



VISTAR MEDIA

Mind the Gap

Bridging the Gap Between
Technology & Creative in DOOH

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Mind THE GAP

Bridging the Gap Between Technology & Creative in DOOH

Traveling inside the capitals of advertising in New York City, London, Chicago or any other region with passenger trains, riders are often reminded to “mind the gap.” The gap is the space between the boarding platform and the train. This space can be quite dangerous, which is why operators ask travelers to “mind the gap” when stepping aboard.

Once passengers are made aware of the gap, it’s easy to step over, but those who don’t pay proper attention to the gap might pay the price.

In the world of digital out-of-home (DOOH) advertising, a similar gap exists between advertising creatives and media buyers. These two disciplines complement each other but often operate independently.

Creative teams produce beautiful designs that inspire consumers to action, yet are often unaware of the full capabilities of the DOOH

medium resulting in a lack of true creative freedom. On the other hand, media buyers are extremely talented at knowing precisely how and where to reach an audience but often don’t bring creative teams into the conversation until the end of the planning cycle, thereby sacrificing creativity in the name of speed.

This “gap” in the DOOH world can result in lackluster creative executions and campaigns that fail to maximize their true potential.

But there is hope! This white paper will explore the knowledge gap between creative and media planning — what this gap means for brands, and how it can be closed by optimizing the creative, planning and collaboration of teams to drive more effective DOOH campaigns.





The Transformation of Digital **OUT-OF-HOME**

Out-of-home (OOH) is one of the oldest forms of advertising — dating back to ancient Egypt where ads were written on stone tablets. Throughout the years, stone tablets evolved into billboards, wallsapes and other more recognizable OOH formats we know today.

The early 2000s saw the rise of digital out-of-home and since then, there has been massive growth in the DOOH market. According to research from IMARC Group, the global DOOH advertising market reached US \$16.9 billion in 2022 and is expected to grow to \$35.7 billion by 2028.

However, while the move from OOH to DOOH was an enormous leap forward for the outdoor advertising industry in general, the process of buying and selling DOOH campaigns remained unchanged. DOOH

buyers still had to make one-off deals with individual media owners, and media owners still had to work hard to sell their inventory.

The addition of programmatic technology definitively brought the centuries-old OOH industry into the modern age of digital advertising. Programmatic DOOH has created a marketplace where media owners make their inventory available, and advertisers purchase those spots at auction. Today, an ever-growing percentage of DOOH media is bought and sold programmatically — streamlining the process and vastly expanding the audience reach for advertisers, and likewise, reducing the work media owners have to do to sell their supply.

Why CREATIVE is so critical

Creative executions are a cornerstone of effective advertising. Without a well-founded creative concept rooted in unique consumer insights and a deep understanding of the medium, a campaign will fall flat no matter how much budget is thrown at it. However, history has shown that the opposite is also true — brands that invest in building high-quality creative are often rewarded with campaigns that drive recognition, build emotional connections between a brand and consumers, and create tremendous returns on investment (ROI).

- 75%** of an ad's effectiveness is determined by its creative
[Advertising Research Federation](#)
- 50%** Creative quality remains among the top drivers of brand impact accounting for 50% of campaign effectiveness.
[Kantar Group](#)
- 2x** Highly creative ad campaigns had nearly double the sales impact of non-creative campaigns.
[Harvard Business Review](#)



Why Creative is so Critical

DOOH and Creative —
A Match Made in Advertising Heaven

OOH media is known for pushing the boundaries of creativity – custom installations, memorable moments and attention-grabbing campaigns. However, the reach and impact of traditional OOH ads can be stifled by the limited number of ad placements a media buying team can secure.

With hundreds of thousands of screens available globally, programmatic DOOH allows marketers to reach a wide audience with big, bold and beautiful messaging, and engage consumers at multiple touchpoints throughout their daily lives.

If advertisers want to push the bounds of creativity and experience unparalleled freedom of expression in their craft, DOOH should be front and center in their media plans.

