RESEARCH ON OUTDOOR ADVERTISING IN ZHENGZHOU RAILWAY STATION

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ABSTRACT

Zhengzhou Railway Station is large station China with concentrated peopleflow and it has a great number of passengers. However, the outdoor advertising and its arrangement is less than satisfactory. How to make full use of this better place in order to achieve desired effect is worth to be studied. Based on the status of outdoor advertising in Zhengzhou Railway Station and passengers’ characteristic, combining the overall image plan of railway station and historical and cultural factors, it is proposed that the outdoor advertising design in Zhengzhou Railway Station needs to be delivered in much more repetitions, especially for those advertisement with intricate, complicated and numerous information. We point out that those products with high reliability or passengers know little need to be delivered highly repeatedly, but should be controlled some kind of quantity and density, in order to avoid causing visual pollution. Moreover, the outdoor advertising design must be rich in creativity, and entrusted with certain cultural connotation to promote the good image of Zhengzhou and the railway station.

KEY WORDS:
Outdoor advertising; media Space; media research; Zhengzhou Railway Station.

INTRODUCTION

Zhengzhou Railway Station has a long history. As it is one biggest and oldest station in China, its internal structure has seemed to be old, plus its outdoor advertising boards haven’t been well arranged, which make people feel so messy. While the low level of the products in the boards has affected the effectiveness of the outdoor advertising, these ads have also brought some negative influences. How to improve and take advantage of outdoor advertising in Zhengzhou Railway Station and develop some new advertising vehicles is a worthwhile subject to be studied.

1 ANALYSIS OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING AND AUDIENCES

1.1 Analysis of present outdoor advertising arrangement

The Advertisers of outdoor advertising in Zhengzhou Railway Station are very limited. According to the statistics, big advertisers of outdoor advertising only account for 25 percent, while smaller ones over 68 percent. What’s more, these ads are mostly replaced every two months. The above statistics show there are not enough big advertisers and the present ads are just in a state of chaos. Here are the details:

a) Messiness. The boards haven’t been well arranged. Some boards are so big that they cover the original looks and there’re so many boards on the walls of two sides of passage that make people breathless. Some boards also block other ones (see Figure1). What can be done in just three seconds? Have exposed audience remembered the ads? Has the core of the ads reached the audience? Has it built and improved the brand-image? It’s apparently not satisfactory in the current outdoor advertising of the railway station. There’re so many advertising boards and too much copy, which make the rushing people unwillingly pay attention to them. Therefore, it couldn’t achieve the desired effect. Furthermore, while aiming to promote products, the characteristics of the city also should be taken into account in order to avoid visual pollution when outdoor advertising is designed.

b) Commercialization. More than 93 percent of the ads in the Railway Station are from business, which make passengers from other places ignore the culture of Zhengzhou and the long history of the Railway Station, but feel too much commercialization of advertising instead. To build the image of a product needs to be served by surrounding environment, not only by the ad itself.

Figure 1 Leading to north exit
Thus what kind of outside environment an ad should in and how to integrate its advantages and surrounding environment? It needs to be well taken into account. The planners shouldn’t always seek commercial benefits.

1.2.2 Analysis of Audience’s Behaviors

According to the statistics issued by Zhengzhou Railway Station, the daily passenger volume is about 40,000 person trips and over 0.1 million person trips during the peak seasons, about 53 percent of which are people with lower income.

From the above data, passengers in the station are mainly people with low and intermediate income. They have different ideas and awareness on the ads. Restrained from their income, the lowers are economically, but afraid of risking. Relatively speaking, they have price and quality preference. While the middles, earning higher income, are reasonable consumers. They tend to consider more about the usage of a product and brand or product meaning, but never blindly seek famous brand.

1.2.1 Analysis of passenger flow in Zhengzhou Railway Station

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In order to achieve desired effect and attract advertisers to invest, those ads with abstract and complicated copy, and the ads people like should be delivered in a larger number of repetitions. Otherwise, it should be less. While those products that audience knows less should also be delivered in much more repetitions.

