

STREET PUBLICITY FOR HOSPITALITY ON TIMIȘOARA'S AVENUES

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Abstract:

Street advertising is an important tool which can be used alongside other tools for promoting hospitality. This paper serves to show how it is used on the street boulevards of Timișoara, focused on the city entrance arteries, and on other large streets.

Key words: Timisoara, tourism, hospitality, advertising, street publicity

JEL classification: M31, M37, L83

Timișoara is the second largest city in Romania and the capital of the Timiș county, the county with the largest geographical spread. In 2009, a sociological study found that the reasons why tourists choose Timișoara are: visiting the city on holiday (51%) and on business (49%). To reach this city, tourists use the train (46%), car (30%) and airplane (24%). Most travelers obtain their information from the Internet or from friends. Most tourists choose hotels or guesthouses; few prefer other accommodations (apartments, hostels, villas or camping). During the visit, 25% of visitors stay with friends or relatives. In Timișoara, both tourists and residents may choose from a variety of restaurants, fast food places, clubs, bars, cafes and casinos.

Here are some of the places considered to be major tourist attractions:

- 1 *The Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral* is the building which represents Timișoara and has a height of 83 meters and 11 towers. The bells were cast in a rare material that was brought from the islands of Sumatra and Borneo, each of the seven bells corresponding to a different musical tone;
- 2 *The Dicasterial Palace* is a copy of the Strozzi Palace in Florence and its name comes from the Greek „dikasterion” (the court of assizes). It is the largest building in town, as it has three courtyards, 273 rooms and 365 windows;
- 3 *Liberty Square* with the Old City Hall, the memorial of St. John Nepomuk, Count of Soro's Palace (or the House of the Military Commander);
- 4 *The Synagogue fortress* was built in Moorish style from 1863 to 1865;
- 5 *The Bastion*, now under renovation, is the name given to the historical artifacts remaining after the demolition of the old city;
- 6 *Union Square*, which hosts the Cathedral (Episcopal Cathedral Roman Catholic), the Baroque Palace, the Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox, the Serbian Orthodox Episcopal Cathedral, the Lenau High School, the Trinity Monument, a fountain with mineral water and other buildings of the 18th and 19th century.

The law on Timișoara street advertising includes a set of definitions, rules and procedures governing the functioning of the activities involving the placement of panels, boards signs, posters, banners, multimedia screens, totems, roof-tops, urban furniture, audio-video systems and meshes. Outdoor advertising activities can be carried out after obtaining a license issued by the mayor of Timișoara, serving for either construction, a temporary advertising agreement or the Commission of Public Order (Comisia de Ordine Publică).

Fees for street advertising have the following structure:

- 1 advertising fee – advertising systems located on private sectors or private support structures;
- 2 amount fixed by contract – for systems built to permit public advertising or private buildings of the municipality;
- 3 duty employment in the public domain – for systems such as advertising panels on ground foundation, the tax is calculated based on horizontal projection, including billboards located partly on private, but still on air above public land;
- 4 advertising fee plus fee for temporary use of public domain – for the promotion and advertising systems and the billboards located under an agreement for temporary advertising on public, tax is calculated based on the amount of land occupied.

Fees for street advertising, established by decision of the Local Council for 2010 are:

- 1 28 lei/sqm – for display advertising and publicity purposes in a display case at the location where the economic activity takes place;
- 2 20 lei/sqm – for display advertising and publicity purposes with any other panel, display or display structure for advertising and publicity;
- 3 0.2 lei/sqm – taxes for shows with video-systems;
- 4 0.4 lei/sqm – taxes for shows with dance performances;
- 5 3 lei/sqm/day for A-zone, 2 lei/sqm/day for all other areas – for employment in the public domain advertising systems;
- 6 2 lei/sqm/day (for May, June July, August), 1 leu/sqm/day (for March, April, September, October) and 0,5 lei/sqm/day (for the months of January, February, November, December) – the commerce of products sold by the seasonal terraces;
- 7 0.25 lei/sqm/daily – seasonal terraces that occupy unused public domain;
- 8 1.5 lei/sqm/day – for both billboards advertising the property of Timișoara City Hall;
- 9 5 lei/sqm/day – to distribute advertising leaflets.

Many documents are required to obtain temporary public agreement: the application form, a copy of the certificate of registration from the recipient firm, or a copy of the certificate of registration and tax number of the recipient firm; a situation plan, scaled 1:500, and a plan for employment in the area, scaled 1:5.000, issued by the City of Timișoara, which clearly marks where the activity will be promoted and/or the location of the systems/billboards, a drawing of the systems/billboards (unless the agreement for temporary advertising includes an advertising system) and the statement, advertisement, agreement or contract with media owners that the systems/billboards will be mounted, the opinion of the Directorate for Culture, Cults and National Cultural Heritage of the Timiș County (if any), granted sanitation (if necessary, because conducts of business promotion leave behind waste), an extract from the advertising contracts which show its value and its validity (if the system/billboards will be located right next to intersections, on the 1:500 scale the distance of 50 meters from the intersection will be marked). If the advertising statement is still unknown when filing the documentation, it will be transmitted to Advertising and Commerce within 15 days from approval.

