



**KEYSTONE**  
OUTDOOR ADVERTISING



# BILLBOARD DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

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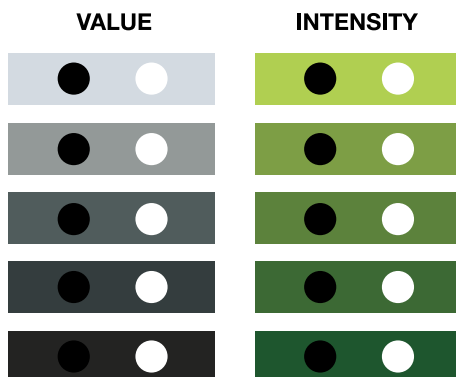
KEYSTONE

# THE LANGUAGE OF COLOR

One of the most important factors in designing an outdoor ad is the effective use of color. Color conveys emotion.

Color also affects visibility and the legibility of a design. The stronger the contrast between colors, the more vibrancy is created. The strongest color contrasts, opposites on the color wheel, are complementary colors. These opposite colors contain no common ingredients.

|               |                                           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>RED</b>    | bold, excitement, energetic, stimulating  |
| <b>ORANGE</b> | enthusiasm, energizing, optimism          |
| <b>YELLOW</b> | cheerful, energy, happiness               |
| <b>GREEN</b>  | harmony, safety, relaxation, fresh        |
| <b>BLUE</b>   | loyalty, confidence, calming, tranquility |
| <b>VIOLET</b> | royalty, luxury, creativity, spirituality |
| <b>BLACK</b>  | sophistication, power, elegance, classic  |



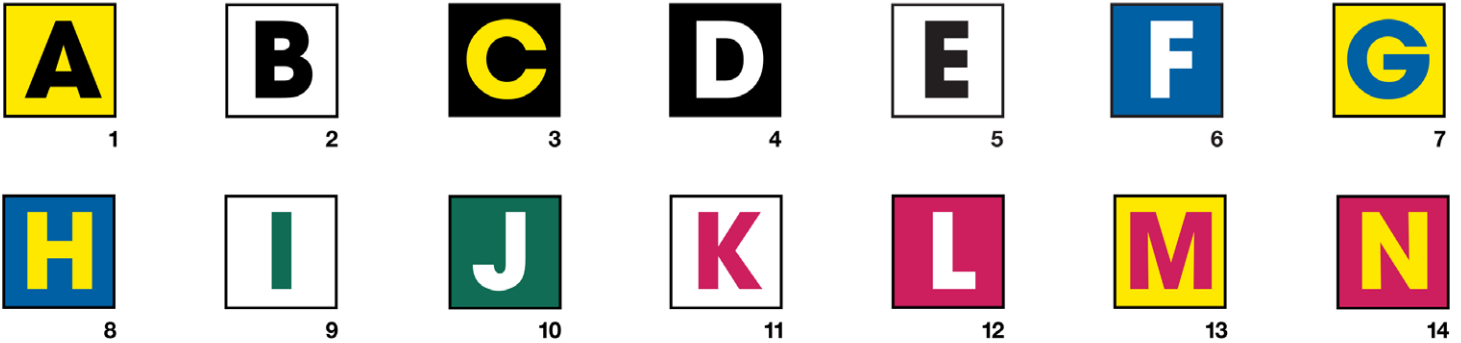
Color has the following qualities: Hue, Value and Intensity. Hue is the “identity” of a color such as red, blue, green, etc. Value is the measure of its lightness or darkness. Its position on the scale which runs from black to white. Intensity is the measure of a color’s strength and purity.

Color and black and white values can also affect distance. Warm hues, reds, oranges and yellows, are perceived as closest to the viewer. Cooler colors of green, blue and violet are perceived as being furthest away from the viewer. Similarly, darker values in color or black and white seem to be more in the foreground, while lighter values recede. Strongly contrasting combinations of either value or hue seem closer. Legibility is affected more by value contrast than by hue.



# COLOR CONTRAST, FREQUENCY, AND VIBRATION

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The 14 color combinations above represent the best of color contrast for readability on traditional outdoor advertising. Example A is the most legible, whereas example N is the least legible.



Like sound waves, light rays have varying wavelengths or frequencies: the lighter the color the higher the frequency. Some pigments absorb certain light frequencies and reflect others. We see reflected frequencies as color. Complementary colors such as red and green are not legible together because they have similar black and white values that cause vibration. Any combination of colors similar in value, even without vibrating, will have low visibility.

NOTE: A rule of thumb when designing for digital outdoor, is to avoid white, pale or neutral color backgrounds.



# LEGIBILITY IN OUTDOOR

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## KEEP IT CLEAN

Avoid using thin fonts as well as most script fonts. The strokes of each character are simply too thin to maintain legibility over long distances. Use thick, heavy fonts to maximize readability. The bold option is an excellent way to add weight to your wording.



## KEEP IT SIMPLE

- Avoid spelling out complete sentences. Don't use eight words when four will do.
- Industry standard is eight (8) words or less.
- Stick with shorter, simple words to maximize quick comprehension by motorists.
- A single message idea will read quicker and more easily than trying to combine multiple offers.
- Avoid using landscapes or complex scenes. (3 visual elements or less: 1 image, 1 logo, and 1 headline)

## NO WHITE SPACE

White space does not apply in outdoor like in printed material. Increase your logo, font size, and imagery. Having unused visual space is not recommended.



