

Industry Alignment Effort Aims to Strengthen OOH

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Nancy Fletcher, OAAA

To showcase OOH's creative impact, relevancy, and ability to work collaboratively and uniquely with mobile, the Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA) has embarked on a fresh campaign to further strengthen and unite the industry.

EYE Reporter asked OAAA President and CEO Nancy Fletcher about the future of the business, social media's role in OOH campaigns, most memorable initiatives and recent OAAA actions to reinforce OOH as a core media buy.

An attorney and industry authority, Fletcher has nearly 40 years of experience in OOH advertising. Her strong social media presence provides a deep understanding of the need to embrace and integrate social media into OOH campaigns. Fletcher has a successful history advocating for OOH in Congress and serves on the Board of Directors of OAAA, the Ad Council, and Geopath.

EYE:

Congratulations on your incredible accomplishment of 25 years of success at OAAA. In a recent quote you say that one overriding lesson learned during your tenure is that "nothing works without industry unity and alignment." What is the area of alignment and unity you are most proud of and secondly, what is the biggest opportunity for unity and alignment, which if achieved would have the greatest positive impact as we look to the future of OAAA and the OOH industry?



FLETCHER:

We've had 26 consecutive quarters of OOH growth since the recession, yet OOH still garners only 5 percent of US ad budgets. My belief in industry unity and alignment applies across the board: as a relatively small industry, we're stronger when we speak in a unified voice in the marketplace and the legislative arena.

1) In my mind, a standout example occurred in 1991. Congress considered legislation to ban new billboards and allow government to take existing billboards without the payment of just compensation. The united OOH industry - against formidable opposition - defeated this threat. The dividends of that victory are continued growth, increased value, and respect.

2) In a recent example of marketing unity, leading CEOs and CMOs from around the industry gathered and spent several months this year crafting a unified strategy that is intended to fuel the success of OOH for the next five years. They created a vision for the medium that positions OOH as a core media buy, right alongside mobile, social and digital advertising.

I am convinced that broad industry adoption of the new plan will have a positive impact on our future by

differentiating OOH from other media and defining a path for growth. In fact, we have created the OAAA out of home positioning tool box to help with brand and value positioning.

(Click here for the OOH Tool Box)

3) In the near future, the OOH industry faces a challenge and opportunity that could be as important as any faced before.

As technology continues to advance, the current mobility model will change. Experts expect to see more fleet ownership, shared rides, and eventually some vehicles could drive themselves. Industry unity and alignment greatly advance our prospects to translate this big change into opportunity.

EYE:

You say that the OAAA recently created a new five-year vision that positions OOH as a core media buy. What was the impetus for bringing this task force together at this particular time?

FLETCHER:

As an industry, we have an opportunity to define what OOH stands for so others do not define it for us. By highlighting the core attributes that differentiate OOH – creative impact, contextual relevance, and the power to amplify other media – the OOH industry aims to reinforce the vital role that OOH plays in today’s increasingly fragmented, mobile-driven media landscape.

I loved it when, concurrent to OAAA’s announcement of the new five-year plan, Twitter launched an OOH campaign that epitomizes the top OOH attributes of creative impact, contextual relevance, and media amplification.

Click here to read more on Twitter’s OOH Campaign

EYE:

OAAA has promised to elevate OOH among planners, buyers, advertisers, and agencies so that it is considered a more fundamental, essential, and core part of the media mix. How is OAAA helping OOH media companies and agencies make good on this promise?

FLETCHER:

OAAA works to elevate the OOH medium with relevant audiences, including buyers and planners.

1.) OAAA gets in the door.

Steve Nicklin of OAAA has a presentation he takes on the road to 100 agencies a year that promotes the OOH medium and its importance in today’s highly-fragmented media environment. He discusses how it works, how it’s measured, how it complements the media mix, how it has evolved with technology (both digital and mobile), and how it’s easily bought and sold. The goal is to promote the importance of OOH in the media mix and make sure planning agencies especially understand its relevance and evolution as they plan campaigns.

2) OAAA coordinates national campaigns that showcase the strengths of OOH.

Saks_Art+Everywhere+US
Art Everywhere US

OAAA's promotional campaign "Feel the Real" was aimed directly at planners, buyers, advertiser, and agencies (2015), by name. When the industry celebrated great American art through Art Everywhere US (2014), the campaign showcased OOH creative impact. When OAAA promoted national parks (2016), the campaign garnered historic social media impressions with images such as the President of the United States displayed on the NASDAQ sign in Times Square. In 2017, we'll launch a campaign with National Geographic to help save endangered species. This visually compelling campaign also has a strong media component.

3) OAAA provides third-party research. OAAA has the most comprehensive compilation of industry information, market analysis, and case studies. OAAA commissions effectiveness and relevance research, and then shares the proof. The latest Nielsen Study shows how OOH amplifies other media. This year, Nielsen is doing a new study measuring the value of posters and Benchmarking (formerly known as Brand Science) is conducting an analytic review of OOH Return on Investment (ROI) within the media mix.

4.) OAAA shares the positive news. As I write, at sunrise, I've tweeted five times today. An important part of my job is to tell our story 24/7, and my colleagues at OAAA, Geopath, and DPAA do the same.

