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Nontraditional Media

This chapter lists the different types of nontraditional media and discusses how they can be used to give a brand a unique identity distinct from those of competing brands. Emphasis is placed on how the innovative use of these unique vehicles does not have to be expensive.

Nontraditional Media Can Reach the Target Alone or In Conjunction With Traditional Vehicles

There is no longer anywhere a consumer can go without being exposed to some form of advertising, whether an ad is in the restroom, on gas pumps or toll-gates, on or near an escalator, or even on the bald guy's head standing in front of you in the checkout line. PQ Media, one of the top research distributors of media econometrics, labels these diverse forms of media as alternative or nontraditional and defines it as “media buying strategies that attempt to bypass the clutter of traditional advertising and marketing in an effort to reach target audiences, primarily through new media...but also by using alternative means through traditional media” (PQ Media, 2006, p. 3).

Strategically, the majority of media mixes today use a combination of both traditional and nontraditional media vehicles to reach the target. *Traditional media* uses vehicles directed at a mass audience such as print (newspaper and magazines) and broadcast (radio and television). However, traditional media alone can no longer be relied on to deliver the advertised message to the target. Lacking the relationship-building capabilities needed to connect with the target on a one-to-one basis, traditional vehicles need to employ alternative ways to break the larger message down in order to reach a more targeted niche audience. Mass messages aimed at mass audiences cannot

effectively address the target's two most important questions: 1) Why should I buy? 2) What's in it for me? To do that, marketers and their agencies must focus instead on using rapport building nontraditional alternatives to fill in the relationship gap. When traditional vehicles are used as a primary source of delivery, nontraditional vehicles work great as support vehicles helping to break down the nonpersonalized mass appeal message into more individualized discussions about the product or service. When nontraditional media is used as a primary media source, it is important the message have several versions or ideas and is distinctive enough to encourage further discussion among the target audience.

Although many traditional vehicles are becoming more interactive, they have for some time now incorporated or referenced some form of nontraditional media device, including a web address, initiating a contest or sweepstakes, encouraging the target to tweet or visit a Facebook page, incorporating product placement into movies or television programming, or using the pages of a magazine to deliver a product sample, to name just a few.

Because of its ability to spotlight a product or service, nontraditional media is alluring to marketers and advertisers, giving a unique identity different from other competitors in the brand category. Creative use of promotions and ads that can tantalize, and/or shock, leave a memorable impression that the target will hopefully share with others, increasing the reach of the brand's initial message. When combined with traditional media, the message can be personalized or designed to create opportunities for dialogue between the product or service and the target.

Today's savvy, advertising-avoidant consumer considers one-way messages not only impersonal but also *passé*. The inclusion of any vehicle that invokes a two-way conversation between the target and the brand is an open invitation for feedback and the foundation for a long-lasting, brand-loyal relationship. Nontraditional media works because 1) it is difficult for consumers to ignore an interactive message, one that is considered interesting rather than annoying, 2) consumers often enjoy being a part of the brand's message, 3) advertising that is interactive doesn't seem like a blatant form of advertising, and 4) interactive messages encourage buzz and excitement.

However, creating buzz is no longer enough, as authors Beard and McCrindle tell us in the e-book *Seriously Cool-Marketing & Communicating with Diverse Generations*:

While marketers for many decades recognized the value of word-of-mouth communication, where consumers spread good reports about products and services they enjoy, [nontraditional advertising practices go] a step beyond this.

Effective [alternative] marketing is authentic, not preachy, and seamless[ly] embedded into the lives of consumers. The key is to market *with* them—not *at* them. (Beard & McCrindle, 2010, p. 30)

Marketers who are open to the use of nontraditional media are those looking for something innovative, something that not only attracts their target but that also encourages the consumer to research, visit a brick and mortar store, or just share their experiences virally or through word of mouth. Reaching the target where they are with a message that they will respond to is one of the many aspects that makes nontraditional media so attractive to both advertisers and marketers. Its personalized approach and ability to get the product into the hands of consumers helps build a relationship between the buyer and seller, encourages interaction on updates, service, and new product launches, as well as helping to quickly address or avoid any adverse comments or publicity before they become a public relations issue.

