

## GUIDELINES FOR BETTER BILLBOARDS

1. **Keep copy concise** - the less said, the better. A few well-chosen words are all it takes to get that concept noticed - and remembered. A jumble of sentences is all it takes to be passed without a glance - and quickly forgotten.
2. **Avoid ornate typefaces.** An elaborate or decorative type treatment can make your message - no matter how concise - difficult to read in the few seconds your design will be seen.
3. **Avoid typefaces with extreme contrasts.** Those typefaces with a mixture of thick and thin lines are difficult to read by passers-by. Heavy, fat typefaces can turn into a blur from a distance, and an ultra-thin, condensed style may simply fade away to nothing. A simple serif typeface has proven to be the easiest to read.
4. **Use upper and lower case, if possible.** It's been proven that messages presented in all capital letters are difficult to read.
5. **Choose color wisely.** Studies have shown that the easiest-to-read messages are comprised of black type against a yellow background. While this, naturally, does not adapt to every design, keep in mind that high contrast.
6. **Rules are meant to be broken.**

Keep in mind, however, that more is not better. Forget the fine print and the paragraphs of clever copy. When designing a billboard, keep three words in mind: immediate visual impact. This applies to the overall design, the art, and, of course, the copy. What other advertising medium's message must literally hit a moving target of an audience - those speeding by, those from a distance, or those who may have just a moment to give the billboard a passing glance?

The illustration you choose should be as concise and immediate as the copy that accompanies it. The two elements should also, naturally, complement each other in such a way that the tie-in is instant and the viewer isn't ten blocks past before the idea "clicks".

When choosing art for your billboard design, keep a few important things in mind. Choose art that is well-defined and will enlarge to the size needed. A heavily stippled piece that may look terrific at four inches will, at 40 feet, have stipple the size of dinner plates. Of course, this may be the result you want.

The luxury of billboard advertising is the ability to show a piece of art, for instance, a car, over three times its actual size. Use that space to its best advantage, and use it wisely. Again, choose art that will reinforce your message clearly and quickly. We suggest doing a mock-up of the board in a small size - about 12" x 3½" - then placing it on a wall 8' to 10' feet away to get the idea of what your audience is actually going to see. It's at that point you may discover that art with fines lines may fade out or heavy lines may fill in.

Think of a billboard as a five second one act play.