While creative investment has historically been focused on traditional and experiential OOH, over the last few years, forward-thinking companies have combined the proven success of DOOH with the revolutionary capabilities of a programmatic channel — making it one of the fastest-growing and most impactful mediums in advertising today.

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In New York City, when you're walking, you can see the digital signs above all the subway entrances from so far away, like a beacon of hope in the snow and the darkness. And it's just that much more impactful, because they draw your eye, and they're a lot nicer to look at.

– Agency SVP Group Media Direct

”

“

There's really no other media that you can have dynamic messaging, along with compelling visuals, along with video. They're not passive experiences; they're exciting experiences.

– Marketer, Senior Manager, In-Person Events

”

OOH advertising produces the **highest levels of consumer recall** versus other media channels.
[Soloman Partners](#)



65% of consumers surveyed immediately visited the business after seeing a digital street furniture ad in the past year.
[Nielsen](#)

80% of survey respondents made a purchase after seeing an OOH ad.
[onescreen.ai](#)

50% of survey respondents said DOOH ads encouraged them to make a purchase there and then.
[Outdoor Media Association](#)



Unlocking DOOH'S TRUE POTENTIAL

As with any new technological advancement, a learning curve exists in DOOH, and it takes time to fully understand, retain and apply new capabilities. Because some creative teams and buyers aren't fully aware of all the medium's unique characteristics, it is often forgotten or deprioritized during the planning stages of a

campaign, forcing creative teams to retrofit existing creative for the specifications of DOOH screens. While this approach may work in some cases, marketers that don't plan around the unique features and benefits of DOOH will fail to fully activate a campaign's true potential.

Optimizing Creative for DOOH Screens

Programmatic DOOH provides advertisers with boundless opportunities to grab consumer attention and convey their message. However, to maximize the benefits of this effective channel and build ads with tremendous stopping power, it's critical to consider the specific requirements of DOOH creative early in the planning process.

These elements include:



CONTEXT

In DOOH advertising, the context, or physical environment in which an ad plays can have a significant impact on what creative will be most effective. A DOOH ad could run on a wide variety of screens — all of which can have an impact on the audience viewing an ad and how they perceive the products being shown. From health-conscious consumers viewing an ad on a gym TV to upscale shoppers seeing an ad inside a luxury mall, knowing who will most likely see an ad and where they will be when they do allows advertisers to build targeted messages into their creative that are supported by the ad's physical surroundings.



COLOR

Color is a major driver of attention, and contrasting colors can make DOOH ads stand out against their background. However, the effect of a specific color largely depends on the colors surrounding a DOOH ad — making it critically important to consider the physical environment in which a DOOH ad will run to ensure that the most effective color is selected within the creative.



DWELL TIME

Dwell time is the amount of time a viewer will likely see an ad. Because DOOH ads are seen by audiences as they move throughout their day, different venue types can have drastically different dwell times, which shapes how advertisers tell their brand story. For example, a highway billboard seen by people driving quickly past may have a dwell time of only a few seconds, whereas a bus shelter screen may have a dwell time of 5-15 minutes as riders wait for their next bus. In general, advertisers activating screens with shorter dwell times should build creative with fewer words, bigger font and more prominent branding for quicker and more impactful messaging. However, when activating venues with longer dwell times, advertisers can expand their creativity, dive deeper into their storytelling, and emotionally engage the audience.



PRODUCT IMAGERY

Human brains process images 60,000 times faster than text. This is why (especially in low dwell time venues), including an image or visual can help advertisers convey their message quicker and strengthen the association between their brand and a product or service



BRANDING & LOGOS

For some advertising channels, over-emphasis on logos can hurt a brand. However, the fleeting nature of DOOH ads means that consumers may only see a few seconds of an ad, which means advertisers should be generous with logos and branding if they want to make the best impression. Integrating branding into the copy and visuals of a DOOH ad, using heavyweight fonts and placing the logo at the top of the creative will all help a brand stand out.



