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5 Types of Signage No Retailer Can Afford to Ignore

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by [Guest Contributor](#) [Merchandising & Store Layout](#)May 10, 2018 6 minute read [Leave a comment](#)

If you want to operate a successful retail business that attracts customers and drives sales, then you need to get noticed, and that usually starts with signage.

Quality signage is an easy and effective way to drive foot traffic and communicate with your customers when designing your store. However, if done incorrectly, signage can cause overstimulation and even confusion. Signage in your brick-and-mortar business is just as important as your website design, and retail signage shouldn't be an afterthought.

Why do signs play such an important role in retail?

Just as your ecommerce store's sales copy should be concise and attention-grabbing, your in-store signage should be clear and useful.

Consider signs your silent but highest-selling salespeople. Signage helps your customers navigate your shop without making it necessary to ask sales staff basic questions.

Much like you set standards for an employee's appearance and expectations for their conduct, the color, visibility, messaging, and quality of your signage also require a certain amount of development and consideration. Also like employees, signs can be given on-the-job tasks, ranging from sales information and wayfinding to general product information and usage.

With that in mind, here are some general best practices you'll want to consider when thinking about store layout and signage, followed by five types of signs you won't be able to do without.

Retail Signage Best Practices

No matter what kinds of signs you decide to include in your retail store, consider these best practices:

- **Be specific:** A customized sign can give you just the right message in just the right place — a concept known as narrowcasting. When designing a sign, include specific details, such as location-specific instructions and relevant product information.
- **Keep it simple:** Your sign's message needs to be clear, but one with too much information is often ignored. Use the five-second rule: If you can convey the main themes of the sign in less than five seconds, it passes muster. If it takes longer, shorten your message or use a series of signs instead of just one.
- **Write in headline text:** This should help in your mission to be concise and simple all at once. Understand the first principle of print journalism: the punch line matters. Can you simplify your text? Can you take out prepositions and extra words? Effective custom signs use a message hierarchy: headline, explanatory text, and finally, a call to action.
- **Create a call to action:** Signs are advertisements, and as any good advertiser knows, you need to get the customer to do something; that's the call to action. An effective sign needs to have a simple goal.

This brings us to the five most crucial types of retail signage you should consider for your brick-and-mortar store:

1. Outdoor Signage



Image: [Corona Del Mar Today](#)

Outdoor signage is arguably the most important kind in physical retail because it's what gets customers in the door — the largest hurdle to beginning a relationship with a potential customer. Exterior signage is the first impression customers have of your business.

These signs need to do more than simply announce who you are; they need to draw in customers and make them want something from you. Effective signage may encourage people who have passed your store many times before to finally give it a chance and cross your threshold.

Outdoor signage can take the form of sidewalk signs, entrance signs, awnings, or window signs. Place signage where it is visible to as much walk-by and drive-by traffic as possible.

Outdoor signage, in particular, should be branded effectively to draw the customer in and help to convey the experience that they can expect inside the establishment.

2. Informational Signage



Image: [Pinterest](#)

Informational signage may also be known as departmental, directional, organizational, or wayfinding signage. These signs help the customer navigate your space more easily. The easier it is for a customer to find what they came in for, the more likely they are to rely on that convenience in the future.

Directional signage is self-explanatory: it tells customers where to go. All types of informational signage need to be concise and easy to read so that clients

can understand the message with just a split-second glance. Large, bold fonts in highly-visible color schemes best accomplish this goal.

Once you start putting up informational signage, it becomes clear to you if your store is arranged in an orderly fashion with some rhyme or reason behind decision-making. Not only does systematicity benefit your customers, but it also makes your internal structure more organized.

3. Persuasive Signage

Persuasive signage influences consumer behavior through convincing language or attractive imagery. These signs can advertise a particular product or promotion. Persuasive signs or displays can influence customer flow and improve interactivity with otherwise unnoticed products. Signs that showcase a particular type of product offer an opportunity for retailers to communicate specific details of new, seasonal, or featured items.

Image: [Pinterest](#)

Using persuasive signage allows brands to more effectively communicate with customers. These displays can turn an otherwise ordinary product into a popular “hidden gem.” Effective persuasive messaging can also create a higher perceived value for products, increase brand awareness, and improve retail sales.

Remember: While persuasive sales signs should be eye-catching and witty, they are not the main attraction. The most effective signs draw the customers to the product.

4. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Compliant Signage

Making customers feel welcome means all customers. Offering accessibility by way of parking, entrances/exits, restrooms, cashier stations, fitting rooms, and elevators will make disabled patrons' experience more comfortable and enjoyable. If your location offers accessible features but doesn't make them known, you're doing your customers a serious disservice.

If your store uses a portable ramp with a doorbell or intercom, you will need to install an appropriate sign letting customers know they can request an employee to bring the ramp to the door. If your store's accessible entrance is not the same as the main entryway, a sign at the main entrance must indicate where to find the accessible entrance.

Any permanent interior signs indicating bathrooms, elevators, entrances, and exits also have to include Braille and tactile characters in legible fonts and contrasting colors, and they must be mounted at specific heights (typically 40 to 60 inches from the ground) for consistency and access.

5. Mats

You may be surprised that mats can also be used as signs, but they're actually the most versatile signage of all. Mats serve not only safety and cleanliness needs, but also promotional and informational purposes.

Image: [Pinterest](#)

You may choose to use mats for branding purposes, or feature something as simple as your company's logo. Mats can be used for directional wayfinding within the store, in places where hanging signage is not as viable, or to lead the customer to a sale product. Mats also keep stores cleaner during inclement weather.

Lastly, mats ease the stress employees impose on their bodies by standing for long periods of time. Ergonomic, cushioned mats help workers feel rejuvenated as if their shift just started.

Moving Forward With Your Own Signage

When investing in any of these five signage types, try to analyze them with fresh eyes. Imagine entering your store as a new customer. Be honest with yourself about what's clear and what may be perplexing.

Establish a consistent brand and use it across your business, from outdoor signage to your website. If you managed to do just that, you'll be well on your way to leveraging signage to your retail advantage and cashing in while you're at it.

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chameleon print • 5 years ago

I agree that signages are very important in communicating a costumer. You have to make it concise as well as catchy to the words that might give the costumer the interest.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Brooklyn Signs • 5 years ago

Great Job! you have described this post really well. I can definitely understand the importance of all signs you mentioned above. I have ordered an outdoor signage from [Sign NY](#). Let see how it will look like.

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Hi, may you read this artical, i think that's sound great

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Great, your website is out standing. Yet nobody can refuse to the importance of the signage. Well done! you presented a great

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