

Lamar Enlists Magink For Subtle Digital Signage

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Lamar Advertising Co. is using low-power digital signage technology developed by Magink for a new billboard installation in the Bronx. This marks the first large-scale adoption of Magink by a national outdoor advertiser. Depending on advertisers' reactions to the alternative billboard technology, it may signal broader market penetration by Magink.

In addition to consuming less energy than an LED billboard of the same size, Magink displays are not as bright or distracting, meaning that local residents are less likely to object to their presence. This was a priority for Lamar's new sign, located at 640 Soundview Ave. in the Bronx.

Ruben Diaz, Jr., the Bronx Borough President, praised the partnership: "Lamar was able to implement a billboard that emits no light to disrupt the community, making this project a great addition to the Bronx." Touting the borough's desirable location, just north of Manhattan, Diaz added: "It is also another sure sign that the Bronx, like the rest of New York City, offers a tremendous opportunity for advertisers and businesses to reach a broad audience."

To create an image with Magink, an electrical charge is sent to a billboard covered with helix-shaped organic molecules. These rearrange themselves in different shapes following the distribution of the electrical charge. After the image is formed, no more energy is required to keep it in place, unlike LED billboards, which require a continuous source of power.

Lamar can display multiple ads on the sign with only a modest amount of electricity, while maximizing revenue by selling ads according to daypart. On average, Magink displays are 50% to 75% more efficient than LED billboards.

Magink signs are also less vivid, with no light emission, and a finish resembling a glossy vinyl poster. Magink displays are also capable of carrying video advertising -- however, using this capability sacrifices much of the potential energy savings.

Some outdoors advertisers are receptive to less intrusive digital signage, but Magink's relatively subdued finish has been a liability with others. Most notably, several years ago, Clear Channel Outdoor experimented with Magink's technology but passed. Clear Channel execs said they did not move forward with Magink technology because it didn't deliver high visual impact.