Understanding and memorizing the copy of ads for exposed audience is a basic element of playing ads’ role. After understanding and paying concentrate attention to the copy of ads, they would naturally accept the ads and the products through analyzing and integrating the information they got from other channels.

2 2 PLANNING OF MEDIA SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Outdoor advertising can highly expressed consumers subconsciously. The forms of outdoor advertising the station can use include: prismatic display, board, light box, hanging board, LED screen, neon lamp, air-supported ads and so on.

2.1 Arrangement of Repetitiveness

2.1.1 Effect of Repetitiveness

Firstly, the railway station has a great volume of passenger follow and most people are in a rush to get in or out of the station. Therefore, one product to be exposed one time is not enough to be noticed by the audience. What’s more, the messy copy would steal people’s focus. So they need to be delivered repeatedly.

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2.1.2 Repetition Number

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What’s more, as exposed audience in or out of railway station have little possibility to arrive there frequently. Therefore, it would be best for advertising objectives with short-term goals and concentrated marketing.

2.1.3 The relationship between repetition number and effect

Ad has both positive and negative effect. It’s very important for media planners to rearrange them by considering of how much repetitions should be delivered. Krugman asserted that three exposures to an advertisement might be enough: the first exposure is by definition unique. As with the initial exposure to anything, a “what is it?” type of cognitive response dominates the reaction. The second exposure to a stimulus...produces several effects. The third time exposure constitutes a reminder, if a decision to buy based on the evaluations has not been acted on. But the advertisers usually have to buy more vehicle exposures than three to achieve Krugman’s three “hits.” The higher the forgetting rate associated with a brand, product category, or message, the higher the warranted level of repetition. But
repetition is not enough. Ads wear out and viewers tune out. Advertisers should insist on fresh executions.

2.2 Choice of the size of outdoor advertising billboard

The present advertising boards are small, like light box ads on the walls of two sides of passage are mostly 1.5×2 meters. Given extensive reach of ads and audience’s short-time exposure, more than 3×6 meters boards should be chosen. The reasons could be addressed as follows:

1. Easily attracting people’s attention. No matter people are willing to see it or not, when a big-size advertising board appears in front of them, they’ll have a glimpse of it naturally.

2. Easily arouse people’s curiosity.


2.3 Choice of quantity and density of boards

Among the determinants of advertising effect, environment jam is a leading factor. The phenomenon that ads to be overlooked resulting from environment jam is more serious in the present outdoor advertising of Zhengzhou Railway Station. Thus it needs to be changed immediately. Every advertiser hopes his ads could attract more people’s attention, so they all would like to put their ads in places with more people flow. As a result, it would lead to advertising environment jam. In this situation, each board actually is being paid less attention, hence undesired effect and decreased ads delivery. Therefore, when outdoor advertising in the railway station is established, not only the quantity of the boards but also the effect of advertising campaign should be considered. The number of advertising boards needs to be scientifically decided.

During the establishment, the media planners have to take the consideration of the general image of the railway station and observe some visual requirements of architecture. Differentiate spatial and functional areas — in the principle of creating excellent environment when carrying out the project of building or ad, of course, the design and planning of the project itself should be simple and great. What’s more, the outdoor advertising establishment should fit to the overall image of the railway station, which is also an important principle to improve the general image of Zhengzhou Railway Station by changing outdoor advertising in the railway station. Sunping Xiong (2004) pointed out that differentiating spatial and functional urban areas is basis of confirming the copy, quantity and location of outdoor advertising in the city (see Table1).

