

BUS BENCH ADVERTISING...

"BUS BENCHES MAKE A LOT OF STREET CENTS"

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Source: Submitted by Mr. Graumlich, President, Bench Billboard Company, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Emerging on the forefront
of non-traditional advertising
mediums is bus bench advertising

Recently, companies such as R.J. Reynolds, Buena Vista Pictures, American Express, 7up/RC, PCH Clothing, Universal Pictures and Western Union have taken advantage of literally hundreds of facings in major markets for as little as 5%-10% of the unit cost of standard outdoor advertising. Now more than ever agencies nationwide are faced with having to produce the same results with tighter budget restrictions. Bus bench advertising meets this challenge for numerous package goods, fast food chains, grocery chains, automotive, home video, motion pictures and many other users of traditional outdoor (in addition to some who had never used outdoor advertising).

Bench panels are designed to attract the attention of motorist and pedestrians, at eye level, creating a mini-billboard. Traffic counts are such that advertisers can be guaranteed maximum reach and frequency at a minimal cost.

·In conjunction with rotating postings and painted bulletins, benches are used as a budget extender at a minimal cost, to continue the advertiser's message, creating the presence of continuous standard outdoor.

·Bench advertising achieves great effectiveness in terms of its directional abilities, directing motorists and pedestrians to the location of business.

·Product introduction and awareness to key buyers with bench saturation, and the positioning of appropriate locations, greatly assist in the forcing of distribution.

·Image building through trademark logo awareness is affordable and is easily accompanied with bench advertising.

·Having your message seen as close as possible to the point of purchase, with frequency, enforces a call to action statement.

·Promoting your message as to where the product can be found makes bench advertising a proven co-op tool.

·Standard showings of 25, 50, 75 and 100 gross rating points are available for general market, Hispanic and Black as well as customized showing by demographics:

- A) Age
- B) Income

By geography:

- A) Nationally
- B) By region
- C) By county
- D) By city

E) Zip code

Any by venue:

- A) By Region
- B) Shopping centers
- C) Sports arenas
- D) City points of interest, amusements, etc.
- E) Hotels, convention centers, airports, movie theaters
- F) Schools
- G) Beach & riverside packaging

With its inception at the turn of the century, up until the past couple of years, bus bench advertising had been viewed primarily as a medium used by local business. But with advertisers and agencies developing an awareness of the vast use of this medium, combined with the many production upgrades, benches no longer take a back seat for anyone looking for strong advertising impact. The standard bus bench ad is 24" in height by 72" in length. Bench operators accept ads produced on vinyl, even those designed and produced for standard transit, tail light displays. Take advantage of bench ads economical rates along with the assured economies of design and production with consistent quality. Bus bench advertising has made outdoor an affordable reality for many in today's tight-fisted economy and is being positioned competitively in numerous standard outdoor buys.

Proof Positive

In order to test the effectiveness of Bus Bench Advertising, Coast United Advertising developed a campaign for a fictitious product called, "Love Handles...Fat Food to Go." By placing advertising panels for the fictitious product onto the medium, the ability to brand products and convey concise advertising messages could be researched and analyzed. As "Love Handles" only appeared on bus benches, the significant awareness results achieved could be directly attributed to the bus bench campaign.

The Campaign

"Love Handles" ads were placed on approximately 800 benches in Los Angeles County and 100 benches in Orange County from September 25, 1989 through November 20, 1989, representing the equivalent of a #100 and a #50 showing, respectively. At the conclusion of the 8-week test, the consumer awareness research results from Los Angeles County were virtually twice as high as those from Orange County. The research highlights to follow are from the Los Angeles personal interview sample.

The Research

Sievers Research Company conducted the independent study of "Love Handles" in three waves...the first wave at 4 weeks and the final wave at the 8 week campaign conclusion.

Results

Unaided Awareness

Respondents were asked a series of questions about cake product brands and advertising, new cake product brand and advertising and amusing advertising for new cake products. The final results produced an unaided awareness for "Love Handles" of 4%.