EYE:

One of the areas that sets OOH advertising apart is the ability to bring storytelling to life in a creative way. Can you provide one or two examples of OOH campaigns that have resonated with you over the recent years?

FLETCHER:

Apple's iPhone campaign is powerful storytelling, amplified globally by OOH media in multiple languages. Big, beautiful OOH displays are bold proof points of a simple narrative: your iPhone takes great pictures.

Showing my age, I'll tell you that I loved the "God Speaks" campaign in the 1990s. It began in South Florida when an anonymous donor put simple messages on bus shelters to generate dialogue about spiritual values. OAAA adopted the campaign and it "went viral" before that term was common.

EYE:

As an active social media user yourself, do you feel that there is a way for OOH to better embrace social media and make the connection between ooh and social with respect to consumers campaign engagement?

FLETCHER:

The opportunity exists for marketers to integrate social media elements into their OOH campaigns to drive deeper engagement and increased results. By combining social media with OOH, marketers can achieve genuine interaction with consumers while driving earned media. In my opinion, OOH and social is a combination that every campaign should consider.

For sales people, the Nielsen study is on point: OOH drives social media engagement.

On a related topic, you asked about the industry's new five-year plan to position OOH for continued growth. When industry leaders created this plan, they agreed that our sales force must better understand other media – including social - in order to better achieve marketers' goals.

EYE:

OOH advertising today is a diverse mix of billboards, street furniture, transit, and place-based media. EYE Corp Media and Grand Visual recently completed an interactive augmented reality campaign surrounding the movie Doctor Strange. Virtual reality, facial recognition, and other tech-centered initiatives are also cropping up in creative across the industry. Any thoughts on the technologies you are most excited with and that you feel are likely to have the greatest impact on the future of OOH media?

FLETCHER:

The EYE/Grand Visual movie promotion for Doctor Strange is fantastic. It celebrates the OOH medium's top attributes highlighted in the industry's positioning: creative impact, contextual relevancy, and amplification.

As the industry expands geofencing and augmented reality and refines its use of data to match ad messages to audiences, we know these innovations will help advertisers connect with consumers. We also know we must respect privacy. OAAA is part of the broader advertising community's successful effort to self-regulate.

“THE OOH CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY IS TO GROW WITH DIGITAL. WE HAVE A PLAN TO EMBRACE OPPORTUNITY, TO ADVANCE OUR RELEVANCE.”

EYE:

Though consumers spend a majority of their waking hours away from home, on average, only 5% of ad budgets are spent on OOH. You have identified this as one of the great challenges of the industry to solve. What has to happen to get a measurable movement on spend shift to OOH?

FLETCHER:

The industry's new plan identifies five priorities to reinforce OOH's role as a core media buy:

1. Sell OOH using audience + location + data.
2. Promote the unique creativity of OOH and its big, bold, beautiful storytelling.
3. Offer powerful but practical innovations that advertisers, big and small, can easily implement and deploy at scale.
4. Move OOH out of its silo and integrate it more fully into the broader advertising ecosystem.
5. Add new solutions-oriented and results-driven competencies to the industry's already strong sales capabilities.

EYE:

As we head into 2017, billboards remain the predominant media as a percentage of spend in OOH, but digital place-based and traditional media conversion to digital is the highest growth in ad locations available for advertising. Where do you see the place-based digital screens having the biggest impact in the coming years and what is the barrier to faster adoption with advertisers in the media mix?

FLETCHER:

Billboards have had more time to mature as a media format, while place-based OOH is still relatively young with exciting new players, formats, and campaigns emerging. If the industry can continue to coalesce with unified marketing, measurement, and cross-company buying, all OOH formats will increase adoption.

EYE:

Measurement continues to be a challenge and an opportunity for OOH media. Mobile and other technologies offer the opportunity for measurement in OOH and DOOH to take a massive leap forward. How long do you think it will be before agencies are really using these new measurement options to truly buy audiences along with location?

FLETCHER:

Many agencies are already using data from mobile devices and other technology to help target specific audiences with their printed and digital OOH buys, and we only expect that adoption to continue. In fact, OOH media companies are creating systems to help facilitate this for the agencies.

The OOH industry, through Geopath, is investing in mobile data and trip information from GPS units so we can integrate it directly into the currency. The first iterations to the measurement system are expected to take place early in 2017. Once that happens, and the data are more widely available to agencies, transactions based on both the audience and the location, informed by rich mobile data, will hopefully become the norm.

EYE:

What are the biggest challenges OOH faces in 2017? How can companies preemptively get out in front of these potential barriers?

FLETCHER:

Ad spend is flowing to digital (online/social/mobile); the resulting disruption to media will continue. If you think “disruption” is too strong or stark a term, Google “newspapers.”

The OOH challenge and opportunity is to grow with digital. We have a plan to embrace opportunity, to advance our relevance.

As mentioned, mobility trends point to increased ride sharing and eventually some autonomous vehicles. Driverless vehicles can be a threat and an opportunity. OAAA is in the opportunity business

EYE:

Any other thoughts or advice for media companies and agencies as we head into 2017?

FLETCHER:

If you're not currently involved, I hope you will join OAAA and OAAA members as we work to advance the cause of OOH. Help us with the important regulatory fights, and support the new OOH positioning.

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