

Best Practices for Effective Retail Signage

BY MAUREEN GUMBERT

Signage and graphics will always have a place in retail. As their uses become more judicious, understanding best practices is more important than ever.

Study after study shows that retail signage is highly effective at influencing and driving sales, and that shoppers remember signage as part of the shopping experience. Whether for branding, information, navigation, or promotion, signage plays a vital role in the retail environment. Here are some best practices for designing and displaying retail signage effectively.

Outdoor Signage

Outdoor signage is critical to brick-and-mortar retail, because it gets shoppers in the door. Exterior signage is the first impression customers have of your business, who you are, and what they can expect when they do enter your store.

Outdoor signage may include a pylon, sidewalk or yard signs, parking signs, entrance signs, or window signs. Place signage in highly visible areas to attract both walk-by and drive-by traffic. Effective signage may get the attention of people who have passed your store many times.

Informational Signage

Also known as departmental, directional, or wayfinding signage, informational signs are critical to providing a pleasant shopping experience. They help the customer navigate your

space more easily. The easier it is for a customer to find what she came in for, the more likely she is to return.

Directional signage tells customers where to go while adding to the look and feel of the store. Department signs should have a similar appearance so that shoppers begin to recognize and look for these signs to help them navigate the store. Strategically place the signage to subconsciously influence flow and guide shoppers to areas where you want them to shop.

Branded Signage and Graphics

Use signage to tell your story and reinforce the store's overall branding. It's important today for

retailers to be transparent and to focus their marketing efforts on the local community and demographics with their choices of lifestyle images and murals. Timeline graphics and photos that communicate the history and mission of the company help customers identify with the store brand.



Outdoor signage: backlit logo sign features rope and twine



Branded signage and graphics: logo, catchphrases, and company history timeline

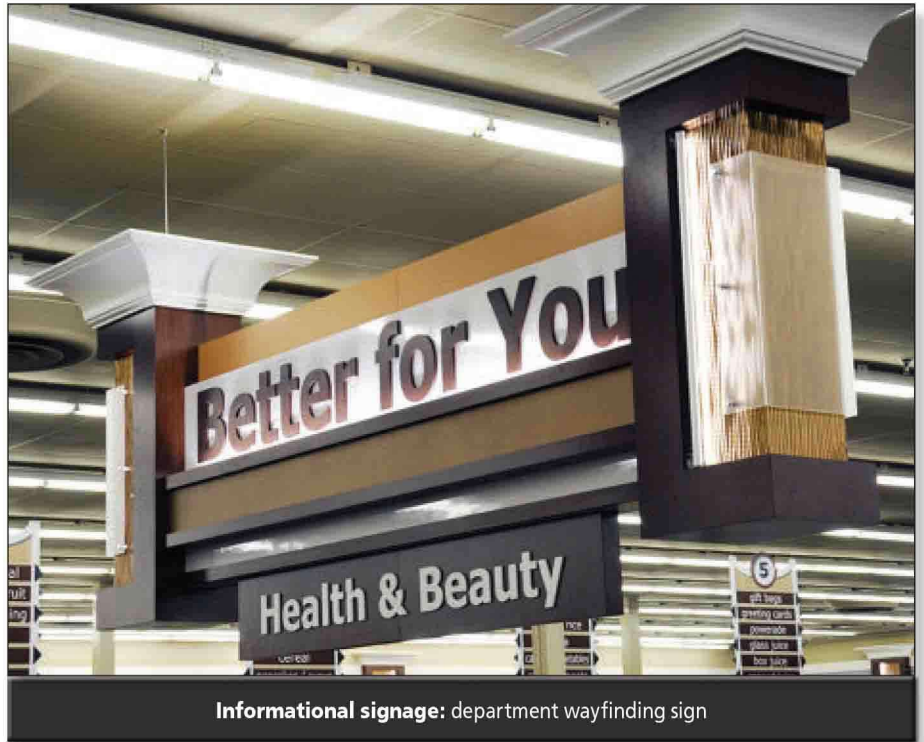


Promotional P-O-P signage:
EAS security wraps

Position branded signage in a variety of store locations for reinforcement. “Welcome” and “Thank You for Shopping” signs are a nice touch.

Promotional P-O-P Signage

Promotional point-of-purchase signage can advertise a featured promotion, product, or service throughout the store. P-O-P displays persuade shoppers and



Informational signage: department wayfinding sign

drive sales at the store level. One in six purchases are made when a P-O-P display is present in the store, and 16% of unplanned purchases were driven by a display the shopper saw while shopping, according to a 2014 study by Shop!.

P-O-P signage uses persuasive messaging and compelling graphics to influence purchase behavior. It can be used in areas such as the store entrance, the aisles, customer service areas, and store windows. Forms include aisle violators, shelf talkers, channel strips, floor graphics, ceiling danglers, end-caps, posters, counter signs, window graphics, banners, and more. Make sure any temporary signage is easy to change.

Signage Design

The following best practices apply to signage across the board:

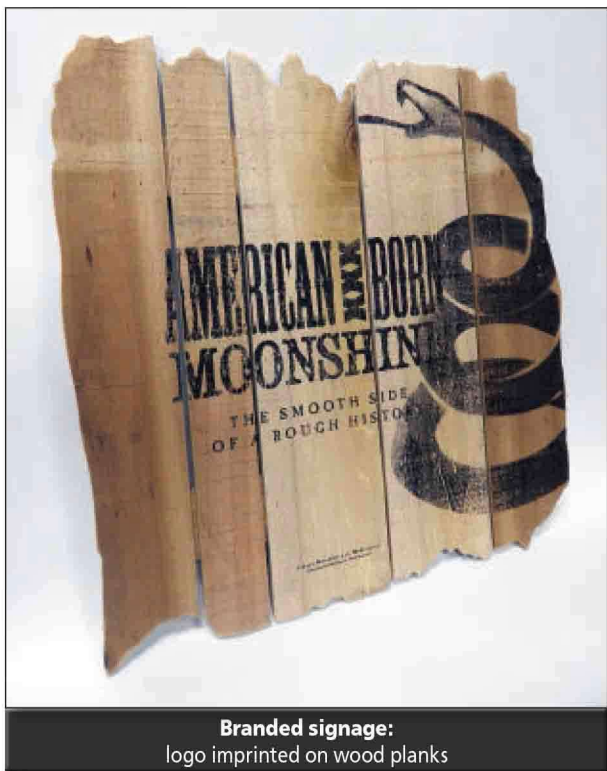
Be specific: Include details about a service, product, or promotion—a practice known as narrowcasting.

Be clear and concise: If customers cannot read your sign in less than five seconds, they will ignore it. Informational signs in particular should include large, bold fonts in highly visible color schemes.

Write in headline text: Effective signage uses a message hierarchy: headline, explanatory text, and call to action. Keep it simple, and omit any unnecessary words.

Include a call to action: Signs are advertisements with a simple goal of getting the customer to do or feel something. Tell them what you want them to do.

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Branded signage:
logo imprinted on wood planks