

MEDIA LIFE

all the news every day

Your client singing
in the rest room

Spritzing fragrances and handing out samples too

By Kathy Prentice

Over the past decade posters placed in restrooms next to mirrors, in stalls and above urinals have become commonplace in bars and restaurants in major markets.

Now the same posters can speak and sing, emit fragrances and dispense samples.

To find out how to get your client's message to the eyes, ears and noses of a captive restroom audience, read on.

This is one in a Media Life series on buying the new out-of-home venues. They appear weekly. **Fast Facts**
What

Innovations in restroom advertising. Who

Numerous companies offer turnkey service for restroom advertising. For this article, Media Life spoke with Zoom Media in New York City, which has been posting ads in stalls and urinals since 1991 and with InSite Advertising, also in New York. They've been in the business since 1997. How it works

Standard restroom posters can now "talk," emit a scent and dispense samples.

"You walk up to it and a device in the frame senses motion," says Marc Miller, InSite's president. "Then they play a 20- to 40-second spot."

Samples are available through a custom dispenser that's attached to the board, says Zoom Media president Dennis Roche.

Posters are placed in stalls, above urinals and alongside mirrors in restrooms. They also can be incorporated into the toilet paper dispenser.

"A lot of advertisers want this because it's a single sex environment," Roche says. "You don't want to put a tampon on a billboard on 34th Street. You want it to be in a restroom."

Creative is usually provided by the advertiser.

A restroom theme is often used in creative.

"The environment lends itself to fun," Roche says. "Most of the time it's customized to people out having fun, not to the restroom."

"Crunch did an ad using different exercises," Miller says. "They had a man doing a urinal push up and in the ladies' room in-stall squatting exercises. It's tongue-in-cheek fun."

Standard posters are 13 inches by 17 inches, framed and covered with Plexiglas.

Creative for talking displays is often taken from radio spots, Miller says.

"Static clings" are also available through InSite. "They are removable stickers that adhere to any surface in the restroom," Miller says. "The History Channel did a campaign for their 'Secret Passages' show. It was a hand pointing and played on the theme of 'Secret Passages.'"

Static clings can be made in any shape and size.

Digital displays are also available through Zoom.

Product exclusivity is built in.

InSite posts two to five non-competing ads per restroom or an advertiser can buy the entire inventory, Miller says.

"You can have shampoo with deodorant, but get category exclusivity," Roche says.

Advertisers are almost always national brands.

But some locals use the service, including a county health department, for example.

Campaigns are both stand-alone and part of a larger media mix including print, broadcast and other alternative venues.

"You can package it with events and promotions," Roche says. "Like a movie launch with graffiti murals, sidewalk decals, hand stamps on people at clubs and restrooms."

Many advertisers use it for product launches.

Markets and locations can be cherry-picked. Markets

InSite is available in 3,000 locations in the following markets:

New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston, Washington D.C., Dallas, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Seattle, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Tampa, Miami, Phoenix, Denver, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, St. Louis, Baltimore, San Diego, Hartford, Charlotte, Raleigh, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Columbus, Asheville, Norfolk, Buffalo, New Orleans, Memphis, Las Vegas, Syracuse, Tucson, Greensboro, Providence, Albany, Dayton, Austin, Champaign, Madison, East Lansing, Baton Rouge, Bloomington, Tallahassee, Wilmington, Gainesville, West Lafayette, Ann Arbor, Athens, Berkeley, Boulder, Cape Cod, College Station, Fayetteville, Iowa City, Jersey Shore, New Brunswick, State College, Tempe, Trenton, Yonkers, College Park, Md. and Columbia, Mo. Zoom is available in 2,000 venues in the following markets:

Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Denver, Detroit, Durham, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Raleigh, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San José, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa, Washington D.C. and Orange County, Calif. How measured?

Attendance numbers from venues are used in addition to audit surveys.

Bar and nightclub customers use the restroom an average of 3.2 times, according to a study by Audits & Surveys Worldwide commissioned by InSite.