VIDEO & ANIMATION

Movement can draw attention and increase engagement with a DOOH ad. Creative teams should consider including moving elements (even simple animations) within DOOH creative to drive greater impact. However, to avoid viewers missing key information, adapt the type of motion based on the average dwell time. For short dwell time venues like certain urban panels, consider partial motion creatives (limited motion graphics on a static image). For venues with longer dwell times like bus shelters or gym TV screens, think about adding video.



PRO TIP

Not all DOOH screens will play with sound. Therefore, it's important to always include subtitles to ensure the proper message is being captured.





UGG CASE STUDY

The iconic footwear brand UGG wanted to garner awareness, consideration and purchase intent for a new seasonal rain-orshine collection. In this DOOH campaign, UGG used high-impact creative with heavy branding and bold colors to make a statement. The brand also used mobile retargeting to re-engage consumers who were previously exposed to the DOOH campaign.

THE RESULTS

UGG generated a **7%** lift in awareness, a **6%** lift in consideration and a **6%** lift in purchase intent.



TIMING

The time of the day and day of the week an ad is seen plays a big role in how a message is received. For example, an ad for a *“hot cup of coffee to start the day”* would be most effective in the morning. On the other hand, an ad for an *“ice cold beer to wind down”* would only make sense toward the evening. To make the most of a DOOH ad’s timing, advertisers should plan campaigns carefully to ensure their creative has an optimal impact on the target audience.



EVENTS

When building seasonal or tentpole campaigns, referencing the event (e.g. March Madness) or a specific moment in time (e.g. Summer) within the DOOH creative helps tie a brand to the event’s excitement. However, it’s also important to remember that the creative has a shelf life bound by the event. This makes it crucial to launch tentpole campaigns at the right time to drive maximum impact and avoid serving DOOH ads too soon before an event or too late after the moment in time has passed.



SCREEN SPECIFICATIONS

The technical specifications of a DOOH screen can heavily influence the layout, copy or imagery used in an ad. Some DOOH screens are massive (e.g. spectaculars in Time Square) while some are no bigger than an iPad (e.g. grocery store displays). In addition, screens can be vertically oriented or horizontal, high resolution, or low. Taking screen specifications into account when building creative can help ensure nothing is cut off or distorted when a campaign goes live.



OMNICHANNEL ALIGNMENT

With competition for attention at an all-time high, brands need to reach consumers with a cohesive message at multiple touchpoints both online and offline. Building DOOH into an omnichannel strategy from the beginning will help advertisers maintain continuity in creative elements and storytelling across all channels and drive maximum impact with their campaign. In addition, DOOH can increase the effectiveness of other marketing channels when used as part of an omnichannel mix.



PRO TIP

Advertisers can leverage features like Vistar’s Device ID Passback solution to retarget audiences that have been exposed to DOOH ads.

Leveraging Audience Data to Achieve Maximum Impact

Every exceptional advertising campaign is built around the wants, needs, hopes and dreams of a particular audience, and DOOH is no different. Marketers that want to build highly-effective DOOH campaigns must incorporate creative elements that make the audience feel seen and encourage them to act.


In the digital advertising world, brands target audiences based on online behavior — such as visiting a website, using a search engine or adding an item to a digital shopping cart. DOOH allows marketers to seamlessly extend many of their existing digital targeting strategies into a physical ad medium while more efficiently reaching their target consumers throughout their day.

Advertisers can build DOOH audiences based on:



BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

The time of the day and day of the week an ad is seen plays a big role in how a message is received. For example, an ad for a “hot cup of coffee to start the day” would be most effective until around 9 am. On the other hand, an ad for an “ice cold beer to wind down” would only make sense after about 5 pm. Advertisers should plan out when their ad should be played for maximum impact and build creative to match.



HOUSEHOLD DATA

Looking at purchase data has long provided businesses with valuable information about a household's demographic, socio-economic characteristics and what products they are likely to buy in the future. DOOH allows advertisers to integrate this data into their targeting and creative strategies and build audiences based on households that have purchased a particular product.