Most forms of nontraditional advertising are relatively inexpensive, requiring more creative ingenuity, time, and energy than anything else. The idea that nontraditional messages can literally appear anywhere and at any time allows this form of advertising the best chance to be innovative without becoming routine or expected. Its very exceptionality not only makes the encounter a part of the promotional experience but also a part of the brand's image, making it a great way to attract consumer attention.

Nontraditional media has continued to increase because 1) traditional media does not have the power to attract and hold a viewer's attention by itself, in the same way it once did, 2) it is versatile, 3) it can be very creative and engaging, 4) it is often less expensive than traditional vehicles, 5) it is highly targetable, and 6) many options allow for personalization. These attributes are what had PQ Media, in a March 27, 2008, online article by Helen Leggatt, "Use of alternative media to rise," predicting that by 2012, marketers will spend one out of every four dollars on alternative media (Leggatt, 2008).

Because of their often in-your-face visual/verbal messages, most nontraditional vehicles are placed in high traffic areas that are seen by, or are a part of, the target's everyday activities. Advertisers use these visible locations or surfaces to reach them in an unusual way but also as a curiosity device to attract attention and encourage further participation or input into the promotion. For example, *Hotels.com* is hoping their target can help them develop a new animated figure that will prominently represent the service in future promotional efforts.

The campaign, known as "Clay Yourself," asks consumers to create a digitally animated figure of themselves rendered in clay. Once submitted, a

weekly winner, based on viewer votes, will win \$200 vouchers from *Hotels.com*. The final winner will not only get to see their clay figure in a commercial but will also receive a three-day, two-night Los Angeles getaway that includes a sneak peek at the production of the ad.

Despite the difficulties of measurement, marketers are more open to including nontraditional media in the media mix because the public is still surprised by its very creative visual/verbal voice. There are far too many forms of nontraditional media available to creative teams to list here, but suffice it to say that there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of vehicles that can be called on to deliver a brand's message. The following "short list" from the book *Strategic Uses of Alternative Media* will kick-start both your business and creative senses into action (Blakeman, 2011a, pp. 6–8).

Airborne Advertising

- Aerial advertising
- Bubble clouds

Body Advertising

- Hand stamp advertising
- Temporary tattoos

Direct Marketing

- Card deck mailings (Poly packs)
- Catalog bind-ins/blow-ins
- Co-op mailings
- Direct mail
- Door-to-door advertising
- E-direct marketing
- E-mails
- Endorsements
- Interactive TV
- Sponsorships
- Issue advertising
- Newsletters

- Payroll/credit card stuffers
- Ride alongs
- Telemarketing
- Tradeshows

Electronic Media

- Augmented reality
- Banners
- Blogs
- Buzz advertising (Word-of-mouth/viral)
- Social media
- DVR advertising
- Downloadable videos
- E-zines
- iPods
- Online classifieds
- Online video advertising
- Podcasts
- RSS (Really simple syndication)
- Satellite radio
- Search advertising
- Viral marketing
- Webisodes
- Websites

Furniture/Machines

- ATM machine advertising
- Chairs/benches
- Exercise equipment
- Gas pump tops
- Gus pump nozzles

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Grocery/golf carts

Scaffolding

Gaming

Advergaming

Videogame/online gaming

Guerrilla Marketing

Bilingual street teams

Postering campaigns (Splash/blanket)

Wild posting

Rip-away wild posters

Snipe media wild postings

Static-cling wild postings

Urban street postings

Mobile

Location-based advertising

Mobile couponing

Mobile video

Texting

Out-of-Home

3-D out-of-home (Extreme out-of-home)

Billboards

Digital out-of-home

Wallscapes

Live mobile billboards

Mobile billboards

Mobile video cubes

Moving walkways

- Parking garage advertising (Entrance/exit gates)
- Parking meters
- Street art (Sidewalks/streets)
- Video projection advertising

Print

- 3-D catalogs
- Flyers (Traditional/suction cups)
- Freestanding inserts

Sales Promotion

- Automated shelf and aisle advertising
- Card deck mailings
- Coupons
- Package inserts (PIP)
- Point of purchase displays (POP)
- Product placement
- Sampling programs (Product/brand sampling)
- Event-based sampling
- Flash mob brand sampling
- Fill concept brand sampling
- Point-of-use product sampling
- Nightlife product sampling
- Covert product sampling
- In-venue brand sampling
- Van/truck product sampling
- Intercept brand sampling
- Supermarket Shelf Talkers
- Sweepstakes/contests
- Take-a-ways

