



Owners Turn Cars Into Moving Messages

Excerpted from *The Washington Post*

Derran Cannady gets a lot of attention when he drives his VW Beetle around San Francisco. Children wave, drivers honk, sometimes pedestrians want to talk to him at stoplights. Cannady is no celebrity, but he did become an advertising industry pioneer when he agreed to coat his car from bumper to bumper with a brush and colorful advertisement for a new satellite telephone company. Cannady's car is one of hundreds if not thousands of privately owned vehicles that have been turned into four-wheeled ads for a wide range of products including insurance companies, golf balls -- even presidential candidates.

Some people may feel a little self-conscious driving around a car that stands out so much, but not Cannady. "You have to be kind of wacky, I'm kind of wacky," said Cannady, who said he is in his late thirties. It doesn't hurt that he gets paid \$300 a month for driving the billboard on wheels, courtesy of a company that matches advertisers with willing drivers.

This mobile advertising trend got its start in California last year, but it's already gaining a foothold in the East.

Locally, Dulles-based Britches Great Outdoors has given



six of its employees the use of Beetles covered in images of the plaid fabric currently on

the shelves in the company's clothing stores. The perforated material is transparent from the inside, which allows companies to cover everything but the front windshield.

Such mobile advertising didn't really take off until 1993, when 3M developed a process to transfer images onto an adhesive vinyl that could adhere to the surface of any vehicle. Ever since, some advertising companies have been coating trucks, buses, even rail cars with ads. now account for 17 percent of the outdoor ad market, according the Outdoor Advertising Association of America.

Mobile advertising is just the latest effort by companies to stand out in a crowded marketplace. Advertising in all its forms has become inescapable. Marketing messages can be found on the bottom of golf cups, inside elevators -- even in bathroom stalls. Advertisers are really trying to break through the clutter and get into the conscience of the public.