Digital photography and barcode verification are used to monitor venues. Research

Over three out of four restroom visitors interviewed, or 78 percent, recalled one or more of the restroom ads, according to the Audits & Surveys Worldwide study. The sample consisted of 14 locations in New York City, Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia. Interviews were conducted as patrons exited restrooms.

Of those interviewed 75 percent reported that they viewed restroom advertising as "a good idea." Additionally, 43 percent reported finding it "very good" and two percent called it "very poor."

The same study found 24 percent of interviewees felt more positive toward a brand after viewing the restroom advertising. Negative responses were 5 percent, with the remainder reporting not being affected by the ad.

Nearly 75 percent of interviewees felt that ads in restrooms are more noticeable than or equally as noticeable as ads appearing in other media, according to the Audits and Surveys study. What product categories do well?

Entertainment, liquor, tobacco, health and beauty, pharmaceutical, fashion and fragrance are popular choices for restroom advertising.

Point-of-purchase items like beer and liquor do well. Demographics

The gender of bar and nightclub customers using restrooms broke down to 55 percent male and 45 percent female, according to the Audits & Surveys study.

Additionally, 35 percent of respondents were ages 18-24, 44 percent were ages 25 to 34, 14 percent were ages 35 to 44 and 7 percent were 45 and older.

The education breakdown was 12 percent with high school or less, 26 percent with some college, 47 percent college graduates, 12 percent with graduate degrees and 3 percent with postgraduate work.

Activities in the past 30 days, according to the Audits & Surveys study, broke down to: Accessed the internet at home or work, at 67 percent Went to a movie theatre, at 66 percent Bought a music CD or tape, at

61 percent Went to a health club, at 45 percent Attended a concert or show, at 35 percent Made a purchase over the internet, at 31 percent Also 26 percent of respondents visit a bar or nightclub twice a week, 24 percent once a week, 20 percent three times a week, and 13 percent four times a week. Daily visits were reported by 3 percent.

Groups can be tightly targeted. For instance, Hispanics, African Americans, gays, sports fans and ravers can be singled out.

"The most interesting thing about restroom advertising is micro-targeting," Roche says. "There's a highly targeted delivery of demographics and psychographics." Making the buy

InSite Advertising:

Lead-time is six weeks.

Factors that affect cost include the number of markets and campaign length.

Restrooms average \$100 to \$200 per unit, per month.

Campaigns are usually one, three, six or 12 months. "Entertainment typically runs one month before a show airs. Consumer products average three months," Miller says.

Creative can be changed monthly at no extra charge.

Advertisers supply creative and sometimes provide posters or InSite can print them for an additional charge.

Zoom Media:

Lead-time is 30 days.

Factors that affect pricing include size and targeting. "The more targeted it is, the more expensive," Roche says.

Campaigns are typically three months. Creative can be changed monthly, but advertisers tend to leave the same art up for three-month stretches, Roche says.

Zoom has sales offices in Los Angeles and Chicago as well as New York. Who's already in the restrooms?

Bacardi, The History Channel, Procter & Gamble, USA Network, Miller Brewing, Heineken, Nintendo and GfK Pharmacies are a few of the advertisers in restrooms. What they're saying

"In a restroom for one to three minutes we own you. It's a liability to turn left or right at a urinal." – Marc Miller, president of New York-based InSite Advertising. Web site info

InSite Advertising at www.insiteadvertising.com

Zoom Media at www.zoommedia.us Etc.

Professional sports venues can be targeted through AdCommunity, headquartered in Chicago. According to president Woodrow Levin, his company places signage in Major League baseball parks and National Football League stadiums. For more information, try www.adcommunity.com

For Media Life's previous coverage of restroom advertising, see "Psst! Before you flush have you considered...?" from May 22, 2000. April 28, 2003© 2003 Media Life -Kathy Prentice writes about out-of-home advertising for Media Life, penning her stories from the resort town of Traverse City, in the upper reaches of Michigan.