

For most people, it is virtually impossible to go through the day without seeing advertisements. From the time we wake up and flip on the TV or check our email, we are surrounded by advertisements. They are in magazines, on buses, on billboards, online, and on... buildings, to name just a few of the places we see them throughout the day. According to a recent study, the average person is exposed to between 400 and 600 advertisements each day. This means that by the time we are 60, we will have been exposed to 9 to 13 million advertisements! In the past, advertisements were usually designed to reach people in their homes through traditional approaches, such as TV commercials and newspaper and magazine ads. However, people's viewing habits have changed dramatically in the last couple of decades. These days, people are less likely to give one form of media their full attention. For example, even if someone is watching TV, they are also often using the Internet at the same time. Advertisers need the consumer's attention in order to promote their products. But because getting this attention is harder than it used to be, advertisers have been forced to find new ways of reaching the consumer. One unconventional place advertisements are popping up is in doctors' offices. In some doctors' offices, pharmaceutical companies advertise products on everything from boxes of tissues to the paper covering the exam table. Doctors get free products, and the advertisers get the consumers' attention. Similarly, advertisements are becoming more common in schools. "Free" products such as book covers and educational posters are offered by companies so that the company can advertise on these materials. In the US, a company called Channel One One broadcasts a ten minute news program followed by two minutes of commercials each day in 350,000 schools. Because the schools show these news programs, the companies give them thousands of dollars worth of much needed audiovisual equipment. Advertisers have found that one of the best ways to get consumer attention is to place ads in unusual places. So, ads are popping up in all kinds of unexpected places like pizza boxes, grocery carts, air sickness bags on airplanes, and even on pieces of food like bananas and apples. A television network recently imprinted its logo on 35 million eggs. They called the approach "egg-vertisements." One of the strangest developments in advertising has been people selling advertising space on themselves! This mini-trend began in 2006 when a man offered his face for advertising to the highest bidder on eBay. A pharmaceutical company won the spot, paying the man \$37,375 to place a temporary sticker on his forehead to advertise one of their products. He may have been the first to enter an unusual exchange, but he was not the last.