

Sign & Digital Graphics

Conveying the Message

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P.O.P. you should check out at the checkout counter

With the proliferation of advertising everywhere you turn, and in every possible media, there is a lot of competition for the consumer's attention, and the message that is noticed will get the best results. Finding a new medium or location to convey that message at the point of purchase may be the key to getting noticed, and that is what Devlin Media has done.

CEO Scott White recognized that there was a large blank space at nearly every checkout stand in grocery stores across the country, and what made it even better was that it was almost always in motion. Devlin Media developed a way to put advertising graphics on the wide, black conveyor belts that constantly roll past while shoppers are waiting in line just before they pay for their cart full of groceries, and the Convey-Your-Ad concept was born.

Established in 2008, with the focus of developing the method and materials necessary to successfully print durable graphics on stock PVC/rubber conveyor belts, Devlin Media tested a variety of inks and processes before settling on their proprietary system and contracting with a print facility to produce the ads.

With seven contracted sales staff and a nationwide network of installers, they design and implement a customized campaign for their clients that will increase visibility and build their brand, with impressive results. A conveyor ad for Panasonic batteries encouraged customers to pick up a pack of batteries located at the end of a nearby aisle, and while the campaign was running, Panasonic saw a 556 percent increase in the sales of that product.

Advertisers pay for ad space based on the size, number and location of their graphics. The ads can take up a portion of the belt, sharing space with up to 10 other

advertisers, or fill the entire belt. The graphics can be formatted in the traditional rectangle filling the width of the belt, or custom shaped to fit the unique bagging area. Many clients place an ad on every belt in the store and in several locations, but some choose to place their ads more strategically or only in the larger stores with higher traffic. A recent client placed three to four ads in each of 14 different stores, but there are a few clients that only need to advertise in a single store. The stores that participate also receive some income from the ad placement, and many of them choose to donate the proceeds to a charity or local community cause, reaping the benefits of positive public perception for both the store and the advertisers.

The types of companies that have placed conveyor ads include cell phone providers, car dealers, health-care providers, local transportation companies, insurance and real estate agents, and local small businesses. A shopper standing at the checkout counter might see an ad and be reminded that they need to go down to the local hardware store after they finish their grocery shopping. The average grocery store customer spends anywhere from two to five minutes waiting for their purchases to be scanned and bagged, and they are in a buying mood. It is certainly a time when they have very little to do but look at their surroundings, and the moving belt below them is likely to catch their attention.

Raising awareness and establishing name recognition works in the favor of out-of-store advertisers as well, when the consumer later decides they need their services and without even knowing why, they call the company that they feel the most familiar with. Products available in the store are also commonly featured on the belts, prompting last minute impulse purchases very much like a P.O.P. display at the entrance to the checkout line.



A conveyor ad campaign may be part of a multimedia branding effort, including social media, newspaper, magazine, radio, and television spots, and this is where Devlin Media works with the public relations firm of White Page Communications to develop the entire package. White Page CEO Celeste White has been representing Devlin Media and a variety of other clients since 2009. You may have noticed the last name in common, and deduced that this is a husband and wife team whose companies support each other to offer a unique mix of promotional options to their clients. The collaboration has worked extremely well for both companies as well as for the advertisers and the network of stores where the ads have been placed.

White Page Communications works to create a buzz through public relations, encouraging newspapers, magazines and trade publications to write articles about the companies that are offering their brand on the conveyor belts to raise awareness of their services, new products or unique features of their business. Devlin Media works with the advertisers to develop a

marketing campaign that gives them the most benefit within their budget, and makes sure that the graphics are designed most effectively for each media. Most companies design their own graphics following the guidelines provided to them, but Devlin offers a contracted designer dedicated to producing graphics appropriate for the conveyor belt format, and some companies find it most cost-effective to employ their services.

So far, the response to the conveyor ads has been overwhelmingly positive. Customers standing in line get the immediate impression that the belt printed with graphics is newer and therefore cleaner than the plain black belt, even though conveyor belts must be regularly cleaned and kept sanitary. It is true that although the belts printed by Devlin Media are stock items available from a national supplier, they use higher quality products and must start with new materials to get the results they want for their clients. They are working on ways to recycle or reuse previously printed belts, but so far the ink has proven too durable to be removed with solvents, and printing over existing graphics would leave an unacceptable shadow of the ink layers beneath.

Different stores often use different sizes, widths and lengths of belt as well, so it is very important to keep accurate records of the details involved in deployment of an ad

campaign. A store survey should only have to be done once, unless the store changes their conveyor equipment, so that when the installation crew arrives on site, they will not be hit with any surprises. Crews take photos of every installation to verify that ads were installed in the right locations, and a follow-up call is made to the store management to make sure that the installation was done on time and correctly.

The only negative comment Scott has received came from a checker, who claimed that a small item, like a stick of gum, could be lost in the brightly printed colors on the belt. Once employees and customers get used to the ads, however, issues like these are no longer a problem. Then, it becomes important to change the graphics regularly to keep the advertising fresh and interesting to shoppers. Some advertisers have their graphics changed every four months, some every six months. Some ads have been in the same store for over a year. Though maximum durability has not been field tested, at least one ad has been in place for two years, and is still looking good.

During the development of the printing process, many different ink formulations were tried, some with better results than others. Early failures included flaking and cracking due to the constant bending and stretching of the belts as they travel around the conveyor. Since the optimum printing process has been finalized, they have seen no such problems arise, either during transport, installation or use of the conveyor ads. Every graphic is coated with a clear liquid laminate to give it a smooth, even surface texture and protection from abrasion and UV degradation.



Other possible applications for the conveyor ad printing method include treadmills in fitness centers, airport baggage carousels, and escalators in retail shopping malls and theaters. For the time being, however, Devlin Media Company and White Page Communications are finding plenty of interest in conveying the message of their clients where people are shopping—at supermarket checkout stands across the country.

More information on Devlin Media and the Convey-Your-Ad advertising system is available at www.devlinmediacompany.com (<http://www.devlinmediacompany.com>) on facebook at www.facebook.com/DevlinMedia (<http://www.facebook.com/DevlinMedia>) or on twitter @ConveyYourAd.

For more information on White Page Communications and public relations efforts you can reach find out more at www.whitepagecommunications.com (<http://www.whitepagecommunications.com>) on facebook at www.facebook.com/whitepagecommunications (<http://www.facebook.com/whitepagecommunications>) or follow Celeste White on twitter @CelesteW831.

