

# Unaggressive Yet Unavoidable:

# Citro

## **BILLBOARD ADVERTISING THAT STICKS**

Go big or go home. *Right?* May we suggest billboards? If your budget isn't big enough to get you a 30-second time slot on the Sphere in Vegas, billboards may be the way to go if you want to branch out into effective outdoor advertising.

Listen up. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Transportation stated that [the average American drives nearly 40 miles a day](#). Even you, work-from-home peeps, still put some miles in during the week, so this is still relevant to you, so keep reading.

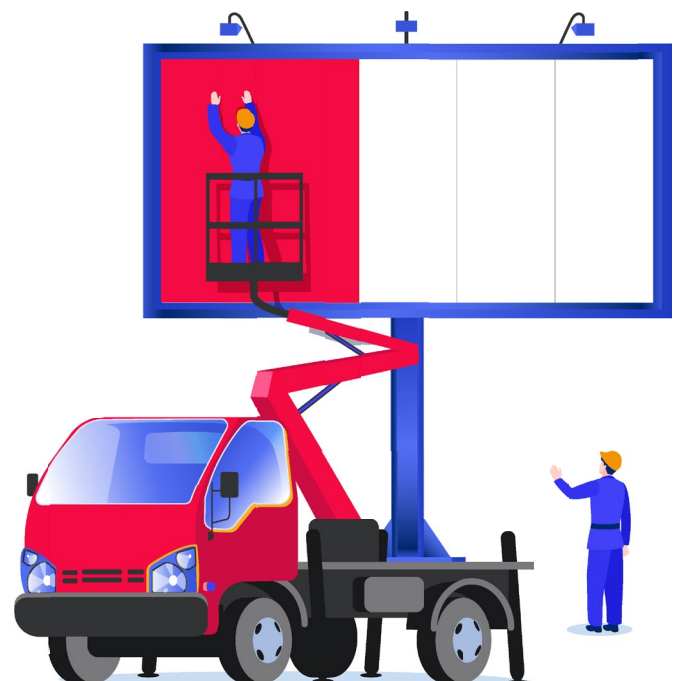
Along with every drive comes more opportunities for brands to reach potential customers through billboards. Seriously, fall asleep in the passenger seat for 30 seconds, and you'll probably miss 10 billboards or so.

It's estimated that the [global billboard and outdoor advertising market](#) was valued at around \$30 billion in 2022 and is expected to reach close to \$50 billion by 2032. Therefore, we have a pretty big opportunity here.

So let's get right to it. Buckle up because there's a lot we'll cover in this blog.

### **Topics To Dive Into:**

- Why Consider Billboard Advertising
- What Makes an Effective Billboard
- Strategy
- How To Begin Building Your Billboard Advertisement
- Where To Advertise
- Different Types of Billboards
- Average Cost & Timeline for Outdoor Advertising
- Knowing When To Pull the Trigger



# Why Billboard Advertising Is Worth Considering

What makes billboard advertising such an obvious choice for so many brands is its reach potential. We just stated that the average American is driving nearly 40 miles a day. Multiply that by the [over 240 million licensed drivers in America](#), and that's a pretty big cluster of people you have to advertise to. Now, that's not to say you should try to target every single person, but it's pretty clear that billboard advertising has a way of blasting your brand out to a greater group than just your main target audience, which can be beneficial.

However, it's not necessarily the right choice for every brand all the time. There are a few questions to ask yourself before diving head-first into a billboard strategy.

## Questions To Ask Yourself Before Getting Started

- What's my goal(s)?
- Who's my audience?
- Does it fit within my marketing budget?
- Where do I want to advertise?
- Are my competitors using billboards, and how?

## Billboard ROI

Billboard advertising isn't a new idea. It's a classic marketing technique that's been around for ages, and we're all aware of just how hard it is to drive anywhere without being exposed to a 14x48-foot ad on the way to our destination.

We mentioned how billboards are a hefty investment and take the proper strategy to truly be successful, and from a return-on-investment (ROI) standpoint, you could yield very positive results with the right outline.



### Based on research from a [2024 blog by True Impact Media:](#)

- Out-of-home (OOH) advertising, billboards included, is between 38% to 86% effective at “provoking a consumer response.”
- Around 71% of American drivers at least glance at billboards while driving.
- Nearly 50% find them “highly engaging.”
- Digital billboards report close to a 65% conversion rate of impressions into actions.
- Digitals may also persuade up to 57% of viewers to check out a business within 30 minutes of seeing the billboard.

## How Billboard Advertising Elevates Your Brand & Your Message

- Visibility - It helps you reach a wider, more diverse audience than other forms of advertising.
- Simplicity - Shorter messages on billboards make it easier for your audience to digest.
- Accepted - Bold, billboard advertising isn’t generally thought of as aggressive or intrusive advertising, so you’re less likely to be faced with resistance.

