

What's Your Signage?

Signs Can Help Your Business Succeed

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Signs are so commonplace that their importance to the profitability of a business is often taken for granted. As an entrepreneur, though, you should know that your sign can be integral to your bottom line. In fact, the U.S. Small Business Administration says that signage is the least expensive, yet most effective form of advertising available. It can be responsible for half of your customer—that's right, 50%. If done right, a sign is an economical way to get out your message.

The Ideal Business Sign

In terms of appearance, a business sign should be conspicuous and compelling to viewers, while communicating a message quickly and concisely. When choosing a sign, keep these factors in mind:

Size and placement. Your sign must be of sufficient size and height so that it is not masked or obstructed by intervening traffic or other objects in the visual field.

Legibility. Your sign must display content that is easily read or recognized. A common mistake is trying to squeeze too many words or graphics onto a particular sign. Lettering must be legible, and the message should be limited to the minimum number of words necessary to identify the type of establishment.

Color Contrast. In order for your sign's message to stand out from its background, it is necessary to consider color contrast. In general, the sharper the contrast between the colors of letters, graphics, and the background, the better the sign's visibility.

Find the Right Sign Company

You need to find a reputable, licensed sign company that can offer a variety of design options. A good sign company will also be able to provide guidance on sign codes in your area and recommend the right sign for your business. To find a company in your area, visit the International Sign Association's membership directory at www.signs.org.

Know Your Legal Rights

Overly strict sign codes hamper the ability of businesses to advertise effectively. It is crucial that you check with your local city or township building department to determine what types and sizes of signs are permitted by the local sign code.

If compliance with the city's code leaves you with an ineffective sign, it is a good idea to know your legal rights. Based on a number of U.S. Supreme Court decisions, your sign is protected by the constitutional right to free speech and can only be limited in certain circumstances.

For additional information on choosing effective signage, visit the following sources:

www.uschamber.com/signs

www.whatsyoursignage.com

www.sba.gov