FIRST-PARTY DATA

Whether encouraging renewals, upgrades, upsells, cross-sells or promoting new product launches, customer data is an invaluable asset for brands — allowing them to reach consumers who have already purchased their products. First-party data combined with DOOH's location-based targeting capabilities gives marketers a powerful way to engage their desired audiences, when and where it matters most.



THIRD-PARTY DATA

Third-party audiences are nothing new in the world of digital advertising. From fast-food mobile app users and minivan drivers to outdoor enthusiasts and movie lovers, there are audiences available for nearly every conceivable market segment. Now, advertisers can ingest that same data into their DOOH campaigns to target third-party audiences in the physical world.

Using these audience targeting capabilities, creative teams can build more tailored messaging into their ads knowing they are more likely to be seen by the right people. On the other hand, this also allows media buying teams to reduce media waste and improve ROI by ensuring their ads will only be played where their target audience is most likely to be throughout the day

TIMBERLAND CASE STUDY

Timberland, a popular footwear brand, wanted to drive foot traffic to their stores using DOOH advertising. Timberland leveraged Vistar's access to passive location data to create and target a custom "Outdoor Lifestyler" audience, comprised of consumers who frequented outdoor recreation areas, trendy restaurants and similar retailers in major cities. Timberland programmatically activated DOOH media against the custom "Outdoor Lifestyler" audience based on where these consumers were most likely to be throughout the day.

THE RESULTS

This campaign drove a **2.8X** lift in store visits against the control group during the flight of the campaign.



Using Data-Driven Creatives to Drive Extreme Relevancy

One of the biggest technological advancements the DOOH industry has seen in recent years is the ability for advertisers to integrate data into their creative and targeting tactics. Below are a few standout examples of how DOOH can be used to deliver highly relevant messaging at the perfect time.

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Weather is not only a universally relevant and popular topic of conversation but also an influencer of consumer behavior.


– Randi Stipes, Chief Marketing Officer at The Weather Company, an IBM Business.

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WEATHER TRIGGERS

Weather is one of the largest influences on how consumers behave. It affects consumers' moods, determines how they dress, where they go, and what they eat. The weather also heavily influences their buying habits — when it rains, people buy umbrellas, and when it's hot, ice cream sales go up. This paradigm is well-documented across many geographic locations, industries, market segments, etc. Research from the [British Retail Consortium](#) has shown that weather is the second largest influence on purchase decisions. Advertisers have been tapping into weather's influence on consumer behavior for years, and now they can use weather triggers to extend this paradigm into their DOOH campaigns. When weather triggers are activated within a geographic area, a programmatic DOOH platform can automatically display weather-specific creative — allowing advertisers to deliver highly-relevant ads based on local weather conditions that are more likely to resonate with their target audience.


These triggers include things like:



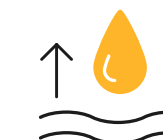
Air quality and pollen count




Precipitation




Temperature



Humidity



Cold & Flu



Pest & Insect Seasons

...and more!



RAIN-X CASE STUDY

Rain-X ClearView, a licensed brand from Recochem Inc., wanted to increase sales for its ClearView windshield washer fluid in Canada. For this programmatic DOOH campaign, Rain-X's overall strategy centered around four customized creative messages – incorporating rain, snow, sleet and an “any weather” condition – promoting its product as a cleaner, safer option perfect for a variety of winter conditions in Canada.

THE RESULTS

Consumers exposed to ads in this DOOH campaign were **6x** more likely to visit a store than a user that was not exposed, and over **1 in 3 consumers** were “very” or “somewhat likely” to purchase Rain-X ClearView windshield wash over the next 6 months.

