

Give Them Your Client's Product With Their Tickets

Placing print ads on parking garage tickets is not new. Promotions via bar coding, peel off stickers, punch cards and sampling are recent twists to this ad vehicle.

Ticket promotions range from samples placed in the driver's seat through a valet service to coupons handed out when drivers stop to pay for their parking.

To find out how to get your client on parking tickets, 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 placed on valet- and machine-issued parking tickets.
Who-Upswing, Inc., headquartered in Dallas puts out AdverTickets.

How it works

Advertising and sampling are available on both valet- and machine-issued parking tickets. Valet tickets are handed directly to customers by parking attendants at venues like restaurants, bars, hotels, shopping malls and private events.

Machine-issued "spitter" tickets are issued to drivers from a machine, usually at parking lot and garage entrances at office buildings, airports, hospitals, colleges, shopping and entertainment centers and sports arenas.

Samples can be individually handed to drivers as they exit a facility or placed in their car. Snack foods, candy, gum, software, CDs and cassettes are some items that are easily distributed. "For example, we can arrange with a large airport parking company to place in hand a bottle of water, a newspaper or magazine for the traveler getting on a plane or heading home on the road," says Chris Gilliam, president. Specialty programs include tickets modified by coupons, bar codes, scent seals, peel-off stickers and punch cards. "Whatever you can imagine," says director of marketing Becky Rodriguez. "The scent of a fragrance or fresh-baked cookies."

Dallas-based Tibbets Media used a numbering system to track response to a web site for potential customers for their client, a Lexus and Mercedes dealership. "What we did to make sure we were tracking was to make an offer on the valet ticket that was a call to action to visit the web site," says senior buyer Jennifer England.

Punch cards were used by a 24-hour fitness center promotion. The ticket was two perforated wallet-size cards. One was a punch card for ten free visits and the other was the parking information.

Creative is most often provided by the advertiser, though AdverTicket can assist. "Brief, bold and clear is what we recommend," Gilliam says. "Like a billboard in your pocket." Creative is sometimes built around the parking or automotive theme, Gilliam says.

Printing is done in four-color, photo-quality process.

Standard valet tickets measure three inches by nine inches.

Machine-issued spitter tickets start at credit card size and are available in larger sizes. The standard is two inches by four inches.

Ad copy is usually printed on one side of each ticket with the reverse side used by the parking company. However, advertisers can buy space on the reverse side depending on the market and space availability. Product exclusivity is built in. One advertiser appears on a ticket run and the same tickets are distributed at a single parking facility, Gilliam says. Advertisers can opt to co-op a ticket run. For example, Hollywood Records was launching a new Sheila Nicholls release and a radio station ran with the record label.

Tickets offer location-specific direct response opportunities. For example, a fashion line or outlet can advertise at a parking venue attached to or close by a shopping mall.

Each valet ticket is made of up to five segments that offer multiple branding opportunities. "The large portion is the primary advertisement," Gilliam says. "The other three are much smaller and can be individually branded with the same information, but much smaller." The main segment goes to the driver. A key chain segment is attached to the driver's key and another segment is placed on the dashboard. Eventually the driver keeps all three.

Spitter tickets can be configured with a portion that a customer can retain as a coupon.

Campaigns can be stand alone or part of a media mix, Rodriguez says. "Approximately 60 to 70 percent use (parking ticket ads) to reinforce what they're already doing."

National advertisers comprise 70 percent of ticket buys. "As we get bigger, we find we're moving more toward national companies," Gilliam says.

Markets

Current markets include Boston, Hartford, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Raleigh-Durham, Charlotte, Charleston, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Atlanta, New Orleans, Birmingham, Memphis, Nashville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Oklahoma City, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Houston-Galveston, Denver, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, Tucson, San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, Seattle-Tacoma and Honolulu.

"We're adding markets every day," Rodriguez says.

Markets and individual parking company properties within a market can be cherry picked, Gilliam says. "A lot of parking companies cater to a certain type of client, like all premium steak houses, all theaters, all stripper bars. So if you're Rolex, we going to give you a choice of parking companies that have premium locations."

Numbers

Approximately 75 million valet tickets and 225 million machine-issue tickets are available through AdverTicket, Rodriguez says.

How measured?

It's estimated that an average 2.3 people are in each car parked in valet or machine-issue lots and garages and that all are exposed to the ticket, Gilliam says. Additionally, customers handle a parking ticket an average of five times. Each segment of valet tickets is individually numbered, which facilitates direct response and tracking. Bar coded, coupon and other specialty tickets can also be used to facilitate tracking. "Jiffy Lube incorporated a box with a code so when people went to redeem the coupon the code was taken off the ticket and downloaded for tracking," Gilliam says. "Also an advertiser can build a splash page or web site around the program. When people go to the web site they put in the number from their ticket in order to be eligible to win a new car or golf lessons of whatever."

Research

A study to measure when customers first noticed advertisements on tickets conducted by Simpson Carter Limited in June 2000 found that:

- 51 percent noticed as soon as the ticket was issued
- 19 percent noticed when putting the ticket in their wallet or purse
- 10 percent noticed when they were parking their car
- 6 percent noticed when they were paying for the ticket
- 6 percent noticed between leaving the garage and returning
- 8 percent stated that they didn't know when they noticed

The same study measured total recall of ticket advertising, with a total of 57 percent of respondents in the total recall category.

- 48 percent reported spontaneous recall
- 4 percent took verbal prompting to recall
- 5 percent took visual prompting

What product categories do well?

Beverages, financial services, entertainment and automotive all do well. Fast food, packaged goods and point-of-purchase goods do especially well with machine-issued tickets.

There are restrictions on some categories in some locations. "With valet tickets we can't have a competing club or restaurant advertise. If it's hotel parking we can't have a competing hotel on the ticket," Rodriguez says. Nothing food related is allowed at restaurants that utilize valet parking. "Almost anything works, other than cigarettes and guns," Gilliam says.

Demographics

Demographics are targeted by parking venue, from affluent restaurant patrons to teenagers attending a concert. For example, customer groups who prefer to have their cars professionally parked are usually from an upper-level socio-economic group. Targeting demographic groups is based on types of venues. "Spending levels go with income levels," Rodriguez says. Hollywood Records used valet tickets at restaurants in L.A. to reach 18 to 34 year old women while promoting a new album by singer Sheila Nicholls.

Making the buy

Advertisers can buy the total network, markets or parking lot companies within a market. Prices are based on number of tickets. There are discounts available for buying multi markets, Gilliam says.

Who's already on parking tickets?

Disney-owned Hollywood Records, Lexus, Mercedes, Dreamworks, H&R Block, Miller Brewing, Jiffy Lube, Pacific Bell, Audi, hushmail.com, Land Rover and BMW.

What they're saying...

"We were trying to do something a little different, to stand apart. There's so much valet parking here in L.A. that it was instantly effective. It even helped secure her (Sheila Nicholls) a performance on the Tonight Show. The booker had seen her before, heard her song on the radio. Then when she was parking she saw the ticket and said "Wow. Let's do it." Ken Bunt, vice president of new media for Hollywood Records in Los Angeles, who placed a campaign promoting Sheila Nicholls new album with AdverTickets.