

Creating Effective Designs for Digital Outdoor Media

Simplicity is the fundamental guideline for creating good outdoor designs and the same principles apply when designing for digital outdoor media.

Be Simple

The most effective outdoor designs capture the essence of an idea, which is then conveyed with brevity and clear expression.

Outdoor audiences are mobile and have limited exposure to messages. Use short and simple words for fast and easy comprehension. There should be no more than 10 words overall and less than five words in the headline.

Be Bold

Ensure immediate product identification by making logos and brand names large. Choose graphic elements with a strong focal point since busy photographs or graphics are often difficult to discern.

Use large and legible typefaces. Choose fonts that are easily read at long distances. Fonts with thin strokes or ornate script will be difficult to read.



Upper and lower case letters are particularly legible. When designing for a roadside display, a one foot letter height is unreadable while a two foot letter height is marginal. A letter height greater than three feet is clearly readable.

Be Colorful

Avoid using a white background when designing for LED or other light emitting technologies. White is a mixture of all color in these situations, rather than an absence of color, and will appear subdued or muddy. White does not carry the same vibrancy that other colors convey.



The perception of color can change depending on the amount of ambient light surrounding a digital outdoor display unit. For this reason, rich background colors are more impactful during daylight hours, while pastel backgrounds are more vibrant at night and on cloudy days. Digital outdoor display technology can automatically compensate for these factors.



Use bold colors with high contrast. The following 12 color combinations for outdoor design represent the best use of color contrast for readability. The chart evaluates primary and secondary color combinations, taking into account hue and value. Example one is considered the most legible color combination.



Be Flexible

Take advantage of the flexibility that digital outdoor media offers. Change messages weekly, daily or even hourly. Design with a creative strategy that tells a story or communicates numerous details using multiple design layouts.

Production

Art files are very small and there are no production or installation charges when utilizing digital outdoor media. The preferred file size will vary depending on the size and dot pitch of the unit. Contact your vendor for specific file sizes prior to producing art. It's a good idea to create the files at actual size. This provides the sharpest possible image by alleviating the need to "down-sample" the artwork before use. Down sampling will cause the image to become "fuzzy" and hurt the overall impact of the design. Designing at the actual pixels' density will also prevent the accidental use of extremely small type. If it can't be read at actual pixels, it can't be read from the street. The preferred file formats are .psd, jpg, tiff, or bmp saved at 72ppi in RGB color mode.

For more information, please contact either Myron Laible or Stephen Freitas at OAAA at 202-833-5566.



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