

medium rare

Commuter Commercials

Riding the subway is always interesting. You never know when you'll see public displays of affection, urination or regurgitation—all being a rare treat. Despite all this drama, most subway riders stare out the window into the blackness, waiting to see the sign for their station stop. Since the antics of other passengers show no sign of subsiding, one company is trying to entertain and inform those left gazing into the tunnel of darkness.

Submedia, an outdoor advertising company in New York City, is one of the latest companies to use posters to create a motion picture-like effect inside of subway tunnels. In between station stops, lighted boxes produce a series of compressed images. As the train speeds by, the pictures simulate motions at rate of 200 to 300 frames per second.

"As you pass by at a high speed, you see a full-fledged motion picture," says Matthew Gross, president of Submedia, in an interview with *The New York Times*. The process, however, is the direct

opposite of motion pictures. Instead of the film moving over a projector lens, the audience moves in front of the posters to view the 20-second animated show. So far Dasani, Coca-Cola's bottled water, has run ads in Atlanta and Philadelphia.

This medium is an excellent way to get your message out to a professional, urban audience, and the viewers are always changing. And even though each train brings a new group of people, each person most likely will be exposed twice daily to your message (based on a daily commute to and from work).

Submedia can run \$35,000 to \$250,000 per month depending on location ad traffic, and the company estimates that a major metropolitan area can bring in two to three million impressions in a month. And unlike television commercials, these ads can't be clicked off or fast forwarded through. If anything, they are considered entertainment to those stuck on the subway and can attract people to the transit systems just to see the ads.

To ensure that the ads are of the

highest quality, Submedia is partnered with companies leading their industries. Kodak is supplying the backlit transparencies, Photobition is creating the large-format, digital photo printing and Parsons Brinckerhoff is providing the transit engineering.

These ads also aren't as intrusive as other forms of advertising. "this isn't a pristine environment," Gross points out. This is an industrial environment. It's just dark outside the window."

Vendors vary for system to system, depending on what company has signed on. Submedia is currently working in Atlanta, Philadelphia and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. MotionPoster in England has contracts in Munich, Frankfurt and Seoul, while Sidetrack Technologies of Manitoba has ads in Kuala Lumpur and plans for ads in other North American systems this year.

To contact Submedia for more information, call 212-219-0033 or visit www.sub-media.com.

—Beth Newhart



[To view a simulation featuring the Coca-Cola polar bears, log-on to www.sub-media.com]