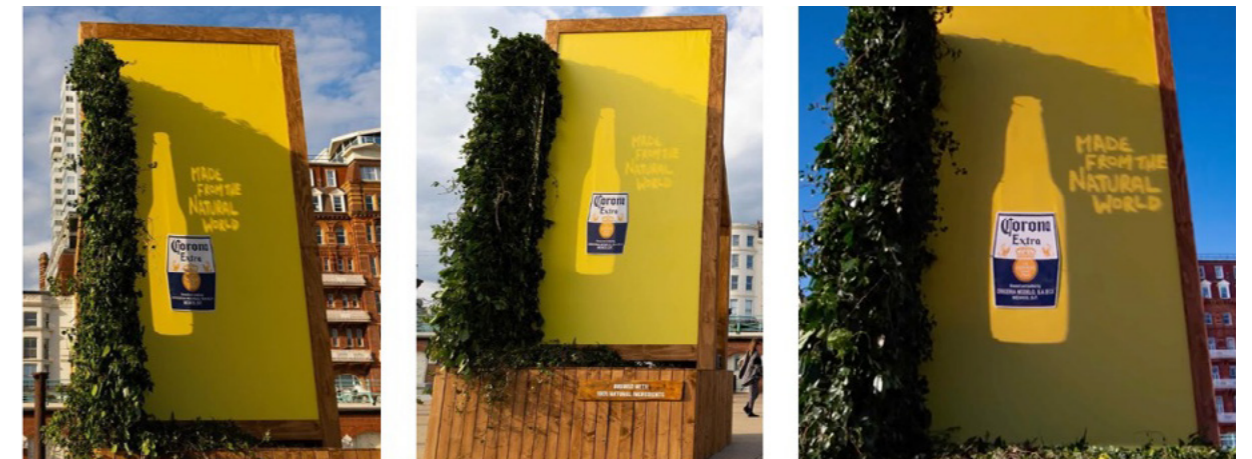
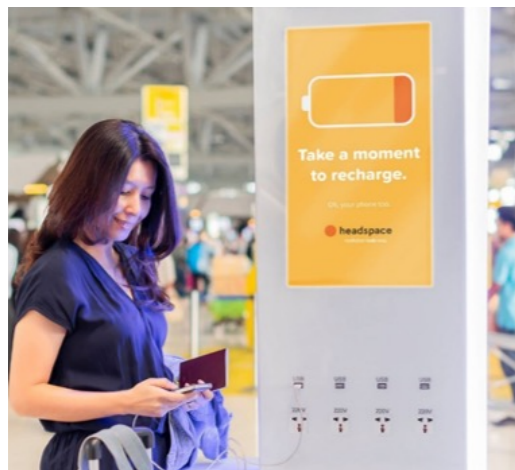


## WHY CONTEXT AND CREATIVITY ARE CRITICAL TO DELIVER GOOD AUDIENCE EXPERIENCES AND STRONGER ADVERTISING EFFECTS

OOH advertising offers a creative opportunity like no other, enabling brands to unleash their imagination and craft compelling narratives that resonate with the audience. It enables creative flexibility that allows brands to create unique and attention-grabbing ads. From billboards to bus shelters, brands can use a range of formats and designs to highlight their messaging. As the advertising landscape continues to evolve, recognizing the potential of OOH advertising and harnessing its efficiency, effectiveness, and creative opportunities can provide brands with a

competitive edge and contribute to their overall marketing success.

Headspace, an online company specializing in meditation, offers a compelling example that illustrates the concepts mentioned previously. They effectively target their audience by strategically placing ads in key airport locations, such as charging stations and baggage claims. Recognizing the stress often associated with travel, the brand seizes the chance to introduce or remind consumers about their app, which can aid in relaxation and rejuvenation.



This Corona ad (above) exemplifies the immense creative potential of OOH advertising. In England, they ingeniously crafted a natural billboard, utilizing sunlight and shadows to form the iconic bottle shape. The main objective was

to emphasize the use of all-natural ingredients in Corona beer. This demonstrates the unique flexibility in OOH that enables the brand to craft a distinctive and captivating advertisement.

