With the continuing evolution of media consumption, it has become increasingly challenging for an advertiser to both capture and hold an audience’s attention, says advertising entrepreneur Patrick Walsh. “A decade or two ago, media was relatively consolidated; advertisers knew they could reach a significant segment of their targeted audience via newspapers and television commercials, which almost seems quaint today,” he says. “We live in what academics call the Age of Choice, where reaching a broad audience and funneling its attention to a business has become trickier than ever.”

In the past, guerilla marketing — the unconventional and creative use of traditional marketing tools like stickers, print ads, and billboards — has been an effective means of jolting public awareness. Today, however, innovation in guerilla marketing techniques is essential. From flash mobs to viral marketing campaigns, successful advertising requires new twists and surprising uses of old tools and strategies.

Walsh shares some of the latest cutting-edge ideas, which — just like the “Mad Men” campaigns of old — are as much art as advertising.

**Aerial messages:** Creativity has revived a very old form of advertising: skywriting and sky banners. The trick today, Walsh says, is to surprise and delight the audience, so all people who see the display feel like they’re getting a private show. Walsh’s company, AirSign Inc., (www.airsign.com), recently executed a showstopper at this year’s South by Southwest — a venue that has become a hub for the next big thing. AirSign worked with artist ISHKY to pull off a media stunt on the eve of Pi Day, March 14, with five synchronized aircraft spelling out the first few hundred digits in pi’s infinite sequence. The air signage worked, earning widespread media attention, and under the Twitter handle #PiInTheSky, became the top trending topic.

**Moss art:** In case you haven’t noticed, green — both the idea and the color — has become a prevalent theme in today’s advertising culture. Taking green to the next level, DIY-ers and small-business owners have put to use a way of creating signage with moss. It’s the perfect match for farmers and retailers of organic products. After meticulously combining the necessary recipe, including clumps of moss, buttermilk, water, sugar, and corn syrup, small business owners simply paint the blended material onto a wall. After waiting several days to a few weeks and spraying the painted area with water, moss lettering appears.

**Light projection advertising:** Light projection campaigns, driven by 3D-Mapping, CGI, and the wealth of online resources available today, enable interactive projections not only capture the eye, but also engage a potential consumer’s attention.

“From flash mobs to viral marketing campaigns, successful advertising requires new twists and surprising uses of old tools and strategies.”

Patrick Walsh is the CEO of AirSign Inc., (www.airsign.com), which, through the use of giant full-color airplane and helicopter banners, skywriting, digital night signs, and blimps, produces show-stopping campaigns. The company recently received global recognition for its artistic skywriting display of several hundred pi characters over the 2014 South by Southwest festival. Walsh is a veteran entrepreneur.