Public display is one of the major advertising media, though it has the disadvantage that it seldom contains a text argument: reading a poster is done quickly, with the exception of places where people are more static (such as public transportation stations). The display can be considered a media channel complement to other media channels, cementing the image transmitted by them. A major disadvantage is that the display requires the use of creative concepts in order to impact the reader. However, the following strengths make it successful: color view and good reproduction, strong

impact, the ability to create a fast reputation, good frequency and geographical selectivity, being directly related to the distribution. These strong points make it a media channel suitable for promoting hospitality.

Timișoara has the following "gateways": Calea Șagului (DN59 or E70), Calea Buziașului (DJ592), Locotenent Ovidiu Bale Street (DN59A), Calea Torontalului (DN6), Calea Aradului (E671), Calea Sever Bocu (DJ691), Simon Bărnunțiu Street (E70), Calea Martirilor (DC155). The research was made going through the avenues from the city entrance to its center, also including the streets and avenues that are considered important (the Cluj street, the Republic Boulevard, the General Ion Dragalina Boulevard, the Liviu Rebreanu Boulevard, the Dr. Ion Bulbuca Boulevard, Gh. Dima street etc.) because they are the links between the various routes of entry in Timisoara, in the absence of ring roads. Calea Aradului is the path with the highest density: 162 Boulevard panels, 18 of which are unused or used by the owners. Calea Buziașului is the "poorest" access road into the city, with only ten panels. In fact, neglecting the input gateways is an acknowledged fact, commented on and deplored throughout Romania. Where one would expect to find most information about hotels, hostels and restaurants, the areas are found to be ignored or used too little, with the exception of Calea Aradului.

In total, 900 objects of advertising were noticed: banners, vertical panels, indicator panels, panel lighting systems (the illuminated panels), totems, multimedia displays, excluding firms in the building. Data collection was done taking into account the following: the street where the advertisement is located, the advertising object type, the name of the hospitality unit, company, product or service that is advertised.

After data collecting, the panels were structured in several categories, according to their target field as: 1. supermarkets, hypermarkets, minimarkets and so on, 2. show-rooms dedicated to cars, 3. services, other than hospitality (transportation, car wash, telephone, etc.), 4. goods (Coca-Cola, Frutti-Fresh, Ford Focus, Barni, Perrena, Tchibo, Gillette, etc.) 5. hospitality and 6. others (the Kiss Music radio channel, election boards, boards for companies such as Fructus, TÜV CERT, etc.). Figure 1 shows their share in total panels used. Of course, if we also take the unused boards into account, these rates decrease significantly. We notice that hospitality is reflected in the rate of 12.84% of all panels. If we compare the number of super/hyper/mini-markets at hospitality establishments, we can consider this a very small percentage. The "Markets" category includes indicator panels for Iulius Mall and commercial complexes such as Dallas.

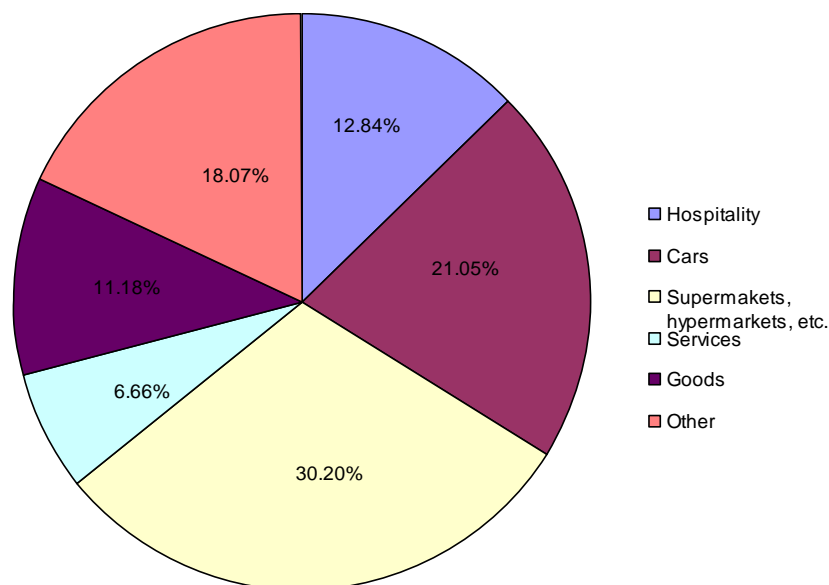


Figure 1. The weight of the street publicity categories

According to the e-timisoara.info site, there are 697 units of hospitality in Timisoara: 81 hotels, 28 guesthouses, 290 restaurants (including 34 fast food places, and 55 pizzerias), 61 confectioneries, 94 bars, 3 discos, 76 clubs, 51 cafes and 13 casinos. We expect that, since this is a significant number of the same type of hospitality establishments (except for discos), advertising is intense, as early as when entering the city. Research has revealed surprising aspects in the competitive conditions described above.