## The Less-Attractive Side of Billboard Advertising & How To Stay Away from It

We’d be remiss if we didn’t mention some of the downsides of billboard advertising. While an inbound approach is ideal for successfully targeting the right audience with challenges that you can solve, billboard advertising is a mass media approach to marketing that seemingly takes the see-what-sticks ideology and runs with it.

That's not to say it's not an effective piece to your marketing plan. If you strategize goals, location, and timing effectively, it can still yield results that would generally come through an inbound marketing game plan.

Money, money, money. Billboard advertising is a big investment, and like anything within your marketing plan, you need to clearly define your goals and weigh your potential return with how much you're willing to put in. Unless you have an unlimited budget, billboard placement is a short-term investment, with the [typical length of time for a billboard buy at around 12 weeks](#). So you better be ready to hit the ground running when the time comes for you to step up to the plate. Think of it as a talent competition. You only have a brief time slot for you to make your mark on an audience. Do it right.

Don't forget that your audience will be on the move when they view your creative. They'll most likely be going at high speeds on a highway, so they'll only see your message for a second if they happen to notice it at all. That's why the message becomes integral. We can't just stop in the middle of the street or the highway when we see a billboard that catches our eye, which means that you have to be quick, clever, and original as the creator. Can you do that?

## Creating a Successful Billboard

Putting together a winning billboard involves various pieces that all have to work together, from messaging to design to placement. Let's dive into each element that helps you surpass the distinction of a passing advertisement to one that sticks.



## Think Goals



Every message you put out should have a reason, a “why.”

Whether it’s to grow general brand visibility, increase visits to a particular office location, or boost sales of a particular product on your e-commerce store, you have to have a mission. If you don’t have specific goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track your progress, it’ll be extremely difficult to determine the effectiveness of your campaign.

## Create a Budget

This one’s pretty simple. Before you can move forward with design, messaging, or finalizing any contract, you need to determine how much you can allocate toward billboard advertising. Your budget heavily depends on where you decide to advertise, the display period, and the type of billboard you choose. Let’s look at some numbers you can expect to see if you plan on advertising in Pennsylvania.

**These numbers are based on information from [Blue Line Media](#).**

- Estimation per location for four weeks with a minimum spend of \$5,000:
  - Bulletin: \$3,685 - \$5,500
  - Digital Bulletin: \$4,585 - \$6,250
  - Poster: \$1,270 - \$1,600
  - Digital Poster: \$1,500 - \$2,000

## Pick Your Spot

Location, location, location. Where you plan to advertise can have a big impact on your ability to perform. For instance, if you’re out to target big-city bankers, your first thought shouldn’t be a small-town placement in rural Kentucky. On the other hand, if you’re specifically targeting farmers, go right ahead. It’s all about appealing to the people in that particular area, so not every message will be appropriate. Think about where you’re advertising and who lives in that area by doing some research on demographics, and then make a decision.

## Consider Placement

Some billboards are located closer to the road, while others are much higher up, larger in size, and raised with a silhouette of mountains behind them. Take all of this into consideration before the initial billboard layout because you can be even more creative if you know where your billboard is placed.

For example, if you're promoting your restaurant near the Pocono Mountains, consider working near the mountain scenery and playing off of that a little within the actual design. Or, if you're a hotel owner, consider a spot that comes off the highway with a simple tagline that reads, "Need a break? Find us at the next exit."

## Don't Forget About Weather

Weather conditions can greatly affect your billboard's success, so for lack of a better term, make sure you dress for success. Whether it's snow, rain, extreme heat, or bitter cold, the billboard can sustain some effects from it, especially print billboards because they can go through more wear and tear with the lettering, and the coloring can fade out over time. If you're looking to set up in an extreme climate or anywhere that sees various seasonal changes and the occasional blizzard or rainstorm, lean more towards digital or vinyl options.

## Choose The Billboard Type

Nowadays, there's more than one type of anything, so why would there only be one type of billboard? The type of billboard you choose for your advertisement will be dependent on a few factors: Budget, location, and design. There are many different types of billboards, but here are some of the most common:

### Static

As one of the most traditional billboards, static billboards are often made of vinyl with a single printed message on a large surface. They're commonly found on expressways or busy intersections. These printed billboards offer more options for creativity with extenders if you wish to be bold in your design.

## Digital

These billboards are computer-controlled LED displays or electronically controlled and display digital images with rotating messages that flip through by a computer every few seconds. Digital billboards can really be found anywhere, including roadsides next to highways and freeways, busy city areas, commuter hubs, etc.

