

THE PROCESS OF SIGNAGE: Working with your provider from inspiration to installation

Unless your business needs signs with standard messaging (e.g., “No Trespassing”) that can be picked up at your local hardware store, creating custom signage for your location or special event will likely involve working with a professional sign maker.

Before calling a sign maker to begin the process, think about what you’d like your new signage to do (promote, inform, direct or alert) and which audience you’d like to address (in-store shoppers, office visitors, passing motorists or event attendees). Also consider where you’d like to mount, suspend, post or erect your signage.

In addition, you’ll want to have a firm idea of your budget and proposed timing.



Choosing a signage provider

With answers to these questions in mind, you’re now ready to seek professional assistance. Ask around for some recommendations, perhaps from a neighboring business owner whose signage you admire. Check the internet too; many business directory listings include user reviews.

Once you’ve narrowed your search to one or two businesses, don’t be reluctant to ask for references. After all, your new signage will not only represent a financial investment — it will represent your company or organization, regardless of if it’s used temporarily for an event or much longer!

While not rocket science, the creation of signage involves a process that, if executed professionally, will lead to a solution you can be proud of. Here are the steps you’re likely to encounter while working with your selected signage provider.

Assessing and measuring the proposed site

Visit the location of your planned signage with a representative of your chosen company. In addition to measuring the site, they’ll evaluate sight lines, competing signage, mounting challenges and electricity sources, if illumination is desired.

Your rep should also apply this rule of thumb: One inch of letter height provides 10 feet of readability with the best impact. For example, if you wish your sign to be readable from 40 feet away to motorists, mall walkers or trade show visitors, the letters will need to be four inches tall (at minimum).

Selecting your signage type and approving its design

The budget, location and objectives for your signage will help determine its type, which will help define the design options available to you. Does your application call for a banner, post-and-panel sign, LED (light-emitting diode) sign, time-and-temperature display, monument sign or something else entirely?

Once the type of sign is determined, your sign maker should create several concepts for your review, refinement and final approval — considering not only size and visibility but also font, colors, size, shape and materials. They should also be sure the concepts adhere to your brand standards.

Obtaining a municipal signage permit

While indoor and temporary signage such as window graphics are usually exempt from permitting, most cities and many landlords will expect your permanent signage to meet codes for size, placement and more. You’ll pay a fee and submit your design to them for review to gain the permit(s) necessary to proceed.

Most reputable sign companies wouldn’t dream of proceeding without a permit, and you shouldn’t either. Fines for unpermitted signage — which can be substantial — are often assessed each day a non-compliant sign remains in place. And, should you decline to take it down, many cities are empowered to do so themselves — and send you the bill!

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Installing your brand-new signage

While mounting window clings, banners, aluminum signs, posters and many others are well within the skillset of do-it-yourselfers, many other types are best installed by professionals.

You benefit from the trained eye and experience of those who are well-practiced in installations. Many, of course,

are equipped with the right tools and equipment such as ladders, scaffolding or even bucket trucks. Electricians may be needed to connect wiring if an illuminated sign is going up. What's more, make sure to ask if their team is fully insured.



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