Outdoor advertising

What is outdoor advertising and why should I use it?
Strategically placed outdoor advertising (billboards, bus backs, truck backs and outdoor panels) can be a good way to get a message across to many people, particularly drivers at a moment of truth (i.e., the advertising is visible to them when they’re driving) in a particular region. Outdoor advertising extends the life of your radio or television ads when it uses key images, key messages or taglines from these existing campaigns.

What general rules are there around outdoor advertising?
Check out the guidelines on the design and location of advertising signs on the NZTA’s website at http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/road-traffic-standards/docs/rts-07.pdf. These guidelines include information on the rules surrounding outdoor advertising and are recommended across all forms of outdoor advertising. The following is a summary of the guidelines:

1. **Outdoor advertising should have no more than 8 elements.**
   To prevent potential distractions, the NZTA restricts the number of elements that any outdoor advertising funded by the NZTA can have. An element refers to each individual item that appears in your advertising, e.g., a word is one element, an image is one element, a logo is one element.
   
   There shouldn’t be any more than eight elements per ad and the words shouldn’t take up more than six elements, i.e., a maximum of six words. The words should use a maximum of 40 characters in total.

2. **Outdoor advertising shouldn’t show artwork that can be confused with official signs, e.g., a stop sign or a speed limit sign.**
   It’s inappropriate to use images of traffic signs on advertising billboards that are in view of a road. There is potential for distraction and confusion, which is why it is prohibited in the Traffic Control Devices Rule. For further information, http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/traffic-control-devices-manual/docs/part-3-advertising-signs.pdf.

3. **Wherever possible, billboards shouldn’t be placed at an intersection.**
   Drivers need to be fully focused at an intersection and could be inadvertently distracted by a billboard. As a general rule, billboards should be placed at least 50 metres from an intersection; however, this is not always possible in an urban environment.

4. **State highway guidelines**
   State highway guidelines state that billboards must not be more than 6 metres wide or 3 metres high.
Pedestrian only outdoor panels (sometimes referred to as an adsheL)

Adshels of a complex creative nature, ie they have more than 8 elements, can be used but caution should be used when doing this. Sites cannot be positioned to face oncoming traffic. Only invest in adshels that face the wrong way on one-way streets and are visible by pedestrians only or are in pedestrian thoroughfares.

An example of a complex adshel from the NZTA drug driving campaign. This has been positioned on a one-way street so drivers cannot view the adshel.

What's a dynamic billboard and why won't the NZTA approve them?

A dynamic billboard has or appears to have elements that move or change in any way, eg reflective material and flashing lights.

Extra attention is required to view a dynamic billboard, so they are a potential distraction for drivers. It doesn't matter how little or how much the elements move or change, or how subtle the changes are. As a driver’s attention is diverted from the road to the billboard, this increases the likelihood that the driver will have or cause a crash.

If you’re unsure whether your billboard concept will result in a dynamic billboard, please check with the NZTA advertising team.

How do I target my outdoor advertising so it’s more effective?

Billboard and outdoor panel effectiveness is enhanced by locating them in areas where:

- a significant amount of traffic will see them (although busy roads and those close to the central city are more expensive)
- your target audience is.

If you choose to advertise on bus backs or truck backs, make sure the vehicles you advertise on actually drive in the areas where you want your message seen.

What colours are best used in outdoor advertising?

Think about the colour of your words and how they’ll stand out on the background colour you’ve chosen. Use dark writing on light backgrounds or vice versa, as this works best. Some colours are difficult to read when placed together, eg red and black.

What fonts are best used in outdoor advertising?

Choose fonts that are easy to read. Avoid curly fonts or fonts that slope or lean. Tall, thin letters are often easier to read than short, thick letters.

Examples of good font styles and those that are undesirable for advertising.
Words should be written in sentence-case (eg Slow down or Slow Down) as it is much easier to read than upper-case (SLOW DOWN). You can upper case the first letter of main words in a tagline if necessary, eg Slow Down, Stay in Mantrol.