## HOW ELSE CAN YOU MAXIMIZE THE CHANCE TO DELIVER AN AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE THAT IS EFFECTIVE FOR THE BRAND?

We know that unique, empathetic experiences and new ideas that reframe existing knowledge are linked to more effective OOH advertising, but how tactically can we increase the chance these audience experiences will be effective?

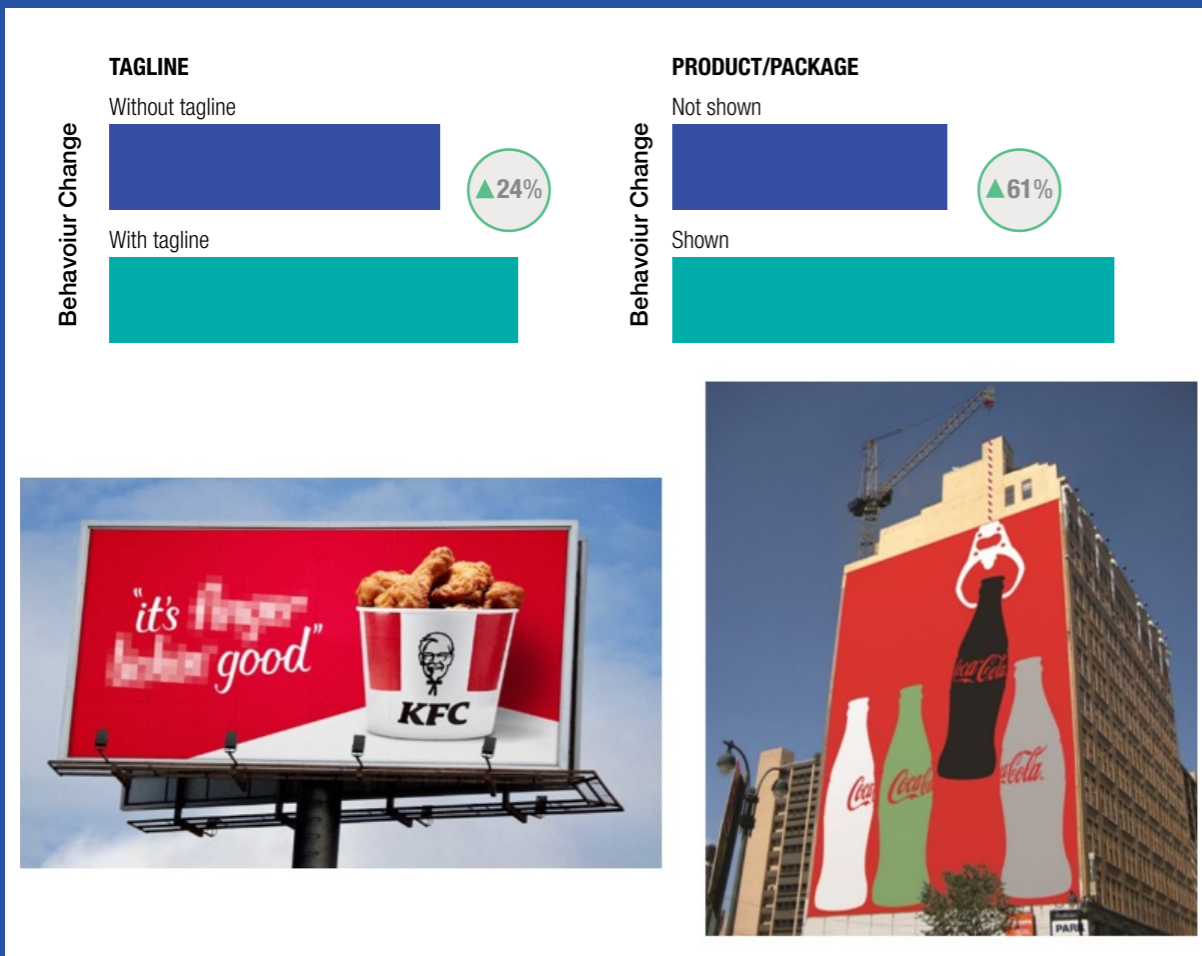
From Ipsos data, we see two key tactics that increase the chances to create more effective campaigns: using distinctive brand assets and delivering a simple, focused message.

