![oaaa logo] **OOH Case Study**

World Out of Home Organization, #SendingLove

Background

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Travel restrictions were put in place, governments imposed stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders, businesses closed, and schools were shuttered – all to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

This led the World Out of Home Organization (WOO), the out of home (OOH) advertising trade body previously known as FEPE International, to pose a question: What can the OOH industry do during this unprecedented time to show our collective support? From that question, an idea was born.

While the global OOH community was facing an unprecedented challenge, there was one thing they knew for sure; everyone can always do with a little more love. The WOO felt compelled to rally the OOH industry for a noble cause: sharing positive and uplifting messages at a time when people were being bombarded with negative, alarming headlines. That's when WOO joined forces with several others to execute THE world's largest user generated digital out-of-home (DOOH) campaign. Together, they opened billboard spaces to the general public and enabled people to share their personalized #SendingLove messages.

The attempt to bring smiles to faces in the name of love went a step further by incorporating a cause-driven component, the ability to donate to the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which would then give participants the opportunity to see their messages—and themselves—on iconic screens across the globe.

Objective

All involved in this campaign wanted to bring the world together at a time when people experienced overwhelming feelings of isolation and loneliness, missing friends and family members. They wanted to design something creatively that will allow them to send love from all corners of the world. The campaign that would allow people to "fly" to the farthest reaches without having to set foot on a plane. #SendingLove is a first-of-its-kind OOH-powered, socially shareable campaign that sent love planet-wide.

The campaign encouraged participants to send love to friends, family and places that they missed by getting creative with the 'Hand Heart' symbol. Participants would upload their photo to the #SendingLove website and select the country and city to which they wanted to send their love.

Participants were then invited to donate to the global COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund before receiving in image of their picture playing on-screen in their chosen city to share with friends and family across social media channels. Just how did they broadcast these messages of love on billboard screens worldwide? #SendingLove was facilitated by a global OOH network, a centralized hub connecting over 20 of the media vendors' partner offices around the world, enabling them to plan, buy and execute campaigns in more than 75 markets worldwide. The partners built a campaign with true international reach. The creative automation system geotargeted messages to the chosen city, connecting communities to messages of love from afar in a show of global strength and solidarity.

Strategy

On May 18th, the #SendingLove campaign went live, kicking off a global initiative to promote messages of love, uniting communities all over the world during the collective fight against the effects of COVID 19. During its month-long-run, the campaign delivered messages of love and solidarity to 178 cities spanning 38 countries, while raising money for the global COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund. Sixty-eight media owners took part in the initiative propelling thousands of unique pieces of user generated content onto donated media space valued at US $15 million.

Overall, the campaign delivered 211,193,220 OOH impressions. How did such an initiative come to life—and at such scale? The socially enabled DOOH campaign was coordinated through the WOO and a media company, in conjunction with the OAAA and other member OOH associations. The collective ability to unite media owners, who generously provided their billboard space, time, and resources to ensure that love could be sent all around the world, was nothing short of inspirational. But what is the point of a billboard campaign when everyone is at home? By many accounts, OOH and social media are among the fastest-growing advertising segments today. But even the most enlightened of marketers see them as two vastly different channels oftentimes managing the disciplines separately.

While social media has played a role in OOH campaigns, it is rare that both capabilities are integrated this seamlessly into a campaign —underscoring how OOH should be seen as a nascent and relatively untapped frontier. Harnessing an out of home while in-home concept, the media vendor incorporated an innovative social media element, as well as a cause-based function, into the #SendlingLove campaign. Every participant that took part in the initiative was sent an 'in-situ' photo of their #SendingLove message on a billboard in their chosen country/city. In one instance, "Gramps"—a German senior citizen made famous by his 22-year old grandson Jannick, who has been documenting his grandfather's evolving streetwear style—was saddened by events around the world. The duo shared their image of love to New York City and other parts of the U.S. just as the pandemic converged with the Black Lives Matter movement in early June, reminding people to be respectful of one another, stay safe, and spread love. The image was then amplified on social media and garnered hundreds of thousands of 'likes.' In another instance, two brothers—John and Stephen Skelton—used digital billboards in Newcastle, England and Perth, Australia to send each other the reciprocated message of love during lockdown, which was ultimately shared on social media and drove local media headlines. What's more is that the OOH vendor's tech platforms responsively adapted each user-generated submission to create billboard artwork with correct specifications for each country, city, screen, language, and local environment. Once approved, the user generated creative was immediately distributed and sent users an image of their billboard for them to share via their social media channels. This not only serves to underscore DOOH capabilities, but the broader possibilities of DOOH.

Plan Details

Market: 178 cities within 38 countries, reaching 75+ markets
Flight Dates: May 18, 2020–June 14, 2020 (one month)
OOH Formats: Iconic DOOH inventory
Target Audience: Global citizens
Impressions: 211,193,220

Results

Social amplification meant that the OOH campaign, at a time when everyone was staying in, still reached an audience of more than 138 million worldwide. #SendingLove generated/ran on US $15 million's worth of donated media space from 68 media owners. During the one month campaign period, thousands of people around the world had their moment of prominence and shared love on some of the most iconic billboards in 178 cities within 38 countries around the world, including Piccadilly Lights in London, Nasdaq Times Square in New York City, and Central Worldwide House in Hong Kong. That sure is a lot of love.

OOH organizations and companies banded together to respond to the crisis in a unique way, tackling the often profound effects of social distancing with messages of love, community, and reassurance during this troubling time. They lent their support during a period in which the industry itself was going through one of its most trying times. It really is a testament to the power of OOH and what it can achieve when they work together.