Specialty

Bathroom advertising
Body billboards
Branded vinyl stickers
Business card backs
CDs
Chopstick advertising
Cinema advertising
Coffee cup sleeves
Doggie bag advertising
Escalator handrail and steps
Fruits and vegetables
Green graffiti
Manhole covers
Milk cartons
Movie promotions
Parking garage ticket backs
Pop-up brand experiences
Shopping bags
Sidewalk chalkings
Sidewalk decals
Snappable ads
Sports marketing
Stickers (All types)
Tissue-packs
Toilet seats
Toilet stalls
Vacant storefront windows
Valet parking tickets/parking permits
Word-of-Mouth marketing

Transit

- Airport advertising
- Buses (Inside and out)
- Bus shelters
- Bus/train/subway terminals
- Bus wraps
- Pedicabs
- Police cars
- Taxi cabs (Inside/outside)
- Ticket jackets (Airline, rail, bus)
- Trucks
- Vehicle wraps

Since no surface is immune to carrying a promotional message, it is easier to customize it based on where the target is and what they are doing. Best of all, since the environment in which the message appears is not controllable by the consumer it cannot be deleted, turned off, or removed by a simple click. Its very uniqueness and often interactive features hold the target's attention longer, limiting the impulse to multitask while engaged with the message. The idea is to put a creative experience in front of the target rather than a hard-sell brand-focused message.

The inclusion of some type of thought provoking element is essential to stopping attention and creating memorable encounters. Whether done with visual images or colorful copy, the diversity of this medium ensures that it never speaks to the target in the same way twice. Some approaches are funny, others shocking, and still others defy classification—they are just downright creative.

Identifying a Medium's Strengths and Weaknesses Reinforces and Highlights the Visual/Verbal Message

Before deciding where nontraditional media fits in a campaign, it is important that both marketers and the advertising teams understand how each vehicle can positively enhance or negatively affect a campaign's message. Let's take a quick look at both its capabilities and limitations.

Nontraditional Media Strengths

1. **Consumer-Focused.** Messages can be personalized, making it a great way to encourage feedback and build or maintain a relationship.
2. **Creative.** Messages are often in-your-face, unusual, colorful, interactive, and engaging. Because of this, it is a great way to spread the message beyond the initial encounter through viral sharing or word of mouth.
3. **Targetable.** Many vehicles are permission-based or require the target to “opt-in” to receive them. Additionally, the diversity of vehicles makes it easier to place them where the target is sure to see them.
4. **Less Media Waste.** Because they are more targetable, there is less waste spent on media that the target does not see or interact with.
5. **Interactive.** Many vehicles are designed to capture and hold attention through some type of interaction with the brand, making them more memorable.
6. **Budget.** Many alternative options can be employed on a small budget.

Nontraditional Media Weaknesses

1. **Reach.** Unless dealing with small niche markets, the use of nontraditional media vehicles alone cannot effectively reach the target. Successful ROI (return on investment) usually requires the use of traditional vehicles to initially get the word out and attract attention.
2. **ROI.** Difficult to determine and measure whether the target saw the message, interacted with the message, or responded to it.
3. **Budget.** Some alternative options can be very expensive as well as time consuming. The more spectacular or specialized vehicles require additional planning and budgetary allowances.
4. **Buzz.** Information spread virally or by word of mouth is good but lacks the repetition or frequency needed to keep the message alive for the long term.

The choice to use nontraditional media depends on the brand, the target, and the overall marketing budget. It is important to remember that unique or innovative products will grab the consumer’s attention without the use of outrageous stunts or novel creative approaches. These tactics work best for products with little or no differentiation from other brands in the product category. Groundbreaking creative ideas can take “me too” brands or reinvented brands to the front of their product category. Messages using an *avant-garde* approach in an interesting way not only attract the target’s attention but also produce a memorable experience. This way the target will choose to share with others via word of mouth or virally via e-mail, text, or social media sites, thereby successfully extending the life of the message.

