

Class 5a ~ Advertising trailers and self-propelled advertising vehicles

Impacts of Traditional Advertising Trailers

The current [SAMOAC \(April 1998\)](#) only covers the traditional or standard advertising trailer consisting of trailers of a relatively light construction carrying two or more advertising panels stretched over frames. Currently standard trailers are mostly aimed at motorised traffic by either being parked along urban roads or being towed on such roads. Such trailers may vary in size from 6 sheet format (2,16m²) to 48 sheet format (18m²) and may be towed by bakkies (pick-ups), cars, motorcycles or even bicycles. These trailers have always been a very controversial form of outdoor advertising since they pose the following problems:

- Due to the mobility of advertising trailers and the possibility of changing display sites almost indefinitely these trailers are very difficult to control and result in the unproductive application of any controlling authorities' manpower.
- It is often parked on sites where a traffic safety problem is created or where it impacts on the visual environment.
- Towing such trailers around for advertising purposes contributes to traffic congestion on already overextended road systems.
- Special gimmicks used with some of these trailers, such as a scantily clothed lady taking a shower in front of a parked trailer, are very distracting and pose a serious road safety problem. Distractive gimmicks are also applicable to trailers being towed around for the purpose of advertising, such as a chunk of cheese on a trailer towed on a busy highway while being chased by motorbike riders in mouse costumes.
- Being of a light-weight structure parked trailers can very easily be blown over and may land in front of oncoming traffic if not being anchored properly. This hazard is also true of trailers which are being towed around.

Positive Development in Trailer Advertising

Since the [existing SAMOAC](#) was completed in 1998 a whole new and more positive development in trailer advertising has taken place, namely the interactive trailer targeting large concentrations of pedestrians by combining promotions, product sampling and educational campaigns with trailer advertising. Trailers used for this purpose may include trailers with built-in sound equipment to attract pedestrians through music or messages or trailers with audio equipment together with foldout stages which provide an elevated space for various live shows or orators promoting products. Interactive trailers do not share most of the above-mentioned disadvantages – the only real disadvantage being trailers towed to and from pedestrian sites which might contribute to traffic congestion or distract the attention of motorists by displaying advertisements while being towed. These trailers offer

various benefits to the public such as employment opportunities due to the more labour intensive methods of outdoor advertising involved, entertainment and refreshments.

Opinions on Trailer Advertising

Since the above-mentioned problems currently experienced with standard advertising trailers had been foreseen when the existing SAMOAC was compiled in 1998, the following statement was made in this document: *'This type of advertising is very difficult to control owing to its highly mobile nature. If a controlling authority does not have the capacity to control advertisement trailers, they should not be permitted by such an authority at all.'* In support of this opinion voices have ever since the publication of SAMOAC been going up from various controlling authorities and other parties for all advertising trailers to be banned.

The outdoor advertising industry feels very strongly about the unfairness of the above statement made in SAMOAC. It is felt that owners of advertising trailers should not be penalised by any controlling authority's 'incompetence' to fulfil its controlling function properly. This must be accepted as a valid argument.

However, there is another side to the argument that may sound just as valid. As we all know most local authorities are nowadays in dire straits financially and are understaffed in most cases. Operators not complying to the rules laid down for operating outdoor advertising trailers will in the end only result in a larger contribution required from already overtaxed citizens in order to enable controlling authorities to solve a problem created 'intentionally.' In the meantime the public is not receiving any tangible benefits from traditional or standard advertising trailers being operated in their neighbourhoods and along their roads apart from being kept up to date on the merits of the latest products and services and maybe by means of their local economies getting stimulated a bit through this type of advertising.

Then there are also the negative effects that may be experienced by local communities such as an impairment of traffic safety and the negative impact on their tourism resources and quality of life. This may be more applicable to communities in the medium and higher income bracket than those in the lower income bracket, but it is still true. The impairment of traffic safety implies the involvement of such services as metro police units. It is needless to say that such overstretched law-enforcement units can be utilised much more effectively fighting serious crime without having to carry an additional traffic enforcement load created by advertising trailers.

It makes sense that public funds should rather be spent on priorities such as the creation of employment opportunities, housing and security than on the control of advertising trailers that might be addressed in a more effective manner.

