

## BRANDING A SITE

The value on-premise signage brings to businesses of all sizes



On-premise signage communicates with potential (and current) customers about how to get to your business and the type of products or services you offer.

Ideally, your signs will also serve to help establish or strengthen a consistent business brand or image. For small and medium-size businesses, on-premise signage will be the primary medium for branding, whereas for larger businesses it may be but one element in a multi-media strategy that could involve off-premise signs (e.g., billboards) as well as advertising, direct mail, emails, event marketing, social media, websites or more.

Of course, new technology is expanding the sign choices available to you when communicating to shoppers. For example, digital signage and video displays are becoming increasingly common. Not only do they enable businesses to change messages quickly and display them in an eye-catching manner—they are also ideal for businesses whose image or brand requires that they be perceived as having products or services that are on the cutting edge of their industry.

### A major study confirms the importance of site branding

Research prepared for the Signage Foundation and conducted by the Economic Center at the University of Cincinnati measured the value of signage and site branding by business owners. The researchers found:

- Approximately 60 percent of businesses reported that changing the design or enhancing the visibility of their signage had a positive impact on sales, number of transactions and profits. *The average increase?* About 10 percent.
- Signage that helps customers find their location was the most important purpose for respondents.
- Nearly four of 10 large companies with multiple locations pointed to branding/image as the most important purpose of effective signage, while smaller firms and single establishments perceived signs to be most important for making their business stand out and for helping customers find their location.
- Both consumers and companies cited legibility as the most important characteristic of signs.
- Not surprisingly, bigger firms tend to have more types of signs: While most single establishments and small firms have either wall signs or pole signs, most large companies have both.
- Business logos and the size and location of their signage were more important for companies with several locations, for whom branding is presumably more important than with single-establishment companies.
- One-third of shoppers associate a sign's quality with a store's quality or the quality of the products or services it sells.
- The impact of on-premise signage is dependent on how well its visual elements interact with and complement the marketing and branding strategies of the business.
- Nearly half of American consumers have driven past a desired business without finding it because of insufficient signage.

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## More key findings from the on-premise signage research

- **Consistency is key:** On-premise signage is a powerful medium for commercial communications. When used with other media, it's often the key element in developing and maintaining a business brand. The more consistent the brand communications, the greater the likelihood that both prospects and current customers will associate the brand with their expectations for price, products or services at specific locations.
- **Placement is critical:** Signage that's optimally positioned is especially important for generating impulse sales. While some goods and services are purchased on the basis of careful consideration, many others are spur-of-the-moment purchases. And for many retailers, impulse sales generate a significant percentage of revenue. The University of Cincinnati research cites another study that found that 68 percent of purchases during long shopping trips were not planned, with shorter trips resulting in 54 percent of purchases being unplanned.



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