

Frequently Asked Questions

After years working with customers on six continents (none from Antarctica yet), Spark has fielded more questions about integrating advertising and mobility than we can count. Here is a list of common questions that our customers have asked. Feel free to call and discuss any of these questions or try out a new one on us.

Doing business with Spark

About Spark

Spark has been the leading supplier of custom mobile advertising solutions since 2002. The Spark team has delivered mobile advertising truck bodies and displays in hundreds of locations in the US and abroad.

For many years, Spark manufactured custom truck bodies with integrated multi-image advertising systems in partnership with leading truck body manufacturers. Spark innovators received patents for technology that advanced advertising displays beyond the traditional. Recent advances in Spark technology allowed the company to develop the innovative ScrollBox multi-image scrolling advertising systems, which can be installed on almost any commercial truck, bus, or trailer.

Today, Spark offers the widest range of mobile advertising products available anywhere.

Scrolling System Questions

How many scrolling posters can each Spark system display?

Spark offers different scrolling mechanisms depending on the model. All scrolling systems can hold between 6 and 10 posters per display unit. Most customers prefer to install between 3 and 6 posters per side.

The standard printing media is backlit film. It is also possible to print ads on paper or vinyl, but those types of media are not recommended.

How are the posters installed?

Posters zip together using a non-proprietary heavy-duty plastic zipper system. The first and last poster on a roll are zipped to a special leader strip, which is securely attached to the motor-driven rollers.

Spark's ScrollBox systems are accessed from the outside. Ads are installed while standing next to the system, which offers the benefit of not having to unload any cargo just to change an ad.

How are the ads illuminated?

Spark has continuously advanced the state of the art in mobile advertising lighting systems. The company was the first to offer 12V DC fluorescent lighting, and was the first to use high-output

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lighting. For 2008, Spark introduced a patent-pending LED backlighting panel, which consumes less power than any other mobile advertising lighting system, yet offers very bright even backlighting. The brilliance and vivid nighttime appearance causes many viewers to mistake the systems for big-screen plasma TVs.

Spark's current LED backlighting offers the best combination of brilliant illumination with low power consumption.

What kind of computer is used to control the scrolling system?

All Spark scrolling systems incorporate a solid state logic board, but there is no computer needed to program or operate any of the Spark systems. A handheld USB-connected controller is provided to adjust the timing for each scrolling poster.

How are the posters affected by extreme heat or cold?

All of Spark's scrolling display systems are designed for outdoor use and operate in all climate conditions.

Customer Support

Tell me about the warranty.

Electronics and scrolling system components are covered by a one-year parts-only warranty. The warranty covers parts and labor to repair defects in workmanship and failed components. Wear items, items added by the owner, and items not properly maintained are not covered.

How is warranty service obtained?

Requests for warranty service are required in writing, preferably by email.

Are spare parts available?

Yes.

Is training provided?

Each system comes with a comprehensive users guide. On site training is not included in the purchase price, but is available. The systems are designed to be easily understood, long lasting, and reliable.

Printing & designing ads

How are the ads printed?

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The scrolling posters are printed on paper, vinyl, or film. None of the Spark systems require proprietary media, and you are never required to purchase your printing or supplies from Spark, although those services are available at very attractive rates.

What is the cost to produce an ad ?

Generally, high quality printing on backlit film, with a compatible zipper system costs between \$5 - \$7 per square foot, delivered.

The price never includes the cost of professional creative design, which is available separately. If you do not have a relationship with a local graphic designer, Spark can introduce you to talented artists who will design your ads on a freelance basis. Typical cost is around \$150 - \$200 per ad for the creative design work.

Can I design the ads myself ?

Of course. Ads are usually created with common graphics software applications such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.

Business & operations issues

What is the best way to use the advertising systems ?

Most Spark customers purchase the display systems to promote their existing business or services. Many owners rent at least half the ad space to their best clients or sell advertising to other local businesses.

There are many strategies that can help Spark truck owners turn their trucks into profit centers for their business. Refer to the Spark blog section of this web site for helpful information.

I want to start a mobile advertising company. Which business model should I follow?

If you intend to start a mobile advertising business, you'll find there are at least four different business models that are effective and can generate sizable revenue. The exact same four models can also lead to crushing financial loss. The Spark blog offers reviews and commentary on this topic.

Does Spark offer training, consulting, or seminars?

Yes. Call for details.

Why would I want a GPS system?

If you do not intend to sell any of the ad space on your marketing truck, you do not need a GPS system.

If ad sales are a major component of your plan, you should consider adding a GPS to guarantee proof of performance for your advertising clients. The GPS is a black box, hidden somewhere in

the truck that tracks all of the vehicle's activity. Most GPS units can log the vehicle's location and speed every few minutes and present that information visually through a web-based interface. The GPS is not an on-board navigation system and does not have a screen.

It's important to note that GPS systems typically use a cellular telephone network to report their data to you. Spark has no knowledge of which cellular network offers the best coverage in your city, and if you purchase your GPS unit as a Spark-installed option, you may discover that it does not work well in your city, or may have a software interface that you are not comfortable working with.

A better option is for you to research which GPS system has the combination of features, coverage, and pricing that best matches your needs. The GPS service providers often offer free installation at your location.

Advertising sales concerns

What do other truck owners charge for their ad space?

The advertising rates vary widely.

Some owners charge over \$1000 per week for each individual ad (on just one side). Others give the space away as an incentive for their best clients in another business. The overall range of prices is from \$50 per week for a single ad to over \$1000 for the same space. It is highly dependent on the specific program that you offer the advertiser, the exposure that you can deliver and the sales ability of the person selling the advertising. Operating in a small city does not necessarily assure lower rates than larger markets.

Many mobile advertising truck owners report that they charge between \$400 - \$600 per week for a single ad face (on only one side). This is typically for owners that do not display more than three ads per side at any given time.

Will Spark help me sell ad space?

No. If you are not eager to sell the advertising space yourself, look into building a relationship with agencies that specialize in brokering advertising on fleet vehicles. Media buying services and local advertising agencies may not be as helpful as you would hope. You will have a very limited amount of advertising space to sell, which may not make it worthwhile for agencies to recommend your ad space to their best clients.

As a rule, if you seek to build a mobile advertising business, you must be capable of selling the ad space yourself.
