

# Analysis of the Ambient Media Approach of Advertisement Samples from the Adman Awards & Symposium under the Category of Outdoor & Ambience

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**Abstract**—This research is to study the types of products and services that employs 'ambient media and respective techniques in its advertisement materials. Data collection has been done via analyses of a total of 62 advertisements that employed ambient media approach in Thailand during the years 2004 to 2011. The 62 advertisement were qualifying advertisements of the Adman Awards & Symposium under the category of Outdoor & Ambience. Analysis results reveal that there is a total of 14 products and services that chooses to utilize ambient media in its advertisement. Amongst all ambient media techniques, 'intrusion' uses the value of a medium in its representation of content most often. Following intrusion is 'interaction', where consumers are invited to participate and interact with the advertising materials. 'Illusion' ranks third in its ability to subject the viewers to distortions of reality that makes the division between reality and fantasy less clear.

**Keywords**—Ambient media, Adman Awards, advertising, Out of Home media.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**I**N today's world, media and marketing has found many different methods of reaching target audiences and consumers. However, with ample media materials being used in the market, sometimes it is necessary to reinvent and find innovative ways to creating media to better attract target groups. One of these innovations is the ambient media approach that has gained interests as well as brings media closer to target groups' daily lives [1].

Ambient media refers to the usage of publicity-grabbing events by utilizing contextual elements of the target groups' environment in the creation of media and marketing materials. For instance, hallways trolleys in supermarkets, caps and signs on caps, golf course holes, street walk paths, pins, hand washing basins, pizza boxes, luggage carousels, public buses [2]. These spaces for advertisements and marketing are categorized under 'Out of Home Media' and are used to provide a channel of advertisement to the target groups, as the following details explicate out of home media to include, according to [3].

1. Outdoor advertising generally make use of billboards
2. In-store media such as in-store signs, flyers, marketing materials along aisles or on trolleys.
3. Transit advertising exists in 3 categories, i.e. inside cards,

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outside posters and station, platform and terminal posters.

4. Advertisements and marketing materials in movie theaters may take the form of product presentations before movies begin as well as using kiosks or snack and beverage distribution spots to display products and services.

5. Other forms of media such as in video games, in parking lots, public bathrooms et cetera.

The employment of ambient media requires appropriate and inspiration techniques to effectively access target audiences as well as ensure target group accesses at the right moment and place without any form of rejection from such groups. [4] Explains 8 methods of effectively reaching target audiences.

1. *Intrusion* is a technique that uses places and items as medium for advertisements. It can be separated into 2 types, as follows:

1.1 Using the value of a medium which equates to using the role of the medium, things that are visible from the medium and ways of connecting the medium to the consumers as well as using the medium's interesting aspects to create marketing materials.

1.2 Using other channels or advertising medium owners which are medium owners, public owners of competing mediums, other advertisers who own mediums or newly created mediums.

2. *Transformation* is a technique that uses changes and alterations to physical states of physical materials to present advertising contents. These changes include changes in size, in color, in shapes, in content or story, in location, changes through addition and removals and changes through replacements.

3. *Installation* is a technique that uses creations of new items to serve as new mediums of marketing and advertising presentations.

4. *Illusion* is a technique that focuses on distortions of the target groups' perceptions of reality and results in them being unable to distinguish fact from fiction. These can be done through mimicking of existing items, usages of 3D technology in presentations, creation of contents and storyboards and creating misunderstandings and misperceptions.

5. *Infiltration* is a technique where individuals are employed in certain locations surreptitiously to present marketing materials and information. This method uses people as actors and presenters of marketing contents.

6. *Sensation* is a technique that presents contents and marketing materials through the five senses which are seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.

7. *Interaction* is a technique that presents information and marketing materials by inviting interaction from target audiences and results in consumers becoming part of the creation of the advertisements and marketing materials.

8. *Stunt* is a technique that is used to present marketing and advertising materials that are abnormal, difficult or harmful through the use of larger than life techniques which are accompanied via exceptional physical acts.

Ambient media approaches may use the 8 techniques explained or be inspired by them. At times, there is a combination of some of the 8 methods to ensure efficiency and success of the advertisements and marketing materials.

In Thailand, ambient media is beginning to overtake the marketing schemes field because its ability to convey message is effective and creative. It also provides a more accurate consumer targeting because marketers are able to pinpoint locations where the materials will be distributed. Its reach guarantees its impact towards target audiences and it is capable of stimulating various actions and reactions from the audiences if the materials are employed are near places where respective products and services are located and sold [5].

