

NEW YORK POST

September 13, 2004

Hubcap-ital plan for TLC

Ads could adorn taxi wheels

EXCLUSIVE

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Transit Reporter

Yellow cabs could soon be reinventing the wheel.

The city is looking into a plan to install Frisbee-like discs that would fit over a taxicab's wheels as part of a program to sell ads on hubcaps. The Post has learned.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission has been in talks with Los Angeles-based AdFleet over the past eight months to discuss bringing the 16-inch steel discs to cabs.

"Advertisers are always looking for new places to sell their products, and this is one place people will remember," said Ian Klassen, president of AdFleet. "We want to help make an ad memorable."

Klassen said the discs are being used by taxis in Los Angeles and Toronto, and he hopes to add the Big Apple to the roster of cities that use the wheel covers.

"These ads have been tested in other markets, and they would work well in New York," Klassen said. "We hope that it's not before long we can be in New York."

TLC spokesman Allan Fromberg said the program is under consideration.

"It's been presented, and

Hits and misses

Devices that have succeeded and failed in taxis over the years:



Latest taxi revenue idea: ads on hubcaps.

Successes:

- 1985: Electronic meters
- 1999: Digital billboards
- 2000: Credit-card payment

Failures:

- 1997: Celebrity voice seat-belt reminders
- 2000: Internet access
- 2002: TV screens

it's not up front in the agency's priorities at this time," he said.

Asked who would benefit from the revenue generated from the ads, Fromberg said, "That's something that we are looking at."

For example, rooftop advertising on cabs is currently run by Clear Channel Communications, which pays the city \$50 for each car.

The revenue generated from the ads goes to the medallion owner. In some cases, a driver that leases a cab also shares in the profit.

Klassen said he has met with TLC Commissioner Matthew Daus, Transportation Commissioner Iris

Weinshall and other city reps who "appeared interested" in the hubcap ads.

The wheel covers were rolled out in Los Angeles two months ago with ads that featured the Los Angeles Dodgers, Virgin Cola and Taco Bell.

AdFleet is also working on a plan to introduce 23-inch discs that can be put on buses, Klassen said.

The cap covers are affixed to wheel's lug nuts and remain stationary as the wheels roll and are readable at high speeds.

"We want pedestrians to see it and say, 'Wow, look at that,'" he said.

**Taxi complaints
soar / Page 27**