### 1. USE DISTINCTIVE BRAND ASSETS

Distinctive brand assets are defined by Ehrenberg-Bass as the “non-brand name elements that trigger the brand into the memory of category buyers”<sup>5</sup>. By incorporating distinctive brand assets, such as taglines, logos, colors, and product visual elements, OOH advertisements can create immediate recognition and strengthen brand identity. This not only captures attention but also establishes

a connection with the audience, leading to improved *Behavior Change*. By consistently incorporating these distinctive assets in OOH advertisements, brands can establish a strong visual identity and build a lasting connection with their audience. In a cluttered advertising landscape, where consumers are bombarded with numerous messages, having recognizable

Figure 9: Brand distinctive assets impact on Behavior Change



Source: Ipsos database of 191 ads (US, UK, FR)

brand assets helps cut through the noise and capture attention.

For OOH advertising, Ipsos data suggests the use of a tagline can lead to a substantial positive change of 24% in Behavior Change<sup>6</sup>. This suggests that a well-crafted and impactful tagline has the potential to effectively influence consumer behavior. By leveraging a tagline, brands can communicate their key message and call-to-action in a concise and memorable manner.

## 2. STAY FOCUSED WITH A SINGLE MESSAGE

When segmenting the OOH dataset by ads that feature a single or multiple messages, we see that single message ads scored 44% higher on Behavior Change outcome versus the ads with multiple messages<sup>6</sup>.

In the fast-paced and visually stimulating OOH environment, where consumers have limited time to absorb information, a single message is more likely to capture attention and leave a lasting impression. By avoiding multiple messages, brands can reduce the risk of diluting their core message and confusing the audience and increase the chances of positively influencing the advertised brand.

Additionally, the data shows that including the product image/packaging in an OOH ad can result in an even greater behavior change, with a substantial increase of 61%<sup>6</sup>. This emphasizes the effectiveness of visually showcasing the product or packaging in capturing attention, establishing brand association, and ultimately motivating consumers to take the desired action. By combining the power of a compelling tagline with a visually impactful product image/packaging, brands can leverage the full potential of OOH advertising to drive significant behavior change and achieve their marketing objectives.

Figure 10: Messaging



Source: Ipsos database of 191 ads (US, UK, FR)

## BRAND SUCCESS

Introducing a new roadmap for brand success, Ipsos has conducted extensive research and meta-analysis over the past months. This research has identified three essential elements that shape successful brands. By understanding and empathizing with people's expectations in the context of their lives, advertisers can actively shape these expectations and forge strong connections that enhance their target

## SUMMARY

In summary, OOH advertising holds tremendous potential for brands to create captivating and memorable experiences. It allows brands to efficiently deliver the right message to the right people at the right time. And is a valuable media channel that harnesses creativity to spark brand growth.

Specifically, Ipsos observes that OOH advertising:

- Is most effective on memory encoding when it delivers a unique *Creative Experience*, with those that stand out from the environment are most likely to be encoded in the mind.
- When they express ideas that are empathetic and show something new this can help drive short-term behavior change.
- Incorporating distinctive brand assets such as taglines and product image/packaging helps people to make a quick connection to the brand in their mind.
- Utilizing a single, focused message to effectively communicate the brand message supports the potential for stronger behavior change effects.

audience's experiences. These fundamental principles are not limited to traditional marketing channels; they can be effectively applied to OOH advertising as well. OOH presents a unique opportunity to establish profound connections with a highly targeted audience in specific locations. By leveraging these principles, brands can unleash their true potential and achieve exceptional success in the OOH space.