Unlocking DOOH's True Potential

DYNAMIC CREATIVE

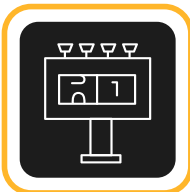
Dynamic creative uses data to change specific elements within an individual advertising asset to create tailored experiences for specific audiences. Dynamic creative can automatically swap out creative elements like product images, taglines, ad copy, offers and more. This provides advertisers the ability to drive personalization at scale and create highly engaging experiences based on real-time data inputs.

Some of the most compelling use cases for dynamic creative include:



NEAREST STORE LOCATION

DOOH is a proven advertising channel for driving foot traffic to specific retail locations. With dynamic creative, ads can direct consumers to the nearest store and show details on the distance to get there.



COUNTDOWNS (OR COUNT-UPS)

From new store openings and product launches to lotteries, contests and more – advertisers can add live countdowns (or count-ups) to their creative to build excitement and encourage action from consumers.



DYNAMIC WEATHER

Whether it's raining in Seattle or hot in Houston, advertisers can leverage dynamic creative to pull in real-time weather conditions within their ads to create a highly relevant and engaging experience.



SPORTS DETAILS

Whether advertisers are seeking to drive tune-in, sell tickets, promote a betting platform or encourage visits or sales around a social viewing moment, pulling in the latest match-up details or even in-game scores creates urgency and relevance.

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Whether it's lottery jackpots, stock prices, gas prices or election results, there are so many different things, and as creative teams realize these things kind of compound, they're like, 'Wow, we really could do everything!'

– Agency SVP Group Media Director

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NBA CASE STUDY

The NBA was looking to increase excitement and viewership for the 75th anniversary of the Playoffs. To achieve this, the NBA ran a variety of creative messages that highlighted local matchups, game-time countdowns, realtime live scoring, hometown winners and moderated Tweets throughout their DOOH campaign.

THE RESULTS

This campaign achieved a **7%** lift in awareness, a **25%** lift in tune-in intent and a **24%** YOY viewership.

PLAYOFFS
Presented by Google Pixel

AF @aaron_futter



Call me crazy but I think the Warriors are winning it all **#NBA #DubNation**

“

It's a huge advantage to someone like me being creative because your message doesn't have to be just that one thing. It could be responsive to the weather, it could be responsive to a score of a game, it could be whatever we can tap into, feeding data in. It's compelling for somebody like me as I start to think about ad campaigns, and executing different ways we can bring that together with a client's message.

– Agency SVP Executive Creative Director

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Campaign Planning for DOOH SUCCESS

The robust targeting capabilities and a wide variety of DOOH screen inventory available open up an entirely new realm of possibilities for creative teams. However, without proper planning, well-crafted creative alone will struggle to move the needle on campaign goals. This means that to truly succeed, marketers must take a thoughtful approach to how they plan and execute their DOOH campaigns.

Breaking Down the Silos

In the modern world of DOOH, the traditional workflow wherein creatives independently develop campaign assets, then pass them on to the media team for placement simply doesn't work.

To prevent gaps from forming, creative and media buying teams need to re-evaluate their workflows to create a more collaborative and synergistic approach to planning and executing DOOH campaigns.

Connecting at the **beginning, middle and end** of the campaign development process is key to ensuring there is a constant feedback loop for creatives to inquire about the target media and for media planners to inquire about the creative executions. If creative and media teams are structured as linear assembly lines, the likelihood of missed opportunities increases.

“
It's important to do capabilities presentations for both the client and the creative teams building ads (internal team or external creative agency) because once they know what's possible, they have this ah-ha moment of what they could create using this type of technology - it's really exciting.

– Agency SVP Group Media Direct

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“
It's been a really nice refreshing change for creative to be so involved from the beginning and also be part of the conversation for the media plan, and to develop everything hand in hand.

– Agency SVP Creative Director

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Operational Best Practices

Rethinking the strategy behind agency, creative and media workflows isn't easy.

Here are a few best practices to follow:



EDUCATE ALL TEAMS INVOLVED IN A BUY – Make sure the creative team/agency is up to speed on the latest technology innovations in the channel. Consider periodic updates to keep creatives (and the entire team) abreast of new capabilities as they become available.