## Bulletin

Bulletins are another common type of billboard that can be either digital or static and typically measure in at around 14 feet high by 48 feet wide. They're often located in highly visible areas like highways and intersections.

## Banner Ad

Banner ads, also known as hanging banners, are often seen hanging up in schools, airports, and malls. They're also a common choice for advertising on a building as it drapes over. Digital banner ads can be seen all throughout the internet as well, such as websites and apps.

## Poster

A poster is usually smaller in size compared to its counterparts, usually around 12 feet high by 24 feet wide. They're printed and designed to be seen up close and often placed in highly populated urban areas.



## Wallscape

As one of the more elaborate forms of outdoor advertising, wallscales are advertisements that are either a painted mural or a printed ad directly on the side of a building. They're meant for long-term exposure. You can often find them in large metropolitan areas.

## Lamp Post

Here's a less expensive form of outdoor advertising. Lamp post banners can be commonly found on main roads in cities or on college campuses, usually where traffic is light and people can safely walk and bike.

## Mobile

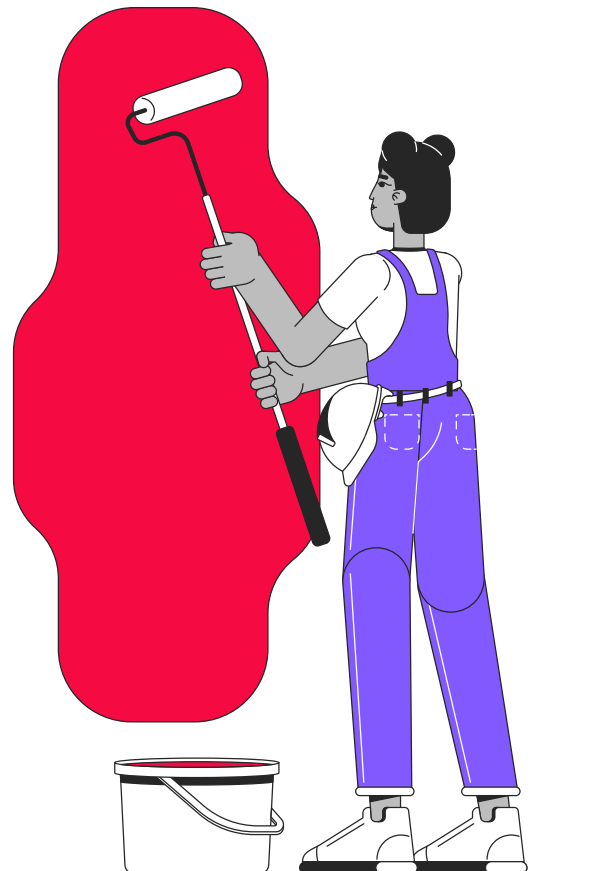
Mobile billboards are digital advertisements on the side or back of a truck. It's a flexible form of outdoor advertising, allowing you to move with the traffic around the city to get your message across multiple areas to a large audience.

## Wild Posting®

In densely populated areas, like New York City, you'll probably see numerous posters lined up one after another that are displayed at eye level. A Wild Posting® is a trademarked form of outdoor advertising that displays the side-by-side frameworks of the same static posters in one urban location for high visibility.

**Bonus Tip:** Design With Purpose & Make Your Ad Useful

Take it from [IBM's multi-purpose outdoor advertising technique](#), and see how you can make your ad more than just a flat design. For instance, if you're like IBM, you may look to promote your business in a more urban (and rainy) setting and have a placement near a popular bus stop that doubles up as a bench or a shield from the rain.





## Decide on Material

Expanding on the point about choosing the right billboard material for the weather, the billboard material you choose will also be dependent on the location of the advertisement as well as your design and message. If you're going with a printed billboard, check out some of these common material options.

- **Vinyl:** Durable; weather-resistant; not prone to fading
- **Mesh Vinyl:** Similar to vinyl with holes that allow wind to pass through; reduces wind resistance; ideal for large billboards in windy areas
- **Flex Face:** PVC-coated polyester fabric stretched over a framework; lightweight; weather-resistant; smooth surface for sufficient printing
- **Corrugated Plastic:** Lightweight; inexpensive; better for short-term billboards
- **Aluminum:** Durable; weather-resistant; useful for larger billboards; less cost-efficient, but higher longevity

## Craft a Simple, Digestible Message

The average time a person has to view a billboard while driving is about eight seconds, meaning short and sweet is the way to go. The last thing you want to do is cause confusion while a potential lead or customer is driving away. Your message needs to be a few words that get your entire message and "why" across. Use minimal words and more imagery to show off your brand's message. Make it clear to viewers about what you want them to do, and understand where potential viewers are in the buyer's journey and how your message can influence where they go. Here's a tip for you to copy and paste in your notes for later: Make it make sense to the reader in as few words as possible.

