

# DISTINGUISHING FEATURES AND CONSTRAINTS OF AMBIENT MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

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**Abstract:** The paper demonstrates the importance of innovative advertising tools and explains the main aspects of Ambient Media. The paper analyses the distinguishing features and constraints of Ambient Media technologies.

**Key words:** advertising, Ambient Media, nonstandard, media, technologies, effective.

Traditional advertising channels are loaded, there is a process of the so-called media inflation and the parallel ban on the certain goods advertising in the traditional media. The current situation makes advertisers look for new approaches to their consumers. A new term is emerging in marketing communications - Ambient Media. New channels of influence on consumers are called Ambient Media, thanks to them advertising finds its viewers or listeners in the most unexpected places, making its way through the overall flow of advertising messages. A new media is beginning to emerge everywhere (for example, gas stations, pharmacies, supermarkets, food outlets, offices, places of study, cinemas, fitness centers, dressing rooms, beauty salons), in any place where a person can be during his lifetime.

Ambient Media is one of the modern trends in social and commercial advertising. A distinguishing feature of this approach is the usage of the environment, where the greatest concentration of the target audience is. Ambient Media advertising can be called as ads beyond the scope of posters, placards and banners. Nowadays the advertising market is becoming increasingly saturated with information that consumers are simply unable to accept and comprehend properly. In order to solve this problem there is a need to find and use the unusual solution for the product campaign. Ambient Media solves such problems and offers unusual and effective approach.

The historical point of Ambient Media existence can be seen in the 90s of XX century in European cities. This term was first used during the second half of the 90s in the UK. However, Ambient Media has had the greatest popularity since the last decade. The phrase "Ambient Media" tells about external (surrounding) media, which differs from the traditional media by the following characteristics:

- inclusion in the advertising space of the environment that surrounds the target audience;
- using of other non-standard media advertising;
- planning special factors of effectiveness and reporting.

Ambient Media is designed to evoke a sense of wonder in people, to penetrate into the everyday life that promotes the best perception and memorization of showed information. Traditional media can not boast of such abilities. This is the main feature of Ambient Media. Due to advertising market oversupply and saturation people have learned to ignore most of the standard information media. Ambient Media stands out from the other ads by following features:

- getting into the target audience atmosphere (advertising on the floor in WC, on the trolley handles in stores, on the handles in public transport);
- having a high degree of creativity and innovation that helps to attract attention;
- having possibility of good planning;

- making emphasize not on the coverage of a large audience but on the most effective contacts with potential clients (Ambient Media как эффективное решение продвижения продуктов на современном российском рекламном рынке [сайт]. URL <http://elib.krasu.ru/bitstream/2311/6471/1/s019-014.pdf>).

Let's take the common example of non-standard advertising - placing information in the restrooms. This approach arouses interest and curiosity. In addition, advertising in WC can cover a very restricted audience. In night clubs these are students and young people who don't watch television a lot. In restaurants, these are wealthy people. Youth and middle-aged people are in cinemas and middle-income people are in cafes and inexpensive restaurants. In large shopping centers a visitor often goes to the restroom, where often goes to the washbasins and notices that inscription: "Beer X is a great non-alcoholic beer". Restrooms are new and effective channels of communication according to Larisa Fedotova, CEO of Advertising agency Primedia.

In West such non-standard media are considered primarily as an opportunity to make vivid and cheap advertising campaign. In Russia large customers require national coverage from Ambient Media but they are willing to invest no more than 5-10% of the advertising budget. At the moment the level of Ambient Media development is low, large advertisers are trying to use the standard means of communication in a non-standard way. In outdoor advertising these can be extenders, 3D-design or lighting.

Russian level of Ambient Media technology is at the stage that the Western markets have been back in the 90s. According to Anna Yakovleva, CEO of media agency Initiative, most Russian advertisers still aim to reach the widest possible audience through marketing communications in order to introduce the existing brand. Only traditional media can currently perform this task. It should be noted that existing Ambient Media operators who could build a network in the capital, have a good chance of attracting the budgets of national brands and developing in the region at their own expense. The closest operators for meeting the needs of today's advertisers are Indoor TV operators. This technology involves the placement of advertising on monitors in supermarkets. Western experts identified supermarkets as a separate media a long time ago, because they have undeniable advertising opportunities, companies that sell advertising in cinemas and toilets in locations with the highest concentration of the audience are also included in this category.

In Russian market, Indoor TV technologies have been existing for nearly four years. Three major operators are engaged in this business: "Magitel", IMTV and "The Seventh Continent" (about 2500 monitors in supermarkets in Moscow and St. Petersburg). But unfortunately their potential advertising opportunities are not fully developed and are not in demand according to the operators and the total volume of the market barely reaches \$ 8.6 million (Помогает ли Ambient Media российской рекламе [сайт]. URL <http://m-marketing.ru/articles/info/article106.html>).

In spite of all advantages of Ambient Media technologies there are some development constraints. Firstly, the electronic media broadcast (monitors in supermarkets, beauty salons, transport) does not occur centrally, i.e. in different stores a content can be quite different. To avoid disturbing visitors in many supermarkets and beauty salons advertising is broadcasted without sound (the sound could become one of the competitive advantages of the media). A significant disadvantage of Russian Ambient Media technologies is the existence of various formats. Unique format for each channel or media does not allow to integrate quickly into the overall campaign.

Another limiting factor is the pricing system for the media usage. Price determination is formed on the basis of internal seller's sensations. Advertisers recognize that the main reason for accessing to new media is determined by a human factor: seller will or will not be able to convince the customer in effectiveness of its new advertising channel.

And finally the market development is greatly interfered by the lack of proper monitoring of the development and modern methods introduction of marketing communications. An advertiser is willing to spend a lot of money on standard media (advertising on television, radio or print media) as there is an adopted measurement panel as a standard. Although panel researches do not provide qualitative answers to many questions of the advertiser, they already exist and are available for a reasonable fee. The only way to measure the effectiveness of new media technologies today are ad hoc. This tool requires a separate research, which is oriented on studying the effectiveness of various advertising media. Such measurements, in comparison with the results of syndicated measurements, are better and

more detailed but they are also more expensive. Customers are not always willing to pay for the newest media measurement and researchers are not ready yet to arrange appropriate panel measurements.

Research is conducted by the Ambient Media operators. For example, Romir Monitoring studies showed that advertising in cinema toilets was noticeable for 64 % of the 100 respondents more than half of the respondents who saw an advertisement in the restrooms and remembered the advertised product. Other 28 % of the respondents indicated that they noticed advertising on the door and next to the sink. Twenty percent of respondents remembered only ads placed next to the sink.

Brand “A. Korkunov” in addition to traditional media is regularly experimenting with advertising on airline tickets of air company “Aeroflot”. The brand also decided to advertise its products on million tickets. The company says that sales are increased by 30%. But the company could not answer what types of advertising had brought the company more profits.

Today innovative solutions are becoming the most effective communication with the consumer both in the commercial and the social advertising market. To draw attention of the modern human by means of advertising is currently quite difficult and Ambient Media is a very effective tool in this situation. Now Ambient Media is the most popular technology in Europe. For Russia this is quite a new phenomenon, but it has managed to interest large companies and organizations. Time shows how effective and successful the further Ambient Media development in Russia will be. In West Ambient Media networking was started by small companies. But as soon as the efficiency of the media has been proved, large multinational corporations began to use it. The Russian market is moving in the same direction.

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