Review of research studies in Thailand [6]-[11] reveal that there exists information studies of out of home media such as Increasing Project Revenue from Billboard Advertising on Shopping Center Facade with Respect to Visual Opportunity, advertising through outdoor media and its effect towards food products purchase, studies of such outdoor advertisements, reiterations of brand logos through outdoor light-emitting diode or LED screen, marketing of products and services in the Bangkok Train System and its effect to purchases of products and services, advertisements through LCD screens on BTS train bogies and its effects to purchasing habits of Bangkokians, studies of consumer attitudes towards marketing materials on shelves and effects to female consumers' purchasing behaviors (primarily supermarkets in Bangkok), for instance. However, it is also found that the numbers of these researches are low in number especially that of ambient media approaches. Thusly, this research focuses on studying and analyzing ambient media to gain understanding towards the types of products and services that employs ambient media and relevant methods that are used in Thailand.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To study the types of products and services that employs ambient media and relevant methods used in Thailand.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on the analysis of ambient media approach in Thailand from the years 2004 to 2011. A total of 62 samples of advertisements which qualified for the Adman Awards & Symposium under the category of Outdoor & Ambience were chosen for analysis. The Adman Awards & Symposium is a marketing multimedia competition that covers all forms of media and is internationally accepted in the media advertising industry as well as industries relevant to media advertisement in Thailand. Therefore, the awards competition was chosen and the mentioned 62 advertisements were

analyzed using code matrix from 2 coders for the reliability test. Intercoder reliability coefficient [12] was used for inspection.

## IV. RESULTS

Through the analysis of 62 samples of advertisements which qualified for the Adman Awards & Symposium under the Outdoor & Ambience category, it is found that there are 14 types of products and services which employs ambient media. These types are 1) Beverages 2) Confectionery, Snacks, Savory Foods and Seasoning 3) Household Maintenance Products and Pet Products 4) Home Appliance and Furnishings 5) Telecommunication, Business Equipment and Services 6) Clothing, Footwear, Accessories 7) Health and Beauty Products or Services, Cosmetics 8) Auto Vehicles, Automotive Products and Services 9) Banking, Investment, Insurance, Property Development 10) Fast Food Outlets, Restaurants, Retail Stores 11) Transportation, Travel and Tourism, Entertainment and Leisure 12) Publication and Media 13) Corporate 14) Public Service Message and Cause Appeals

Data and information analysis also reveal that ambient media has been employed in 3 levels, which are high, medium and low.

Ambient media that has been used at the high level is that of Public Service Message and Cause Appeals, at 12 advertisements.

At medium level, a total of 7 advertisements exhibited such level through Beverages advertisements. Health and beauty Products or Services advertisements also rank medium at a total of 7 advertisements. The same also applies to 1) Fast Food Outlets, Restaurants, Retail Stores. 2) Confectionery, Snacks, Savory Foods and Seasoning, 3) Auto Vehicles, Automotive Products and Services all had 6 advertisements.

At the low level, 1) Home Appliance and Furnishings, 2) Banking, Investment, Insurance, Property Development all had 3 advertisement appearances. However, 1) Telecommunication, Business Equipment and Services, 2) Clothing, Footwear, Accessories, 3) Transportation, Travel and Tourism, Entertainment and Leisure. 1) Corporate and 2) Publication and Media all had 1 appearance.

Technique-wise, 'intrusion' was found to be most frequently used in 39 advertisements. Advertising and marketing materials were created using the medium's role, the medium's visible aspects, the medium's ability to connect with consumers and the medium's interesting aspects. For instance, ambient media in Pedigree advertisements used a car's rear mirror windshield viper as a dog's tail. When it rains, the viper activates similarly as to how a dog's tail would function in response to affection. The slogan of 'Dogs' favorite along with the image of the products is used. When the dog sees Pedigree, its tail will move similar to how the windshield viper moves. Wolf's spicy sauce uses ambient media by using stickers of a man blowing out of his mouth due to spiciness and sticking the stickers onto public bathrooms' hair dryers. This is done to convey the fact that the sauce is so spicy that the heat coming

out from the consumers' mouth is going to be equally high in temperature to that of the hand dryers.

'Interaction' follows with 15 advertisements. This technique primarily presents information by inviting consumers and target audiences to participate and 'interact' with the advertising and marketing materials. For instance, Thai Health Promotion Foundation's campaign had installed toilet paper dispensers at a higher location in bathrooms so as to stimulate users to jump to reach the toilet papers. The message is clear, i.e. exercising can occur anywhere at anytime. Health Land Spa & Massage uses an image of a person's back and foot and sticks them inside the elevator, where users push the elevators' buttons. When a person presses a button, it is similar to a masseur or a masseuse applying pressure to pressure points to perform massages. This is done to display Health Land's pressure point massage services.