AVOID DEFAULTING TO “THE SAME OLD MEDIA MIX” – The tools available within the channel are not the same as they were a few years ago, and a brand may be able to use DOOH in different ways than previously thought possible. Developing a culture of intellectual curiosity will help creatives and media planners stay on top of what's current and what's new at the intersection of creative execution and media placement.



KEEP THE FEEDBACK LOOP TIGHT – The success of implementing DOOH best practices relies on open communication across teams. Remember to stay connected at every stage of the process.

PRE-CAMPAIGN

Ensure all stakeholders understand what is feasible for the creative and media buying teams based on bandwidth, budget, etc., and set goals and expectations accordingly.

POST-CAMPAIGN

Bring both teams together to understand what worked for a specific campaign and what could be improved for next time. Did the audience targeting strategy work? How did different creative versions perform? And so on.

Asking the Right Questions

For advertisers considering programmatic DOOH, here are three key questions to answer before the wheels are in motion:



WHAT AUDIENCE DO WE WANT TO REACH?

Defining the target audience(s) and selecting the proper data sources are two of the most important factors to consider before launching any DOOH campaign. Is the goal to target consumers exhibiting certain behaviors, such as people who visit coffee shops more than three times per week or individuals who frequent competitors' retail locations? Once the target audience is defined, the campaign will have a solid foundation on which everything else can be built.



WHERE DO WE WANT TO REACH THEM?

From highway billboards and bus shelters to office buildings and gas stations, there are more opportunities than ever to reach consumers at multiple touchpoints. Once a target audience is defined, brands can leverage behavioral data to understand how the target audience moves throughout their day and which screens will be most effective in reaching them.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE CAMPAIGN?

Historically, the out-of-home industry has struggled to concretely show the impact of campaigns using the key performance indicators (KPIs) brands care about the most. However, the rise of mobile location data has opened up new measurement opportunities for DOOH advertising. Whether an advertiser cares about upper- or lower-funnel metrics, they can get a clear view of a campaign's performance through brand lift, foot traffic or sales lift studies that measure the results of DOOH on metrics like awareness, consideration, store visitation and sales. These studies help advertisers understand the impact of DOOH on their bottom line, inform future media planning and provide insights about the effectiveness of specific creative and targeting tactics.





JCDecaux

Closing the DOOH GAP

As brands look to capture consumer attention in an ever-more competitive landscape, DOOH provides the perfect canvas for advertisers to reach their audiences with high-impact creative at multiple touchpoints throughout the buyer's journey. However, the gap between media planning and creative teams remains a sticking point keeping many DOOH campaigns from becoming truly great.

For brands standing on the metaphorical train platform — ready to take the leap into the next phase of their marketing journeys, achieving total alignment from both the creative and media planning teams will go a long way in closing the DOOH gap.

Once creative teams have full knowledge of the capabilities, requirements and considerations of DOOH, they will be empowered to produce stunning designs that deeply resonate with consumers. Similarly, when media buyers recognize the importance of bringing creative teams into the conversation early and keeping open communication throughout the planning process, together, both teams will unlock new heights of creative freedom and build more engaging, inspiring and effective DOOH campaigns.

About Vistar Media

Vistar Media is the leading global provider of programmatic technology for out-of-home, bringing enterprise-grade software that was purpose-built for the unique requirements of digital signage. Vistar provides a global demand-side platform (DSP) for buyers to activate data-driven programmatic campaigns and a supply-side platform (SSP) to connect signage operators to digital revenue. Vistar also powers some of the world's most advanced signage networks with device & content management software (Cortex) and ad serving technology.

Headquartered in New York, NY, Vistar has rapidly expanded since its founding in 2012 and now partners with some of the world's leading brand marketers and media owner networks in more than 20 countries globally.

For more information please contact us at info@vistarmedia.com or visit our website at www.vistarmedia.com.

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