

Out of Home

Your client on the water this summer

By Diego Vasquez

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It's summertime and as the temperature rises more and more people are making their way to beaches and lakes across the country. And when they get there, chances are they'll be met by signage out on the water, be it a sign on a pontoon and anchored off shore, a sign being towed along the beachfront or a sailboard skimming across the water with a huge sign as its mainsail. And it's no wonder. It's a good way for advertisers to reach consumers at their leisure, when their minds are more open to product messages.

To find out how to get your client's message in front of consumers taking in a waterfront event or playing on the beach, read on.

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

Fast Facts

What Ads on the water, from floating billboards to sailboats.

Who Water signage is available just about anywhere in the country where there's a body of water. Some of the providers include San Diego's Weintraub Media, Malibu's bbi Display Systems and

Montage Billboards of New York. Photo Sails of Fort Lauderdale provides sails with ads on them for use on charter and rental boats around the U.S.

How it works For floating billboards, ads are displayed on signs that are usually towed slowly across the view of those near the water. They can also be anchored, though usually only for special events such as on-water races or shows.

Bbi's and Weintraub Media's designs are the same, Weintraub uses a system that's patented by bbi: 12-foot-long inflated and linkable sections that can be combined to make a 36-foot-long sign. The signs are 14 feet tall.

Montage's floating billboards are tent-shaped and sit atop small barges. They're also backlit and can include sky-tracker lights, making them visible at nighttime.

Photo Sails creates opaque two-sided sailboat sails with bright, vibrant ads. The company has created sails for everything from windsurfing boards to sailing yachts.

Weintraub Media and bbi's signs are two-sided and can feature different advertisers on each. For a typical campaign the sign is towed slowly, at about five miles per hour. But they can also be moored for events like boat races or water-ski shows.

"We can anchor them in certain areas but our business is primarily having them towed," says Stuart Weintraub, president and CEO of Weintraub Media. Says bbi president Bill Barlow: "Coast Guard rules don't always allow them to be anchored."

Montage's floating signs are 24 feet by 14 feet and sit atop a 30-foot-long by 12-foot-wide platform and can be illuminated to be visible at night.

Photo Sails offers various programs, including its Charter Barter, in which the company gives free sails and a monthly payment to companies that charter out boats for things like day trips and corporate outings. For its Beach Billboard program, the company

sells sails to advertisers, who in turn donate them to upscale resorts for use on catamarans.

For the floating signage, advertisers generally provide creative. Bold lettering works best for maximum visibility. The aim is to be seen by beach visitors but also by cars on area roadways.

Markets Weintraub Media claims a distribution network of more than 200 waterfront markets worldwide.

Bbi says it provides its service throughout the U.S. and 35 countries worldwide.

Montage's service is available around Manhattan year-round, and it will also be in China for next year's 2008 Summer Olympics.

Photo Sails is in 33 U.S. markets and another 34 internationally. "We've sold sails to boats that have been everywhere from Maine to Mexico," says Aaron Kiff, president and CEO of Photo Sails.

How it is measured The typical measure of exposure is traffic data provided by parks and beaches. For events, attendance or gate sales are used.

What product categories do well "Time Warner Cable is our launch client here, and other companies that we're working with are an entertainment company and an energy drink," says Weintraub. Other possible categories include anything that'd be of interest to beach dwellers, such as beverages, fast food and sunglasses.

Floating billboards also work well for sponsorships; Honda used bbi boards last month at the F1 Grand Prix of Canada in Montreal.

Photo Sails products are often in front of the upscale boating and yachting crowd, so categories like banking/financial and luxury

products would work well.

Demographics Groups can be targeted by location and by event.

Making the buy Montage Billboards: Lead time is two days and campaigns are generally season-long, with a one-month minimum. Weekend flights are available after Labor Day. Bbi Displays: Lead time is 14 to 30 days for a mobile campaign, depending on the market, and seven days for an event. Campaigns range from one day up to a year. Cost is \$1,000 to \$1,600 for an eight-hour day for a three-part 36-foot billboard, with hourly campaigns available in some markets at \$125-\$200 per hour, with a four-hour minimum. Production costs are \$1.45 per square foot, which works out to about \$250 per 12-by-14 foot ad.

Weintraub Media: Lead time is 30 days; prices are: \$800 per side for a 12-foot ad and \$1,500 for both sides; \$1,500 per side for a 24-foot ad and \$2,000 for both sides; and \$2,000 for one side of a 36-foot ad and \$3,000 for both sides. All prices are per day.

Photo Sails: Sails cost \$36.95 per square foot for one sail and \$29.95 per square foot for two sails. The company offers a 10 percent discount for those who buy three or more sails, 15 percent for those who buy six or more, and 25 percent for those who buy nine or more.

Who's already on the water McDonald's, Disney, Bud Light, State Farm Insurance, Honda, Mitsubishi and Nike have all used bbi floating signs this year.

Montage's floating billboards have been used by NBC, Yahoo, Heineken, WWE, Wal-Mart and Frederick's of Hollywood.

Tequiza, Crocs Footwear, LaSalle Bank, Budweiser, Corona and American Airlines have all used Photo Sails.

What they're saying "Chicago's good for it because the city is focused on the lakefront. The Taste of Chicago gets something like 1

million visitors a day for like 10 days. LaSalle Bank was a sponsor at the Chicago Mackinac Race, for which you get high-dollar people with money out on the lake racing their sailboats. We just didn't get in their way and were present while they were practicing." – Michele Durkin, president of Surprise Charters, which uses a Photo Sails sail with an ad for LaSalle Bank on what has become known in the area as "The LaSalle Boat."

Web site info Bbi Displays at www.bbiDisplays.com

Montage Billboards at www.MontageBillboards.com

Weintraub Media at www.WeintraubMedia.com

Photo Sails at www.PhotoSails.com

Etc. Montage also offers beachfront sampling as well as branded towels and beach toys. Bbi's displays can be used on land at concerts, sporting events, fairs, off-road events, alpine events, conventions and stadiums.

Weintraub Media also has sailboat inventory and offers parasail advertising.

Photo Sails' products aren't subject to potential signage ordinance issues since the sail is a functional element of the vessel.

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