The above arguments does not implicate that all outdoor advertising contractors act irresponsibly. It is just to indicate that there are two sides to a coin while one has to admit that rogue operators do exist and that it seems as if trailer operators have more than their fair share of rogues. What is asked for is for the outdoor advertising industry to show its goodwill by contributing to the solution of the problems created

by advertising trailers instead of leaving the issue to tax payers and controlling authorities. The goal of minimising the impacts of outdoor advertising while at the same time maximising its benefits should also be strived for in this case.

In conclusion it needs to be mentioned that there is no need to go into a lengthy argument about the outdoor advertising industry's entitlement to freedom of economic speech. We have to admit that this is a basic right. But we also have to admit that all citizens of South Africa are entitled to live in an environment that is not detrimental to their health and well-being. This is also a basic right. Both these rights have to be accommodated.

A Possible Solution?

In spite of all the negative aspects surrounding advertising trailers it does not seem necessary to ban all these trailers outright. The interactive approach to trailer advertising may have opened the door for allowing sufficient opportunities for advertising trailers while at the same time minimising the control problem and any associated impacts. The following points are relevant in this regard:

- Trailer advertising should be limited almost exclusively to the interactive approach and pedestrian environments thereby shifting from a opportunistic approach to a more focused, calculated approach – from trailers along busy roads trying to catch the attention of passing motorists for a fleeting moment to pedestrian crowds where it is possible to get audiences' full attention for more prolonged periods by making use of all the human senses.
- The urban environment provides a multitude of opportunities where large pedestrian numbers may be successfully targeted. Such pedestrian environments may include pedestrian malls or streets, squares, the parking areas of shopping centres, transportation nodes such as minibus taxi ranks and train stations together with a variety of sporting and cultural events. In environments such as pedestrian streets and urban parks which lack the necessary pedestrian numbers interactive trailer advertising may actually serve as a stimulant for creating more lively social environments –attracting informal traders and even tourists.
- No advertising trailer should be parked outside pedestrian areas and no advertisement on any parked trailer should be visible from any public road. Trailers should also not be towed around on public roads for the sole purpose of advertising.
- In order to prevent advertising trailers from being misused for advertising purposes while being towed to and from pedestrian areas such towing should be limit to the hours between 6:00 and 19:00
- Advertising trailers outside pedestrian areas may be accommodated to a certain extent if the outdoor advertising industry is willing to take responsibility for controlling such trailers and if the display of advertising trailers can be limited to specific areas or stretches of road identified by means of the [SEA procedure](#).

Self-propelled advertising vehicles

The existing [SAMOAC \(April 1998\)](#) does not make provision for any self-propelled vehicles used solely for the purpose of advertising. Compared to certain overseas countries there are currently no significant demand for such vehicles in South Africa. However, a specific need for self-propelled advertising vehicles at soccer stadiums may arise during the 2010 World Cup.

Self-propelled advertising vehicles may include:

- Advertising vans consisting of trucks adapted for the purpose of carrying advertising panels or other advertising devices.
- Scooters adapted for carrying advertising panels.
- Custom-built advertising bicycles.

If accommodated in SAMOAC, one may expect more or less the same problems currently experienced from advertising trailers. However, being more mobile some of these self-propelled vehicles may actually be more difficult to control than is the case with advertising trailers. On the other hand options such as advertising bicycles may be exceptionally suitable for South African conditions and may even provide previously disadvantaged groups with excellent franchise opportunities.

Most of these vehicles are suitable for an interactive approach to outdoor advertising in pedestrian environments and should therefore also be limited to such environments while being subjected to more or less the same conditions pertaining to advertising trailers.

Standard or Traditional Trailers



Standard advertising trailer giving an indication of the size of such trailers.

A standard trailer parked at a busy intersection creating a traffic safety hazard (right).





A more solid 48-sheet (18m²) standard trailer on a double wheel base from *Bullfrog Media* – UK (left).

<http://www.bullfrog-media.co.uk/>
<http://www.promobikes.co.uk/>



Smaller trailers from the UK: 6-Sheet (1,6m X 1,8m) *Smart Car* trailers from *Bullfrog Media* (above) with *Bullfrog Media's* 6-sheet scooter trailer (above right) and a *Promomini-mobile* (3,0m x 1,5m) from *Promogroup* on the pavement at an urban intersection (right) where it is not exactly beneficial to traffic safety.



South African Interactive Trailers



Comutanet's *Audio Trailers* (left & below) equipped with state-of-the-art PA systems. Music CDs, interspersed with commercials, are played to attract audiences.