The strategy behind using nontraditional media is all about creatively streamlining and personalizing the message. How nontraditional media can be weaved into a campaign requires taking a thorough look at both the marketing plan and creative brief. If the strategy is to build awareness, remind, reinvent a brand's image, or *wow*, nontraditional vehicles have enough media choices to astound. Erasing the prejudicial and apathetic views that consumers have about advertising takes planning and a creative approach that engages through innovation. Nothing stops attention or is more memorable than an ingenious approach to promoting a brand's mundane features and benefits. Turning mundane into extraordinary often requires both the marketing and advertising teams to reimagine the brand. Marketers are often leery of nontraditional media because ROI cannot always be measured in the same way as traditional vehicles. Oftentimes, being able to envision its sheer creativity helps them to understand its power to grab attention in ways traditional media is never able to do. Let's take a look at a few creative and innovative ads that have successfully employed nontraditional vehicles.

Many Great Alternative Ideas Often Cost More Creatively Than Monetarily

Nestlé Global is using television in a nontraditional way to advertise its line of dog food with a commercial targeted to dogs. The extremely targeted commercial uses a high-pitched whistle only a dog can hear. According to an October 4, 2011 online *Washington Post* article titled, "TV commercial is meant for dogs," Nestle's Anna Rabanus tells us, "We wanted to create a TV commercial that our four-legged friends can enjoy . . . but also allow the owner and dog to experience it together."

A Chinese restaurant helped the History Channel advertise its documentary "Lost Book of Nostradamus" by placing the promotion in their fortune cookies.

To remind consumers to dunk, Oreos placed a bigger than life Oreo into a very large glass of milk in the lobby of a building. This very visual appetite stimulant required only the logo to complete the message.

To raise money, UNICEF placed vending machines on the street that showcased a bottle of dirty water to educate pedestrians about unsafe drinking water in third world countries. Although you could not buy one of the imaginatively offered flavors like Typhoid and Cholera, you could donate to the cause by feeding money into the vending machine.

To alert homeowners to the rising crime rate and advertise their free home security check, Schussel & Schloss used street teams to place a direct mailer that looked very much like a real crowbar into doorframes of local homeowners.

One inventive insurance company placed very large branded air-filled pillows on the corners of local parking garages where cars are most commonly damaged.

An online seller of suits in Holland advertised their site by placing a sign listing their website on a poster held by a man standing along a busy highway clad only in boxer shorts and a T-shirt.

A charity that works to feed the homeless used a flat-topped steel outdoor trashcan to deliver their message. The trash filled hole on the top took on the look of a plate when advertisers added stickers of a knife, fork, and napkin on either side, simulating a place setting. Copy read: "For The Homeless, Everyday Is a Struggle. Donate today and help us feed the homeless." Additional information included a website and the logo.

A karate school placed a wallscape at ground level that featured a man in a karate pose, looking down. His face is scrunched up as he appears to release a grunt before his downward projected fist appears to hit the sidewalk, where, coincidentally, there is a crack to emphasize the results.

The Turkish department store, YKM, to bring attention to its brand used shopping bags featuring an athletic looking woman in one version and a man in another who appear to be jumping rope. The handles play the role of the rope popping out from each raised arm. When held, the rope appears over their heads; when down, it's at their feet.

Big box retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot are placing QR barcodes on a variety of merchandise throughout their stores. Any consumer who can't find a sales assistant to answer their questions no longer has to wait or search for one. The barcodes, when scanned by their smartphone, deliver helpful and immediate information.

The aquarium in one city is not only using traditional media to promote their "Share the Love" campaign, but nontraditional vehicles such as social media and interactive options as well. The campaign uses a branded truck that travels to neighboring cities showcasing an interactive video screen dubbed the "virtual aquarium dive adventure." There is also a mobile application that consumers can download, featuring an interactive game. Moreover, ads were featured on the sides of trucks, and also on bicycles that traveled back and forth within the city limits. Additional promotions included sponsoring the *Kiss Cam* at the local major league ball park, and oversized displays featuring the aquarium's fish placed in the lobby of a local Hyatt in order to encourage tourists visiting the area to take time out to stop by the aquarium. One of the most in-your-face displays used photos of penguins placed on either side of the elevator doors so that when they closed, it looked as if the penguins stopped for a little smooch.