## Design To Win

A good billboard should be eye-catching but not distracting. This means choosing your colors wisely, using imagery that captures the attention of your intended audience, and ensuring the message is large enough so people can easily see it when they're passing by.

# Billboard Design Tips & Examples

To be more specific, here are some of our own professional design tips when it comes to creating billboard magic.

## Choose the Right Colors

Assuming you've done your homework on the messaging aspect of your design, it's time to think about more of the creative aspects, starting with colors. You'll most likely be sticking with your main brand colors to ensure people can better associate the message with your brand. This will also help with brand recognition and memorization in the future.

Color contrast is especially important for billboards because the design and message should be clearly visible from the street, at a distance, and during all times of the day. Colors on a billboard should follow best design practices just like on any other type of design. Use complementary colors to ensure the wording is clearly visible and that the font is readable.

*[See the differences here?](#)*

Hard to read	Easy to read
Bad contrast	Good contrast
Don't do this	Do this

## Be Mindful of Logo Size & Placement



Yes, your logo's important, but it shouldn't necessarily be the focal point of the billboard. That should be the messaging and the imagery, which bring out emotion and curiosity. The logo is simply to associate your brand with this message. So while it should not usually take up half the billboard space or be front and center, ensure it's visible enough for people to see.

This also goes back to the color palette you plan to use. Is your logo on a transparent background, or does it always have a solid color surrounding it? If so, that'll influence the main background color of the entire design. Consider placing the logo at one of the bottom corners or the bottom center. It should be somewhere that doesn't make a reader think it was placed there as an afterthought or vice versa. The message should be the focal point, so don't put it somewhere that people will notice it after the logo. Place the logo somewhere strategically, and also consider how it could fit in as part of the overall design instead of simply using it as a branded watermark on the board.

### Example:

Do something like this:



And less like this:



# Follow Specifications

Visibility is everything, so don't submit blurry artwork to the billboard company and expect it to look much better when it's on a 14x48' board overlooking a major freeway. When designing for this larger piece of artwork, it's important to follow a spec guide, but also keep in mind that certain billboard companies require certain specs. You can find them on their website or by contacting them directly.

Be sure to scale your artwork to fit the correct dimensions, DPI (dots per inch), and pixels per inch (PPI). PPI refers to the smallest units in a digital image while DPI is the amount of printed dots that a printed image will have. DPI matters most for print artwork but not as much for digital. Most printers prefer 300 DPI for maximum resolution quality. However, 150 DPI may be sufficient enough because it's not as noticeable from a distance on larger materials.

## Use the Proper Format & File Type

Printed and digital billboard specifications vary in terms of their suggested file formats. More often than not, the printer will give you the option for different file formats to choose from as they're pretty flexible. The most popular file formats that printers request are PDFs, EPS, or AI files. You can also send a PSD, TIFF, or INDD file as those are other common formats that companies will request. Printed artwork should be in CMYK mode, and digital should be in RGB.

## Test Distance & Angle Visibility

A great way to test out visibility is through virtual rendering and creating a 3D environment to ensure your design is visible from a distance, at an angle, and when the sun's at its brightest and shining directly on the design. Render your design on a vertical plane, and move your positioning to view it from various angles.



## Be Diligent About Time

Creating a billboard strategy and design is one thing. Getting it all sent and approved by the printer is another. Make sure you're following any specific guidelines and protocols. If not, you risk having to go back and completely redo everything. It may be easier if you're creating a billboard advertisement for your own company, but if you're working with a client, there's more than one stamp of approval you're going to need before everything can be finalized, so also keep that in mind.

It can take a few weeks at minimum to get the billboard artwork approved and installed. When all is said and done, you'll be looking at at least a few months of prep from beginning to end, so start as early as possible.

## Why Billboard Advertising is Still Relevant Today

Despite everything you may read and hear about, traditional advertising methods like billboards aren't going away. Even in today's digital age of more targeted, online media, larger forms of mass advertising are still used by brands to reach a wider audience.

Look, people aren't going to stop driving anytime soon. Twenty-five years ago, we thought that by now, we'd all be using flying cars or jetpacks to get around. Clearly, that hasn't happened nor will it anytime soon, at least we think. The roads and highways will still be full of traffic and potential customers for years to come, so we won't see billboard advertising lose its appeal for a long time.

Its high-frequency exposure, wide reach, and visibility make it a valuable form of advertising that offers a large canvas to make your brand stand out and be remembered. Are you willing to invest in that for your brand?

## Ready to Discuss Billboards?.

Stop sitting on the sidelines, and get in the game! We've crafted master billboards for our clients, so we know what it takes to make something special. Let's take on the world of outdoor advertising together. [Connect with us today to get started.](#)