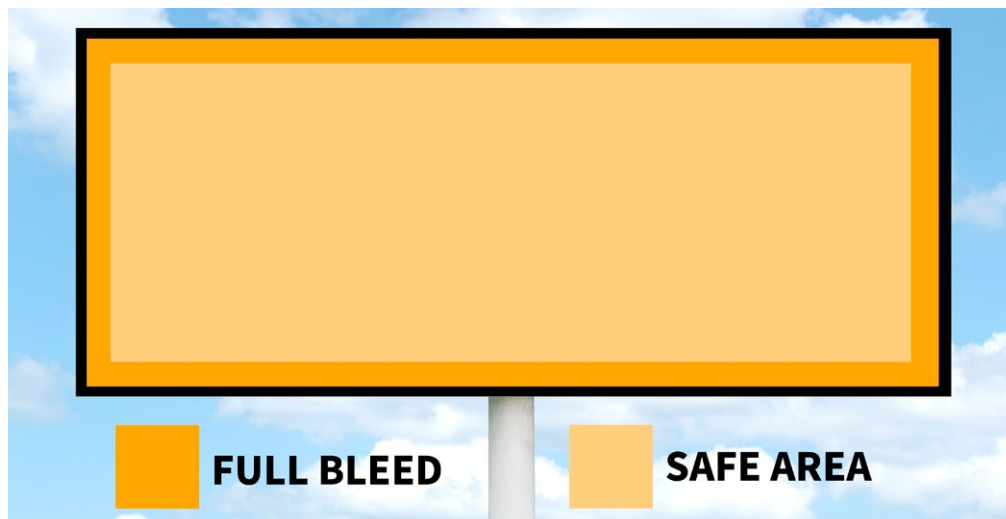
# DISTANCE VS READABILITY

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## SPACING

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- Cut out as many words as possible (if designing for a client, encourage them to use eight words or less).
- Include blank space around all text and make sure all space is equal
- Center all text and/or graphics or align them left or right
- Always use vibrant dark and light colors
- Make sure colors have good contrast
- Do not use outlines on letters
- Make sure photos are saturated and not washed out
- Check spelling and review all copy for accuracy (dates, website, etc.)



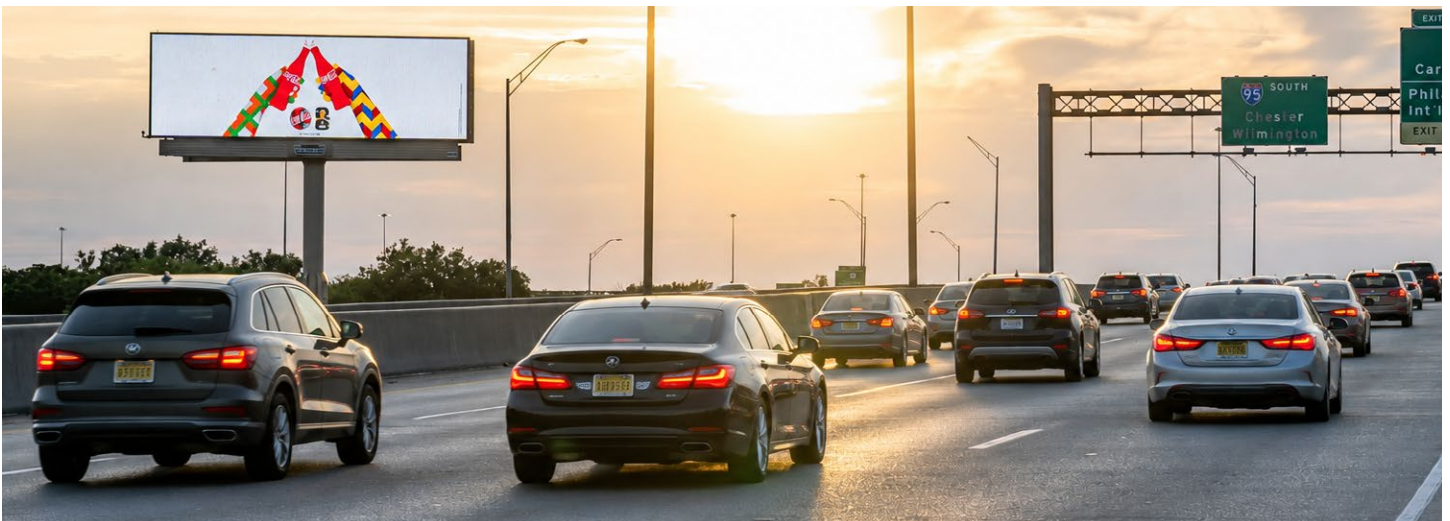
# WHAT WE NEED TO GET STARTED

- **Creative direction:** Any examples, existing materials, or general direction for the look and feel
- **Required elements:** Any disclaimers, legal language, addresses, or other items that must appear on the art

## OTHER ITEMS NEEDED

- **Logo:** High-resolution or vector files if available
- **Photography/graphics:** Any specific photos, graphics, or other brand assets that must be included in the art
- **Brand guidelines:** Colors, fonts, or guidelines we should follow, if applicable
- **Copy:** Exact messaging, offer, URL, phone number, CTA, or other information that needs to appear

**OUR STANDARD DESIGN TURNAROUND IS 48 HOURS**



*AI-generated artwork may be submitted as a creative reference, but it is not necessarily production-ready or editable. If artwork must be rebuilt, the final design may vary from the original AI image. Please provide all logos, copy, fonts, brand assets, and product images separately. Additional design charges may apply depending on the extent of the rebuild.*

