

# MINI COOPER

MEDIA  
PLAN  
OF THE  
YEAR  
AWARD



**PROBLEM:** Limited by a modest advertising budget, how would the MINI COOPER successfully re-enter the U.S. car market after more than a 30 year hiatus?

**SOLUTION:** Tailor an efficient advertising campaign intended to generate broad reach and effective frequency, centered on outdoor advertising.

## BACKGROUND:

In March of 2002, the MINI re-entered the U.S. car market after an absence of more than 30 years. For decades, the MINI has been an automobile icon throughout Europe. However, prior to MINI's re-launch, brand awareness of MINI among the American public was virtually non-existent. The MINI, a car known for its compact size, fuel efficiency, and sporty performance arrived in the U.S. at a time when gargantuan SUVs and large trucks ruled American roads.

MINI USA, a unit of BMW of North America, tapped the Crispin Porter + Bogusky agency to develop a campaign that challenged the tradition of car advertising by using unconventional tactics to create a buzz for its retro-looking MINI COOPER.

## OBJECTIVE:

The agency's challenge was to define the MINI brand in ways that could help it become an icon in the US the way it has been for so long in the UK. The strategy was to communicate MINI's core proposition, "true exhilaration at an attainable price," by showcasing its defining signature shape; creating multiple opportunities for people to come in contact with the new MINI; to subtly anthropomorphize MINI; to treat MINI enthusiasts not as a target but as ambassadors of the brand, and finally, to market MINI to a personality trait, or a mindset.

## MEDIA PLAN:

Crispin Porter + Bogusky's unique approach began with branding ideas, not media formats. The agency's creative and media groups worked closely to determine the best formats and distribution channels for those ideas. The result was an innovative campaign intended to stand out in cluttered marketing environments.

Unlike most automotive campaigns created to unveil a hot, new model, the MINI campaign did not use any television or radio. Instead the campaign was focused largely on outdoor advertising and supported by print advertising in 45 of the largest markets around the country.



## PLAN DETAILS:

The outdoor campaign was designed to provide the MINI launch mass reach within individual markets while using an unconventional approach to create buzz.

Geographically, the campaign covered 45 DMAs, corresponding to dealer locations. Five markets were given special consideration (New York, Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, Chicago), given both the high concentration of MINI dealers and the “thought leader” populations, as defined by PRIZM Clusters.

Rotary bulletins served as the base of the outdoor plan throughout all 45 MINI markets (March 2002 kick-off thru December). Several factors were used in selecting rotary locations for the year, including average DECs, length of read, proximity to the road, and dealer locations.

During the initial months of the campaign, high profile urban wallscales and several different forms of street furniture were used. Bus shelters in all 5 key markets were placed in hip, urban, areas of town. Urban Panels were used for both commuter and pedestrian traffic within New York City and Chicago. In addition, street kiosks were used in San Francisco’s SOMA, Financial District, and Union Square areas.

One of the revered rules of outdoor advertising states: An outdoor board should have no more than seven words of copy. One MINI wallscape execution in Times Square had 247 words of copy, so many words in fact that the copy spilled over to the adjacent Smint breath mints and Evian water billboards.



Adhering to the unconventional approach, the MINI campaign integrated a unique airport advertising campaign. The use of “Oversized Objects” took a traditional form of outdoor advertising (airport kiosks) and gave it a twist. The agency designed and produced several oversized objects (including a pay phone, garbage can, and newspaper vending machine) and placed it next to the MINI airport dioramas which read “Makes Everything Else Seem a Little Too Big.”

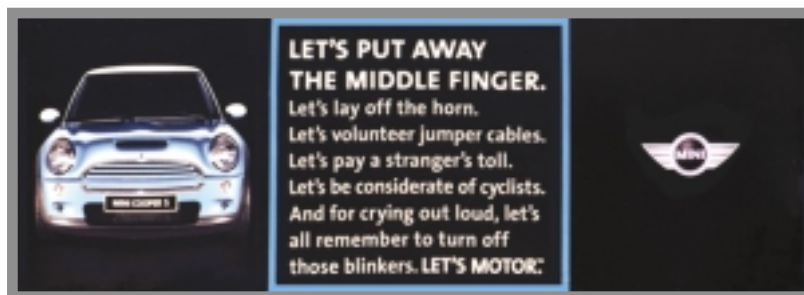
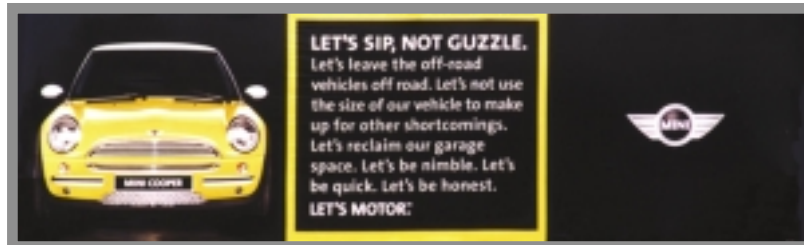
Wild posting was utilized as a “tease” during early 2002 in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Creative was changed each week, initially focusing on big, bold images and then gradually including, in a checkerboard pattern the MINI.

“MINI @ the Game” - Unlike the typical car display behind velvet ropes or in the concourse area of the stadium, the MINI was actually positioned in the seats like a regular fan at games (i.e. a Monday Night Football game and Oakland A's vs. Mariners).



“MINI Ride” features a life-sized version of a MINI mounted to look like a coin-operated “ride” for children placed in several high traffic areas in key market shopping malls. Signage on the ride coyly suggests operators deposit \$16,850 in quarters for a ride.

In addition, an “Event Outdoor” program called “MINI on an SUV” was created. The agency mounted 3 MINI’s on top of Ford Excursions, the same way many people put the fun stuff like bikes and skis and kayaks on top of their big SUV’s and drove around 24 cities. On the side of the Excursion a big sign asked “What are you doing for fun this weekend?”



## RESULTS:

In summary, the plan capitalized on both the obvious and the often under-appreciated aspects of outdoor media. Outdoor media’s ability to generate low cost advertising impressions against a target audience is well-recognized. This campaign made liberal use of efficient outdoor formats like bulletins, bus shelters, airport advertising and the like to provide constant exposure.

The campaign results were outstanding. With a limited budget, the media campaign achieved an average of 95% reach and 97.3x frequency within the top 5 key markets and an average of 85% reach and 32.4x frequency in the remaining markets.

Huge demands generated for the car was evidenced by the waiting lists at dealers throughout the U.S. as well as the exceptional overall sales. Incredibly, MINI achieved its first-year 20,000 unit sales target after only nine months. But perhaps more importantly, though, MINI has taken its first steps to iconic car status in the US.



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