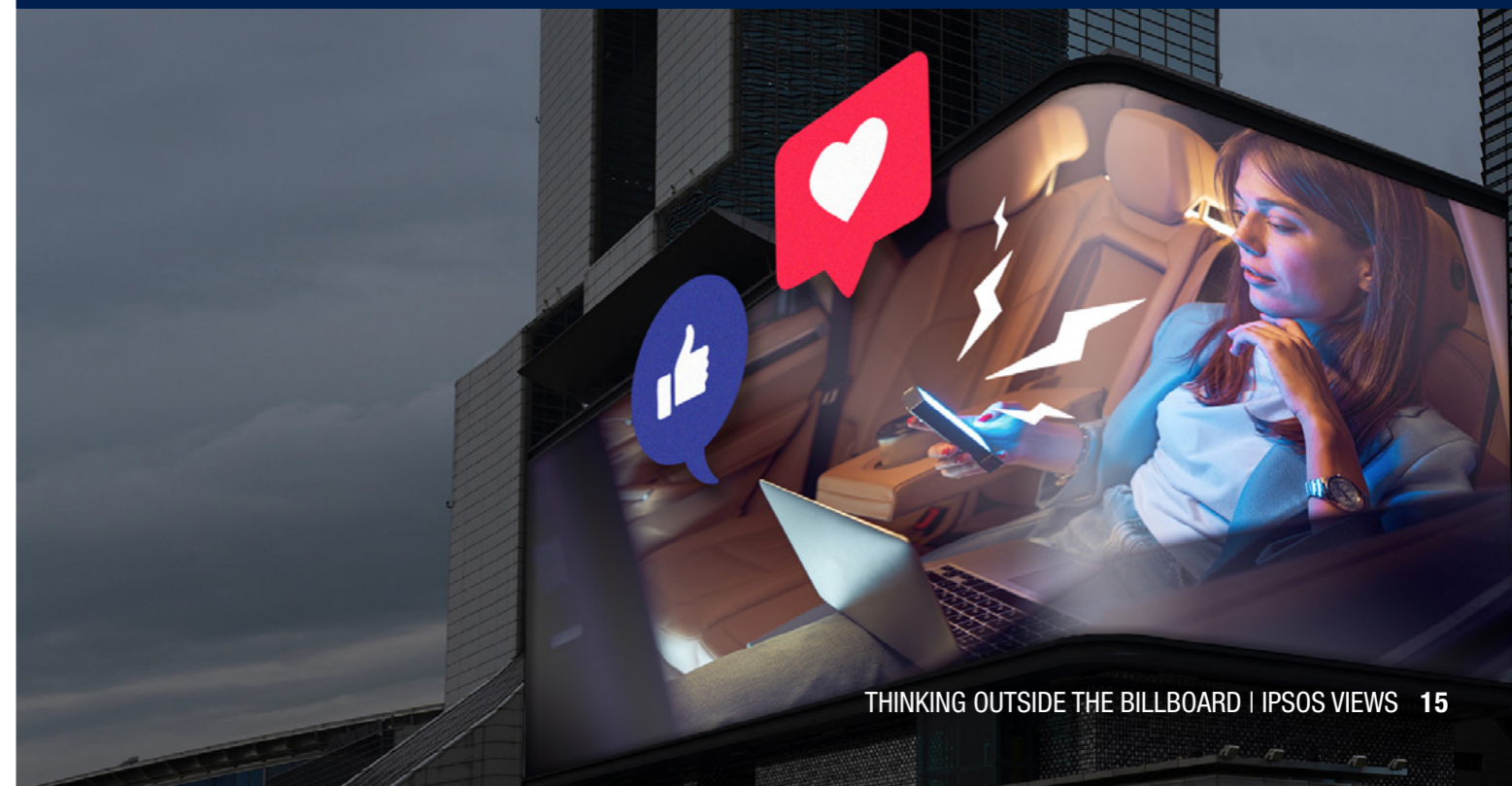
As the advertising landscape continues to evolve, it is essential to embrace the full potential of OOH and incorporate it strategically into campaign planning. By doing so, brands can unlock a world of possibilities, achieving new heights in terms of reach, engagement, brand recognition, and ultimately, driving consumer behavior. In a world filled with various media channels vying for attention, don't let OOH be overshadowed. Embrace this powerful channel and let it amplify your brand's message, leaving a lasting impression on your target audience.

At Ipsos, we understand the significance of this creative journey and are committed to supporting brands in optimizing their OOH advertisements. With our flagship creative assessment tool, CreativeSpark, we provide insightful data and analysis to help brands unleash the true potential of their OOH campaigns. By leveraging our expertise and innovative tools, brands can confidently navigate the OOH landscape, making informed decisions that lead to impactful and successful advertising outcomes.

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