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Why signage is important for your business

May 22, 2019 by Contributed Post

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Signage is such a ubiquitous part of our world that we scarcely ever consciously notice it, but it plays a vitally important role in the ecosystem of business – and a company without signage might be missing important opportunities for branding, customer acquisition, and more.



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A **survey** conducted by FedEx in 2012 found that almost eight out of ten (76%) consumers will enter a shop they've never visited before on the strength of the signage. Not only that, but 52% of those polled said they would be reluctant to enter a shop that had a poor-quality sign, and 60% reported that they would be put off from an establishment that featured no signage at all. The message is clear: signs make a difference.

Especially for a newly-established business, signage is crucial for communicating to the world what your company is and what it offers. An unmarked retail outlet might sell anything from electronics to shoes or pet food – and how would the public know without being told?

In terms of branding, signage conveys the personality and character of your business. The heavy metallic serif lettering of a bank or law firm's signage would be inappropriate for a doughnut shop, and vice versa. Therefore, we might say that *no signage* can also imply *no personality*.

By not seeming to communicate or stand for anything, your business can come across as a bit of an uninspiring blank slate. Should customers associate you with trustworthy, discreet formality – or relaxed and playful leisure?





Image: public domain

Of course, in today's world signage is *everywhere*. In order to have any hope of competing for the attention of the public, you're going to need to get some of your own – or your business may just go unnoticed.

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The design of your signage can speak volumes about the products, services and values of your business. By carefully identifying key things to communicate and finding good ways to express them visually, you can commission signage that always puts your company's best foot forward.

Typography, colours, imagery, sizing and many other factors can have an effect on the way your business is perceived by visitors. A large, colourful sign might invoke a friendly and sunny customer experience, whilst a darker sign with formal typography could imply a respectable and professional service.

Even the materials used for the sign can have an effect on the perception of your business – a tastefully backlit sign with brushed stainless steel lettering might convey an old-school elegance and good reputation for a bank or a hotel, or a three-dimensional sign colourfully constructed from acrylic might communicate a friendly atmosphere for a sandwich shop or bowling alley.

A good designer can work with you to help you identify the visual equivalents of your company's values, helping potential customers to understand at a glance what you offer and what your business is all about.

The importance of functional signage

Signage, of course, isn't necessarily limited to the front entrance of your building and might fulfil other functions such as navigation or safety communications inside the premises.



In addition, safety signage is often a legal requirement. Even if your business isn't related to an obviously hazardous environment such as a building site or a professional kitchen, you'll probably still need to observe safety legislation with signage for:

- Trip hazards (possibly in the form of "mind the step" signs)
- Low ceilings (in the form of "mind your head" signs)
- Fire safety – the locations of fire extinguishers and emergency exits
- Non-drinking water (as might be found in the bathrooms)
- Electricity danger signs
- Locations where staff can find first aid kits

You might also use signage to communicate rules and guidelines for visitors to observe, such as signs disallowing smoking or dogs.

Internal signage for branding

The signage found within your business premises can, of course, be used to supplement the branding established by the external signage.

It's important to offer a consistent experience to your customers and provide continuity with your branding throughout the entire process of their dealings with you. Delicately soft branding at the front door with gentle colours and a cursive font won't sit well with your visitors if they encounter a completely different aesthetic inside – such as a dark and moody environment with neon lighting.

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other large sign depicting an exotic holiday destination – inspiring both customers and employees alike to imagine the possibilities offered by the company.



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Internal signage and imagery can also be used to prime visitors to think about your business in a certain way. In the image above, Burger King have installed signage designed to emphasise the potential of their eatery as the perfect venue for young adults to get together, creating an association between the business and good times shared with friends. Note that this signage doesn't illustrate any particular qualities of the actual food sold by the business, and exists instead to depict the meal as the focal point of an enjoyable gathering.

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By getting all of your signage on point – from exercises in design and branding to legal and safety box-ticking – you can make certain that your company is well-presented and that your customers are reassured of your professionalism from start to finish.

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About the Author

Medash Signs has designed and produced signage for over forty years, providing [businesssigns in Kent](#) and throughout the UK – offering a wide variety of signage types for a broad mix of businesses across the country.

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