

AMAZING SIGN DESIGN

I have the simplest of tastes. I'm always satisfied with the best. - Oscar Wilde

Quality sign design is a critical component of advertising your business, but all too often we overlook aesthetics simply for the sake of "getting the message out." However, it's important to remember that like any form of advertising, the way the advertising message is presented is as important as the message itself. You may serve the best burger in town or provide the best service in a particular area, but if your signage doesn't convey this information, people will not walk in the door.

There are several factors to consider when getting a sign produced. First is readability, second is messaging and third is design. But wait, isn't this all about the importance of design? Yes, but first you have to address the first two before you get to making the sign "look pretty."

READABILITY Especially pertaining to readability, a key issue is size. You can have a sign that has great messaging and great design, but it has to be readable at a distance. Think about where your business is located, what other businesses are nearby (and what their signs look like) as well as any obstacles that might block the view of your sign. Simply put, go outside and look around. Take some pictures of your block so you have that information handy when you visit your sign shop. Perhaps in your location a sign that hangs perpendicular from the face of the building makes sense. Perhaps something with additional lighting on it does. Take time at the beginning of the process to answer these basic questions and the rest of the process will go smoothly.



A fine example of a unique and interesting sign design and installation.

MESSAGING Messaging, simply put, is telling people what your business does. Think of it as a two to three second business card. That is to say, you have two to three seconds to convey what your business is, what it does and what sets you apart from the competition. You may have a great business name, but people need to know what you do. Don't be shy about putting "The Best Italian Food in Lansing" on your sign – that is, unless you serve Mexican food!

DESIGN Once you have determined what your sign is going to say and how you are going to position it on the facade of your building, we get to the design. Think about different sign-making techniques and determine what works well for your type of business. This is an area where your sign company can have excellent advice. Some of the methods for sign production are: vinyl applied to a metal or wood base, dimensional lettering, metal and sandblasted wood. Of course, like anything else, costs will vary depending on technique and degree of complexity.

However, while it's common to use the least expensive method to get your signage created, it may not be the best method, especially for your particular business. Take a look at the signage in the image above. This business is using a sandblasted sign, along with a decorative element on the corner of their building. In conjunction with decorative painting, this is a sign that reaches out and grabs your attention! If this sign had been made with printed vinyl, it would have looked nice, but it would not have the same impact as it currently does.

Ultimately, you have to think about the various ways you can have your sign produced, have it readable and have it be creative, all the while representing your business and its brand in the best possible way, and of course, all the while staying within your budget.

With a little planning and determination, even inexpensive signs can have high impact, provided the design is excellent and well thought out. On the next page are some samples of dynamic, interesting signs, as well as some samples of signs that miss the mark. Hopefully these will give you some ideas as to how you want to get your sign produced and possibly miss some of the pitfalls in the process.

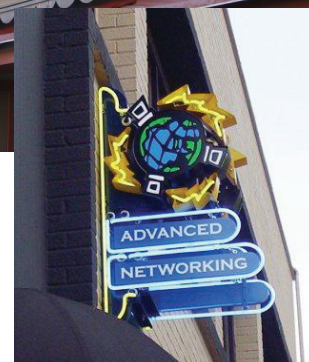
Good luck!

AMAZING SIGN DESIGN

GREAT DESIGNS



Signs here employ a variety of production methods. They include sandblasted wood, dimensional lettering, applied vinyl, metal and neon. Creative materials use means you can be dynamic without breaking the bank.



AMAZING SIGN DESIGN

SIGNS THAT NEED HELP

The signs here illustrate a few of the common problems that can befall you. We have an example – the *Palette* sign – that while the installation is interesting, the sign is hard to read (what is that little oval on there?) The other examples have issues that range from too much information, simply poor execution, or they are just plain boring! Just because your business is to store peanuts and cotton doesn't mean you can't be dynamic with your sign! Or, if you have kids, do you want to leave your child at a "child care facility" (how sterile!) or someplace else that has a fun message about what they do or what your child will experience on a daily basis? The message is critical, like in any other form of advertising. If you are not excited about your sign design and its messaging, no one else will be.