Aided Awareness

Respondents that did not identify "Love Handles" on a spontaneous basis were first shown a card with five cake product names, including "Love Handles", and asked to identify familiar brands, resulting in an 11% response. Those not

recognizing "Love Handles" were then shown a photo of only the ad panel for "Love Handles" (not on a bench) which prompted an additional 17% recall. A cumulative aided awareness of 28%.

Total Awareness

At the conclusion of the 8-week campaign, 32% of the respondents were aware of "Love Handles". These final results built from a 26% awareness at 2 weeks, to 29% at 4 weeks, to 32% at 8 weeks, demonstrating the medium's ability to continually reach more consumers over time.

Advertising Communications

77% of the respondents who were aware of "Love Handles" on an unaided and a name only aided basis recalled one or more salient aspects of the ad...product graphics, brand name, product attributes, availability, etc....verifying the effectiveness of the ad and the medium.

Source of Awareness

The vast majority...83%...of the respondents who were aware of "Love Handles" on an unaided and a name only aided basis claimed bus benches as their source of awareness.

Summary

The research results clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the bus bench medium's ability to achieve awareness and convey your advertising message. Because the campaign was, in many ways, like the launch of a new branded product, the results are even more impressive. Generating 32% public awareness for a non-existent cake product, after just 8 weeks. Don't take a back seat on another medium. Think how well bus bench advertising will work for your brand and products.

Los Angeles Times

F/ THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1989



JOEL LUGAVERE / Los Angeles Times

Benches Serve Sweet Put-On

An odd advertisement has popped up on some 900 bus benches around Los Angeles and Orange counties. "Love Handles," it says. "Fat food to go. (Not available anywhere)." There is an accompanying photograph of a piece of chocolate cake with a plastic handle on top.

No, "Love Handles" aren't an underground product aimed at countering the diet fad. They aren't a convenient way of carrying around a snack, either.

In fact, "Love Handles" don't exist. The ad is part of a market research survey being conducted by a company that owns some 14,000 benches in Southern California.

Coast United Advertising is trying to determine

how many people actually notice what's written on bus benches. The company tried to create a fanciful, flippant product that wouldn't be confused with anything else.

The advertisements were posted two weeks ago, and researchers have been asking people on the street if they have seen them. The company hopes to use the responses to attract new business.

There isn't any address or phone number listed on the ad, but Coast United's phone number is printed on its bus benches, so the "Love Handles" campaign has generated an unforeseen response.

"We've been getting phone calls," said Arlan Renfro, the company's president. "People are saying 'What's this all about?'"

Advertising Age

Crain's International Newspaper of Marketing. In Two Sections. Section 1.

REGIONAL NEWS

California feasts its eyes

Fat Food spoof shows strength of bench ads

By Marcy Magiera

MAYWOOD, Calif.—Forget oat bran, arugula, yogurt and tofu. Southern Californians are being tantalized by Love Handles, fat food to go.

Ads for Love Handles—showing a slice of chocolate layer cake with a handle on top—are running on 1,000 bus benches in Los Angeles and Orange counties. And despite all the sugar and fat the name implies, the product has no calories.

That's because it doesn't exist. A line of copy at the bottom of the ads reads "Not available anywhere."

The spoof ads were designed by bus bench broker Coast United Advertising to demonstrate the medium's effectiveness. They're the brainchild of Russell Gore-Andrews, chairman of Coast United parent More O'Ferrall Adshel, London.

Mr. Gore-Andrews earlier this year sent U.K. consumers rushing to department stores asking for Sheila, a non-existent Australian designer fragrance that also kills flies—according to bus shelter ads.

"Benches [have been used as an ad medium] for over 40 years," said Arlan Renfro, Coast United



Love Handles' cake looks tasty, but it's not very filling. In fact, it's "Not available anywhere."

president-ceo. "Most major advertisers, agencies and clients don't even consider bus benches."

Love Handles might change that. Sievers Research will measure awareness of the ads after two weeks and at the end of their October run.

Coast United plans to use the research in sales presentations to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of bench ads (1,000 boards a month for \$85,000).

The Sheila campaign achieved 45% awareness among people polled, Oxford Research Agency reported. □