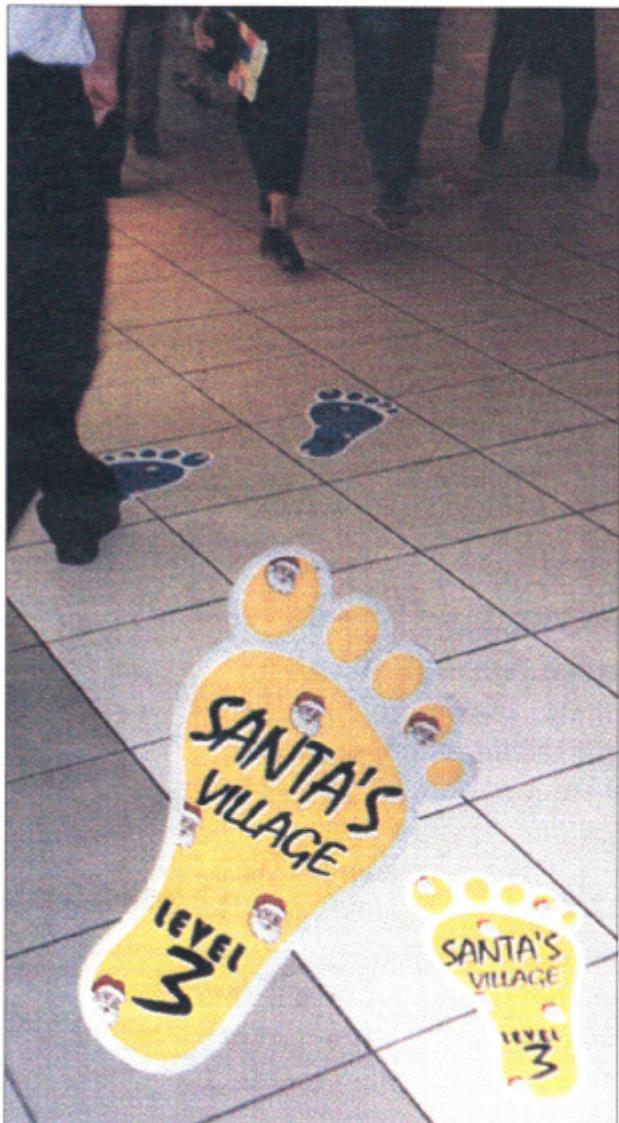


Mesmerizing Floor Graphics



The global market is at our door-step! One has to only step into a shop or supermarket to be confronted with an array of foreign products adorning the shelves. For close upon two decades the consumer market has been flooded with numerous foreign products, making it difficult for consumers to decide on what to purchase. Advertisers on the other hand have to ensure that the consumer notices their products if the products are to stand a chance of being purchased. How on earth does one succeed in grabbing the consumer's attention with so many advertisements being churned out with consumers like us in mind?

If it is a brand that we are familiar with or one for which we always go, then the others stand no chance, for brand loyalty reigns supreme. But if the consumer does not have any particular brand preference a number of factors would come into play before the customer makes that decision. Amongst these is the crucial impact of, point of sale advertising.

You have only to walk into any supermarket and more often than not, a pleasant looking girl will walk upto you in an attempt to promote a product. Usually these are sold at a discounted price in order to make it price attractive to the consumer. The Floor graphics material was imported by 3M Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., a fully owned subsidiary of 3M Inc. USA, which invented the 3M Floor Graphics System in their own laboratories.

Danglers and banners strung up at these supermarkets are yet another means of drawing the customer's attention to particular product brands. But these and other methods used in the Sri Lankan market place are so traditional that the consumer has got sort of immune to it.

It was a breath of fresh-air to witness the floor being used as the medium on which to advertise an event. The recently concluded American Trade Fair was advertised in this manner on the entrance floor to the Galadari Hotel.

When a leading advertising agency was asked about the potential of floor graphics, they had this to say, 'specially for impulse buying and merchandising, it will definitely influence the sale within the store."

Floor graphics can be used for effective point of sale advertisements. Mainly if it is located in close proximity to the product. This has become a new concept in high-impact advertising in developed countries, with good consumer response. It is also ideal for product promotions, directional advertising, product launches, special events, brand advertising, gift with purchase and even for advertising of conventions. The advertising agencies contacted were of the opinion that the full potential of floor graphics has not been fully understood as yet in Sri Lanka, specially when it comes to creating product awareness in urban markets which are subject to media clutter.

This type of advertising is 'extremely new to Sri Lanka, but a few products have been advertised in such a manner at Keells Super in Liberty Plaza. The only draw back in our local supermarkets are its narrow aisles. Unlike the broad aisles in the

west on which these graphics stand out well, the narrowness here tends to dilute the effectiveness of this powerful tool. To overcome this, creative graphics should be used with bright colors to grab a person's attention. 'Some of the promotional tools used so far in supermarket promotions have become so mundane, that this type of floor graphics will add sizzle and excitement to such promotions', says a supermarket promoter. Speaking further she said, if the maximum is to be achieved, it is best to tie up floor graphics with mass media advertising, so that it reinforces the advertisement that the consumer saw on TV, when he or she is at the point of purchase. Floor graphics make the investment on TV that much more worthwhile, making it a good support service to other types of advertising. "

This system can be applied to practically any floor surface, which includes waxed vinyl, sealed concrete, marble, terrazzo, ceramic tile and finished wood floors', says the Sales Executive of 3M Lanka. The company guarantees its safety, as extensive testing has demonstrated that 3M Floor graphics are slip resistant, which means that they can be used with confidence.

Explaining the process of the entire operation, Business Today learnt that these floor graphics are produced through a network of licensed fabricators who screen-print the images or produce them electronically. No, out of the ordinary artwork is required. Positive transparency, glossy print, floppy disks or line art work can be utilized depending on the type of printing used.

With no restrictions to its size, 3M floor graphics can be printed in any size and produced in any shape. The company warrants them for upto 6 months for slip resistance, image retention and removability.

This new tool is interesting food for thought specially to marketing and promotional personnel who are seeking new ways of promoting products and events. The company states that promotional budgets could be stretched effectively to accommodate this novel concept of floor graphics which would enhance the investment on mass media.