<http://www.comutanet.co.za>



Comutanet's Roving Stage Trailers – equipped with state-of-the-art audio systems and foldout stages. These trailers are ideal for product demonstrations and interaction with the crowds through a PA system.

<http://www.comutanet.co.za>



South African Interactive Trailer

Comutanet's Roving Stage Trailers – equipped with state-of-the-art audio systems and foldout stages. These trailers are ideal for product demonstrations and interaction with the crowds through a PA system.

<http://www.comutanet.co.za>



Self-propelled Advertising Vehicles



Promogroup's Promovan (above) & *Bullfrog Media's Ad-Van* (right), both carrying 48-sheet posters (3mx6m)

<http://www.promobikes.co.uk/>

<http://www.bullfrog-media.co.uk/>



A unique concept – Promogroup's Promoshowcase. The name speaks for itself.



Promogroup's Promoscooter carrying a 6-sheet poster (1,8 m x 1,2 m / 2,16 m²) on each side.

Promogroup's Promosegways a self-propelled mini-chariot for handing out samples and brochures.

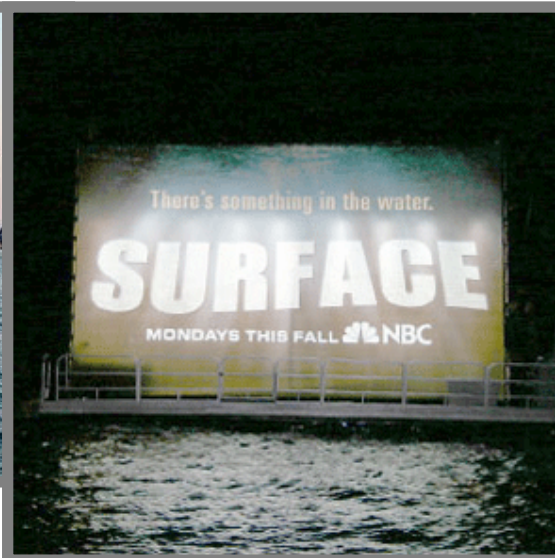
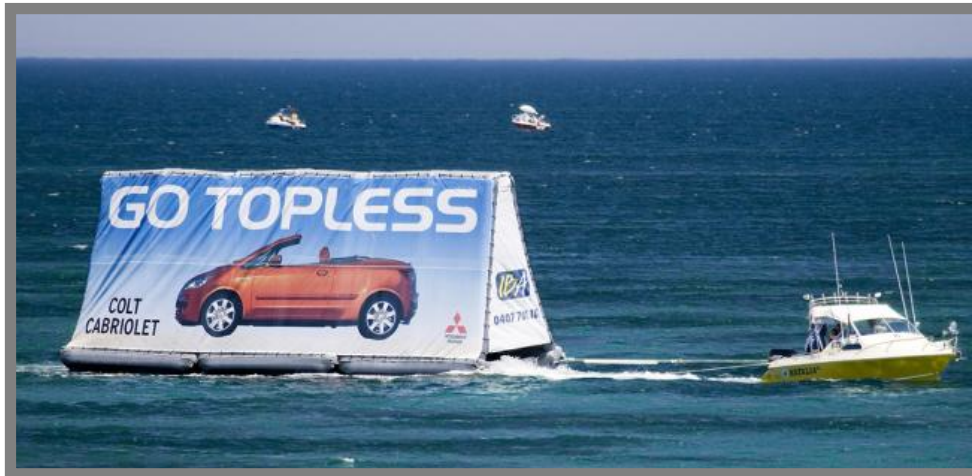


Advertising bicycles: Promogroup's Mediabike (right) and Promobike (below right) both with 6-sheet posters (1,8 x 1,2m). Below left is South Africa's own version of an advertising bicycle.



<http://www.promobikes.co.uk>

Aquatic Trailers



A less familiar way of advertising. It is not yet quite clear what all the issues surrounding the control of aquatic trailers may be, but one may assume that such 'trailers' will be limited to environments such as beaches, harbours, marinas and sporting events. It therefore seem that the control of aquatic trailers will be less problematic than their land-based counterparts.



Being inflatables it should be noticed that some of these aquatic trailers may also be used as an advertising medium on dry land. In such cases they should be accommodated under [Class 2g\(iii\)](#) ~ [Signs for sporting events, festivals and exhibitions.](#)

Compiled by Frans Jordaan