To update its image and reinstate an aura of prestige, the French clothier Lacoste usually relies on a professional athlete or celebrity to wear its

clothing. To widen their reach and bring more attention to the brand, the company decided to dress up the very visible employees (i.e., the wait staff, bus boys, and valets) at an upscale restaurant in the Hamptons as well as employees of several fine Manhattan hotels. All apparel, of course sported the Lacoste logo to invite conversation about the brand and promotion. Additionally, they employed the use of branded trucks to deliver food and hand out Lacoste's red crocodile mascot to pedestrians on busy city streets. Other promotional events included street teams handing out coupons, and a seventeen-foot-tall Lacoste shirt marking the entrance to the store.

Another different, effective, and nontraditional way to raise awareness about skin cancer was used as people at one beach discovered an ownerless orange towel with a white police outline of a body on it.

KFC Corporation used the backsides of young female college students to advertise its new Double Down Sandwich. The promotion throughout the country required young women to wear sweat pants with "Double Down" printed on the back and hand out gift certificates on campuses. The goal: encourage its male target to try the sandwich without a bun.

Why use an outdoor board to capture the target as they move from place to place when you can put the message a mere six feet in front of their face on a tollbooth gate? That's exactly what a small seasonal New York based business recently did when they used the entire four feet of the tollgate to advertise their website address. Each commuter had approximately three to five seconds to view the unusually placed ad before driving past. "This is so 'in your face' advertising we couldn't pass it up," said co-owner Nancy Jubie, in an October 26, 2011, online *Advertising Age* article by Rich Thomaselli, titled "Hey Advertisers: New York Has a Bridge to Sell You" (Thomaselli, 2011).

This small handful of creative approaches underlines the importance of having an idea that informs, titillates, and/or astounds. The more creative and unusual the visual and/or verbal message, the more attention the product, service, cause, or event will receive. The goal is to not only get the target to act, but to stop and take pictures with their phone and send them on to friends and family or post them to their Facebook page, successfully extending the life of the message.

Tying the Visual/Verbal Message to the Media Mix and Campaign Direction

A product or service's overall visual/verbal direction is developed based on information found in the creative brief. The brief helps the creative team determine what needs to be said and shown to strategically highlight the brand's key consumer benefit. In order to be effective, creative direction must capture

the target's attention and tie the brand's image to the target's self image and current lifestyle. Brands that can successfully weave these combined images into the visual and/or verbal message will isolate the brand from the competition, create interest, and encourage the target's further action.

Image also helps determine the tone of voice the visual/verbal message projects, such as whether it uses humor, scientific facts, fantasy, testimonials, or demonstrations. This image choice not only sets the stage for what will be repeatedly said and shown but assists in creating a cohesive message that is recognizable regardless of the medium used.

Elements that help to maintain a cohesive look across diverse types of vehicles might include layout or headline style, color or color combinations, typeface and style, repetitive use of visual images and styles such as photographs, illustrations or graphics, or the use of a spokesperson or character representative. Any campaign using actors or spokespersons must ensure each choice matches the look, age, dress, professional background, and lifestyle of the selected target audience in order to ensure believability and solidify image.

Additionally, a product or service's logo, tagline, or slogan is one of the most unifying visual/verbal devices available to a brand; consumers recognize it and, in turn, associate and respond to the brand and its reputation.

Slogans and/or taglines that are visually written should expressively tell the brand's story. Nike's "Just do it" slogan conjures up varied visuals in the target's mind depending on their level of activity. Wendy's classic and now reintroduced "Where's the beef" slogan is not only visual but thought provoking. M&M's "Melts in Your Mouth, Not in Your Hand" tagline addresses issues many of us have with chocolate, but also alludes to its ease of use and rich taste.

What cohesive elements are employed depends on the key consumer benefit advanced, the target to be reached, the media mix employed, and whether or not the campaign's overall strategy can be simply delivered or requires a more complex series of messages in order to tell the brand's story.

Determining how to strategically use the key consumer benefit on any non-traditional vehicle is difficult. Many options, such as stickers placed on fruits and vegetables use only the logo, slogan, or tagline, while others (e.g., shopping bags, coffee sleeves, or parking meters) may involve using a graphic, illustration, or photograph accompanied by the logo and tag or slogan. Vehicles such as transit shelters, mobiles, posters, elevators, payroll or credit card stuffers can combine a visual with a small amount of copy. Still others—for example, direct mail and website messages—can use multiple visuals supported by lengthy copy. More complicated messages can use sight, sound, and motion to tell a lengthier brand story such as with infomercials or cinema advertising.