In hospitality, we find the weights shown in Figure 2. Of course, the "aggressiveness" panels for Roma Hotel dramatically increase the percentage dedicated to the "Hotels" category. For example, on the Calea Șagului viaduct, almost every pole is "occupied" by pairing panels, one for Diego and one for hotel Rome. Given the fact that restaurants represent about 41% of hospitality establishments, the weight of their panels is surprisingly small, only 17.35%.

Billboards dedicated to hospitality stand out in a very strange way: in most cases, for a single unit, one caution panel and one target panel are used. Exceptions to this "rule" are the panels for Hotel Roma and the Ambassador Hotel. We can say that the Hotel Roma promotion is aggressive, as these panels represent 43.66% of all panels that promote hotels, or 28.70% of the total number of hospitality panels.

Promoting only in the vicinity of the hospitality unit is noticeable even when it comes to restaurants and fast foods – surprising for "Pizza Hut", as opposed to "McDonald's" or "KFC", whose boards can be seen scattered over all the main streets. In fact, the "fast foods" category consists of only two names, McDonald's and KFC, each with two restaurants, always located in nearby places.

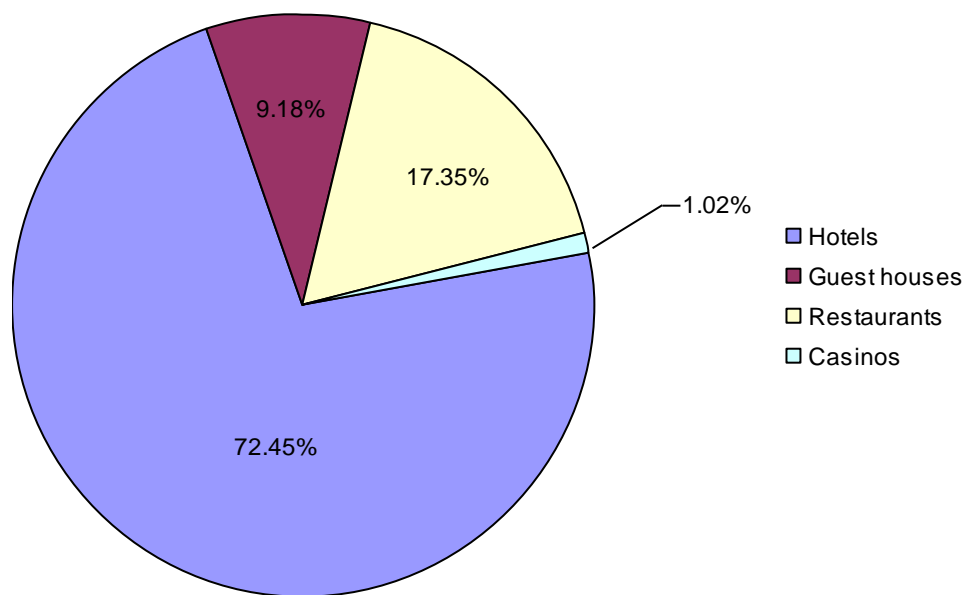


Figure 2. The weights of panels dedicated to hospitality in outdoor advertising

One aspect of economic instability is characterized by the fact that many illuminated panels are unused or contain information about the owner (a site address or phone number). This situation represents about 52% of studied illuminated panels. A special case is the panel used in a campaign for presidential elections which has been displayed ever since. We could consider that, under current circumstances, the mayor has had to decrease fees for street advertising or facilitate access to it (the number of documents required is large compared to the number of acts under regulation approved in 2005 for street publicity). The Calea Torontalului access way is important because it

is the entry way from Hungary through the Cenad customs. This route has large sections with no streetlights or insufficient street lighting, which makes it impossible to read a panel if it is not illuminated. Maybe if street lighting systems were functional and effective companies would find increasing interest for advertising to reach street level on Calea Aradului. In some parts of some streets, the panels are hidden by tree branches, which often even block road traffic signs.

Given the representation of hospitality in street advertising, and given that the number of these units is important, we consider that other forms of information promotion are being used in order to meet tourist behavior. However, the city itself would become a little more hospitable if the entrances would greet tourists with suggestions of accommodations, dining places and places for entertainment.

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