

# Advertising with Adverta

An insight into the world of on-bus advertising

REPORT BY CHRIS PEAT

Many on the highways and byways of the country will not doubt have seen the fruit of Adverta's labours. Whether it is making them aware of the latest movie or the local college's courses, commercial messages sourced and placed by the transport advertising specialist are presented on buses across the nation. Chris Peat met with Mike Terry and Nicky Dodd of the agency to discuss this interesting area.

## From the beginning

There is one place in particular where you are highly likely to see adverts sourced by Adverta: Nottingham. One of the city's main operators, Nottingham City Transport (NCT), is one of the company's top clients, sourcing all of its on-vehicle advertising. It has had a contract with NCT since 1999, making it one of its earliest customers. Having been in the bus industry for over 20 years, Mike said the business certainly knows the issues and challenges in this area, as well as how to best serve operators. Over the years though, Adverta has had a number of name changes. It was founded over 20 years ago under the name Decker Media. However, this company was acquired in 2004 by AdBus, which was followed by another buy-out by Titan Outdoor in 2006, forming Titan Bus. In 2010, Lisa Ratcliffe, Adverta's MD (then Finance Manager of Titan Bus) and the late Roger Ferry (then MD of Titan Bus) instigated what was to become a successful management buy-out. The company became Ratcliffe Ferry Media, which then changed its name to Adverta. Mike said the company offers the complete package, providing advertising on any position on a bus, whether that is the T-side,

the rear, the bulkhead or even as a whole vehicle wrap. Mike said its pricing is affordable to local businesses, which should help attract advertisers from the area a route operates.

As well as working with operators to source advertising, it also offers a vinyl and sign writing service through its Graphic Evolution subsidiary. It can take care of producing all adverts, as well as their fitment. This part of the business is based at its Nottinghamshire offices, which is in addition to its other site in Ripon, North Yorkshire.

The company is sensitive to operators' needs, Mike affirmed, ensuring customers are comfortable with all messages to be displayed on their vehicles. "We always make it clear that any specific requirements for advertising an operator has can affect revenue earned from them." For instance, he gave the example of one of its main customers, saying: "They are currently going down the route of branding its services on its vehicles at the expense of advertising."

## Family

Like a lot of the companies it serves, Adverta has a family feel to it. It has such a high retention rate that its employees get to know each other well, working together as a tight knit unit. Mike said: "With such high retention rates, it really gives us that family feel. The MD and the company care about each other. We take an interest in each other's lives, we all care." This care extends not only to each other, but their work. Mike said: "If I see an out of date advert on a bus, it rises and I will get it removed. We all care, we're in it for the same aim." Adverta aspires to a close relationship with its customers. "We like to talk to people directly,



Mike Terry and Nicky Dodd

to get to know them. We have worked with NCT for years and that all helps. We all know what's expected of each other. We are at the point where we know what advertising they wouldn't want."

## Carefully selected messages

All operators have their own separate opinions of what they want displaying on their vehicles, according to Mike. "Some like taxi adverts on them, others don't. Most operators don't allow religious and political ads, but some do. We always make them aware of the pitfalls of different types of adverts. You have to be respectful of who is going to see it. We always check the images and messages of an advert before they go on."



One of the company's Megarun ads

www.busandcoachbuyer.com | www.busandcoachbuyer.com



Interior advertising can also be sold by the company, as shown here with this Hazzler ad

is smaller companies think it is out of their reach, too expensive. Engaging with them via social media should help dispel these thoughts.

## Care and attention

One of Adverta's biggest USPs, Mike said, is its bespoke offerings. He said: "Customers will be treated the same regardless of how many buses they run. We like working with small independent bus operators, as well as larger concerns."

"What else sets us apart is we have good quality control measures. We are very conscious about checking things, that they don't slip the net and an advert stays up longer than it should."

Mike, as with the rest of the company, has a strong customer service ethos, another factor he believes sets them apart. He said: "We care."

This care extends throughout the operation, whether it is in likes of twitter and facebook, it runs a Campaign of the Month, where on-road images of bus advertising campaigns are photographed and posted online. It helps generate a "good feeling" for this kind of advertising, said Nicky. The company interacts with operators through Twitter too, not just advertisers.

A misconception of bus advertising, in Nicky's experience,



Bus stop advertising is also an area of Adverta

www.busandcoachbuyer.com | @bus\_andcoach

being rural routes, where buses pick up more road dirt, marring advertisements' appearance. Incidentally, vehicles running in cities tend to earn more revenue from advertising, Mark said, simply because they run more frequently, with more people seeing them. Have council funding cuts had any effect on bus advertising? Mike said: "Purely judged on sales, no they haven't." Adverta continues to gain

ground in its market, but this is not surprising considering how much it markets itself. However, even though it has gone to lengths such as promoting its bus advertising on buses, Mike says word of mouth is still important in getting its message out. Having good relationships with its operator clients and advertisers is also key to its goal of helping you earn more revenue from your fleet. W. adverta.co.uk

## Batman versus Superman

Social media is important to Adverta's strategies. For instance, a recent stunt it pulled was posting an image of one of NCT's buses featuring an advert for the film Batman versus Superman. The vehicle was parked beside a sign for Gotham near Nottingham, which shares its name with the fictional hometown of the Caped Crusader. Nicky said it gained a lot of interest.



adverta.co.uk  
Local Media Experts

Buses are big. Buses are everywhere.  
Buses reach everyone.

**BUS ADS WORK**



For more information call:  
**0115 975 4024**  
or Email: sales@adverta.co.uk