'Illusion' ranks third with 13 advertisements. Reality may be mimicked to create interest such as through the use of 3D images. For example, Gatorade's ambient media approach uses a mannequin wearing sports outfits to reveal a physical body that has aged excessively as well as ones that have fallen and are lying unconscious and places them in public parks where people are exercising to convey the message that Gatorade products can refill the human's need of mineral and salts to refresh and replenish people exercising so that they do not meet the same fate as the mannequins. McDonald's ambient media campaign uses stickers of the brands' store interior images and posts them on other restaurants' doors. When the restaurants are closed and the doors are shut, people and passer-bys will see the stickers and understand that McDonald's is always opened 24 hours a day.

There is a total of 11 'transformation' advertisements. Sizes and shapes of advertising materials are subjected to change such as in the Scotch-Brite advertisement where an excessively large Scotch-Brite product along with the slogan advertising how the product absorbs water excellently are placed alongside public water fountains. When users use the fountains, the product's water absorption capabilities are displayed. Rejoice, a hair conditioner product brand, installed a large comb that shows the message 'Use Rejoice when your hair is all intertwined and messy' on electric poles with intertwining electrical wires. The message meant to be conveyed is that Rejoice can take care of such messy problems.

'Stunt' has 6 advertisements. Exaggeration is key to the stunt technique. Big Bubble bubble-gums created large and colorful balloons that are similar to bubble gums along with a model of a child hugging the balloon that he or she seemingly blew after chewing the gum. These creations are left in shopping centers to convey that Big Bubble bubble gums can be blown to create large bubbles. In Thailand, Pran Ta Lay is a famous frozen seafood products brand that used remote controlled frozen seafood. Once placed along with other frozen seafood packages, the controller creates movement via the remote control system and conveys the message that the seafood is so fresh that it moves even when in storage in the

packages, to the point that even the fishes, shrimps and crabs move after being frozen and packaged.

'Installation' has 4 advertisements. What is key about this technique is that creations are used to convey messages and marketing contents, particularly the creation of installations. For instance, Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company, uses air tubes and installs them around offices, clinics, pharmacies, golf courses and more. Only one of these air tubes has rigid PVC pipes in it to keep the air tube standing tall. This is done to advertise Pfizer's Viagra products. During Halloween, ZEN department stores used remote controlled severed hands and attached them to shopping bags left lying around the malls to promote their 'ZEN Hunted Halloween sale' event. These bags were also placed in competing shopping malls.

Lastly, there are 3 instances of the 'infiltration' technique as 'sensation' was not used in any of the 62 advertisements analyzed. Infiltration focuses on the presentation of marketing materials through infiltrating individuals. For example, Clear shampoos used QR codes effectively and creatively by carving the QR code onto the hair cut design of a person's head. This person then walks around the city, stimulating others to read the QR code from the head which then links through the internet to the brand's product website to show what the shampoo characteristics are. SPY wine had people sit or lie on the streets with seemingly crushed cars along with the sign that reads 'Better to live the cool life through SPY Wine Cooler'. These infiltrations are set throughout teenagers' popular area where they often hang out. This is to convey that if a person drinks SPY Wine Cooler, they would not get as drunk or get into accidents.

## V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

'Intrusion' was found to be the most prominent and most often used technique of ambient media of all the 62 advertisements obtained from qualifying advertisements of the Adman Awards & Symposium under the category of Outdoor & Ambient. Advertising and marketing materials were created using the medium's role, the medium's visible aspects, the medium's ability to connect with consumers and the medium's interesting aspects. It is a technique that is easy to create and use and is not complicated in its presentation methods. The target audiences can both easily interpret and understand what the technique is trying to convey. It suits Thailand's culture and way of living appropriately because Thai people often times prefer simple and easy contents to suit their way of living which is fun and relaxed [13]. The target audience's perception will choose to interpret and understand contents that suit their attitude, character, social needs, cultural needs as well as their own way of living [14].

'Sensation' was not used in any of the advertisements, however. This technique deals with the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. The lack of usage may be accounted by the reason that Thai people may feel intimidated or unfamiliar with instances which require them to touch, smell or taste products and services. The uncertainty as to what would happen if they do may stimulate certain levels of fear within the consumers [15].

The awards entitled by the Adman Awards & Symposium under the category of Outdoor & Ambience are Gold Awards, Silver Awards and Bronze Awards. 'Intrusion' may be used most often but also used in conjunction with other techniques such as the 'transformation' technique. This is done to increase the attractiveness of the advertisements as well as its efficiency. A piece of creation may be the summation of many different techniques and ideas to create the most interests in the advertisement and create better responses and understandings from the target audiences [16].

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