Table 1  The proportion of outdoor advertising in the city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Copy</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House building</td>
<td>Public warfare and use</td>
<td>Courtyard</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store and restaurant</td>
<td>Commodity and promotion</td>
<td>Doorplate, light box</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service facility</td>
<td>Public warfare and use</td>
<td>outdoor</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Public warfare</td>
<td>On the campus</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Proposal of combining the history of Zhengzhou Railway Station

Zhengzhou Railway Station is an important place that is connecting Zhengzhou to other places. Its construction will have a bearing on outside people’s expression on this city. Just imagine that if someone comes to a city, the railway station may be the first place to look at, various messy ads without creativity and cultural sense that couldn’t mix the city’s history and reality together would affect his first expression on the city. Although outdoor advertising is commercial, while it meets the needs of propagandization, it also should display the functions of the railway station. So the elements such as the size, form, cartoon and lighting and location need to be completely planned to avoid brining visual pollution to the city and the station.

The outdoor ads design should be with traditional characteristics. Zhengzhou Railway Station is station with a long history, where tourists and other people from all over the country gather together. The design of outdoor advertising should integrate the long history of the city and the railway station. The creativity not only can send people certain message, but also has strong influence power on people. It combines the city’s ancient culture and the station’s long history. It is necessary and imperative to inherit traditional culture. However, succession doesn’t mean rigidly adhering to but developing it and injecting new thoughts into outdoor advertising. The outdoor advertising in the railway station should be designed to be with a deep cultural connotation to show the history and culture of the eighth ancient city in China.

The symbol of China Railway (see Figure 3) could be used as element of designing outdoor advertising in the railway station to attract audience. Secondly, another historic symbol of the big city, Feb.7 Memorial Tower, the element of that could also be adopted in the railway station. That would be great for propagandizing products and the city.
2.5 Analysis of developing new media

Researchers have found out that people were born to be curious about new things. New media can always attract more consumers’ attention and curiosity. Thus both enterprises and merchants are constantly seeking new media and new forms of advertising to promote their products. It usually can get double results if advertisers put ads in the new media.

Outdoor advertising is one the oldest media types, mainly aiming to flowing exposed audience. So except for improving the present outdoor advertising media in the railway station, new vehicles need to be found.

Animation is a new trend of outdoor advertising. Research shows animated outdoor ads can more strongly attract people’s attention. Combining the characteristics and the present facilities of the railway station, escalator was found to be one of new media vehicles that can be used.

Escalator can be a vehicle of transmitting brand culture and become a media people like best. It can be used as a carrier of new outdoor media. Its geographical environment can make more people to notice it. Furthermore, the people using it usually have nothing to do and they own enough time to notice the copy of the ads. In fact, this form of advertising has widely used by some shopping centers and supermarkets, like Carrefour. But what kinds of new media can be developed in the waiting room?

It’s surveyed that most passengers are usually waiting in the room for about 20 minutes to 40 minutes. They basically have nothing to do and usually look around automatically. In fact, there isn’t any ad around there, where some big-size advertising boards could be established. Electronic display board is a kind of neoteric form of outdoor advertising. It can attract more people’s eyes. If an electronic display board is installed beside the ticket entrance, it can relieve people and maybe could receive undesired effect. The ceiling of the waiting room is relatively higher, which can be regarded as a new vehicle to put ads. Hanging boards could be suitable to be put. When people are looking around, they won’t intend to refuse the message. Ads can also be well observed and memorized in an abundant period of time by the audience, achieving the desired effects.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the arrangement situation of outdoor advertising in the railway station needs to be immediately improved. Although it has many advantages like concentrated peopleflow and extensive exposed audience, improper establishment has been one of the main reasons for unexpected effect. Therefore, it needs to be tried to achieve excellent effect through various methods such as improving the arrangement and so on. Zhengzhou Railway Station, which has a long history and a large number of passengers, is the first image representative of Zhengzhou. The outdoor advertising in the railway station should be delivered repeatedly. Those ads with abstract and complicated copy and products people know less should be particularly be delivered in much more repetitions, using big-size boards, but must be controlled in a certain quantity and density to avoid visual population. Except for seeking commercial influence, attracting audience’s attention and stimulating their desire for purchasing, the historical culture and the entire image of the city needs to be taken into account in order to improve the level of outdoor advertising in the railway station. After that, not only Zhengzhou Railway Station will become a newly hot outdoor advertising area, but also the image of the city and the station will much be improved.

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