A strong key consumer benefit must be adaptable to all surfaces, whether small or large, both strategically and visually and/or verbally, so as to reach the target in multiple ways. In order to project a key consumer benefit that concentrates on a brand's heavenly aroma, for example, small compact

surfaces might use a visual that mimics the look of someone taking a deep aroma-filled breath. The tagline or slogan might give the target an idea of what the aroma is like such as, “it reminds me of apple cider,” or “a clean breeze after a summer storm.” This type of visual/verbal message has little to say and show, but represents the brand’s key consumer benefit by invoking both the target’s imagination and senses. A more intense assault on their senses might use a creative direction employing nontraditional vehicles that can also release the brand’s smell in subways or transit shelters, for example. Other options might include setting up a pop-up store where the product can not only be smelled by passing pedestrians, but eaten or used. Outside, street teams could be employed to hand out samples in front of the temporary store or near retail stores that sell the product.

Creative adaptability allows nontraditional vehicles to appear anywhere the target is located with an unusual and captivating message capable of igniting interest in the advertised communication. It is a creative, inexpensive, and

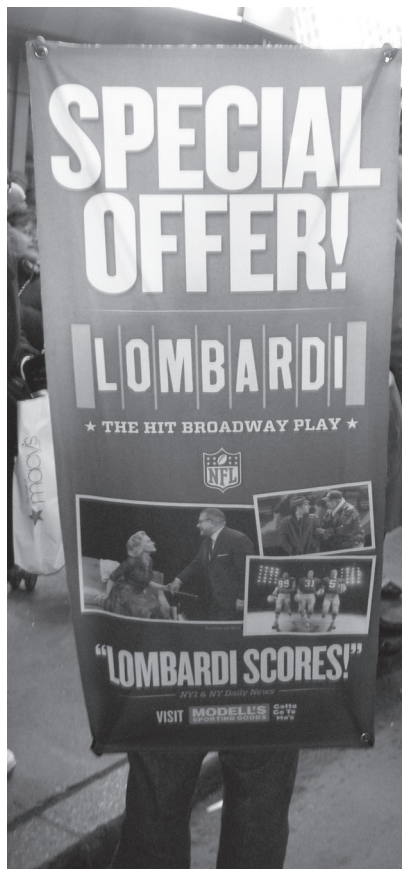


Figure 5.1

consumer-focused way to create awareness, build or maintain a brand's identity, or inform and remind the target about a product or service in order to build or maintain an ongoing relationship with the target.

After being continuously exposed to conventional forms of advertising, today's consumer finds most messages easy to dismiss. The very uniqueness of a promotion using nontraditional vehicles as a secondary or primary source of delivery helps to build a brand's identity through recall. As more ways are found to measure its effectiveness, nontraditional media will continue its slow but steady rise in the marketing mix, looking for an ever-increasing piece of the marketing budget.

Chapter 5 Exercises

1. Working in the same or new groups, use the brief that was developed for the national brand from Chapter 2. Determine how nontraditional media can be employed in the campaign or be combined with traditional and/or guerrilla marketing.
2. What visual/verbal direction will accomplish the directives laid out in both the marketing plan and creative brief? How will you tie the visual/verbal message together to create a cohesive look across vehicles?
3. Groups must use some type of nontraditional media. The goal from here on out is to look to competitors to see what they are doing and do it differently with nontraditional media alone or in combination with other traditional vehicles. Each team must defend their position based on information found in both documents. Tie creative decisions back to the creative brief and marketing plan.
4. Consider whether or not you will delete any mediums based on what you now know about nontraditional vehicles. If you do not delete and continue to use the same vehicles, how can you tie nontraditional media into the existing direction? Be able to back up your decisions either way. Tie creative decisions back to the creative brief and marketing plan.
5. Present your conclusions to the class or to the marketing team.
6. Follow the same exercises for the small local business using the selected brief from Chapter 2.

Memory Box

Nontraditional Media

Traditional Media

Media Mix