



THE SIGN BUYER'S GUIDE

VOL. 1: EXTERIOR SIGNAGE

Your Guide to Finding the Right
Exterior Signage for Your Business

KC SIGN
& AWNINGS



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SIGNS MEAN BUSINESS
An Introduction from
KC Sign & Awnings

First impressions are everything, and the first impression many passers-by have of your business or other establishment will be your sign. Your customers' interest in your sign can make or break their interest in your business.

Some doubt the importance of signs in the digital world we now live in, but signs have never been more important than they are today. Your customers and visitors are still out and about, walking and driving, and they are paying attention to your signage—and with good reason.

You can block ads before you ever see them online. You can mute TV commercials. **Signs cannot just be avoided. They are always there,**



through thick and thin, working tirelessly to attract new customers. While signs can go unnoticed, if you make effective signage a priority, your sign will be impossible to ignore.

Your sign can help brand your business. It can have its own identity, even its own personality. Signs can even become **landmarks**, popping up in casual conversation and direction-giving, sometimes transcending to fame in their own rights, such as the Hollywood sign, the “Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada” sign, and the signs of the Chicago Theater or Radio City Music Hall.

For business owners who are gearing up for a grand opening or an even grander revamping, we've put together the definitive guide to exterior signage to help attract customers and make an outstanding first impression. We can tell you what you need to know to create the perfect sign for your business based on our wealth of experience working with customers with that one goal in mind. We made this guide to accomplish just that because we're KC Sign & Awnings, and **we live and breathe signs**

**First impressions
are everything**

LEARNING SIGN LANGUAGE

Your guide to exterior sign terminology

Before you choose your sign, it helps to be able to name what you want. There are many types of sign types, but most people probably couldn't tell you the difference between dimensional and channel letters, let alone when to use them.

We're going to break down the various sign types by name. Many of these sign types can be mixed and matched with each other to your heart's content, and all are customizable with regards to structure and design.



Awnings



Channel Letters



Monument Signs



Post & Panel Signs



Dimensional Letters



Carved Signs



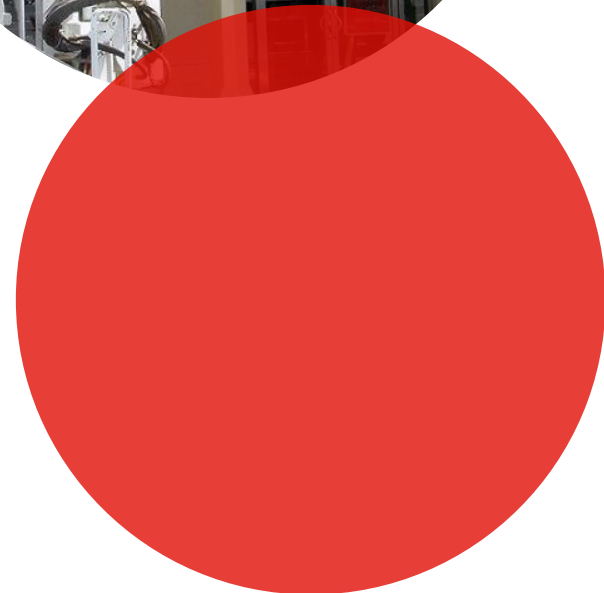
LED Message Boards



Sign Cabinets



Pylon Signs



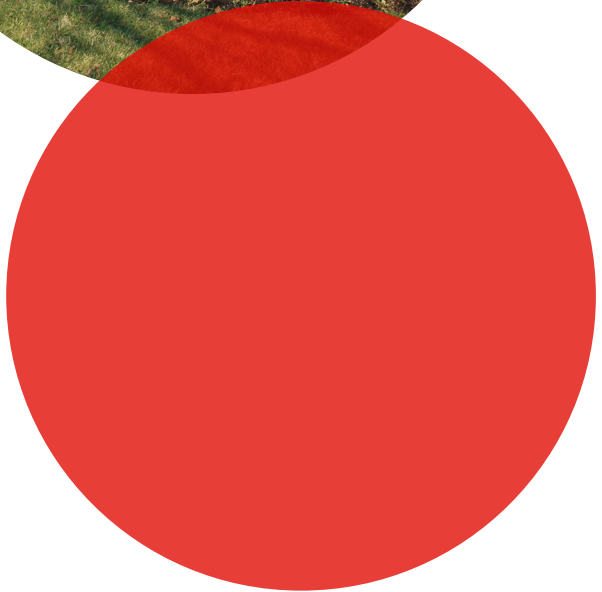
- ▶ Outdoor overhangs made from a variety of materials
- ▶ Enhance elegance and shelter incoming customers
- ▶ Seen at restaurants, offices, cafes, and hotels



MONUMENT SIGNS



- ▶ Freestanding signs that incorporate masonry with bases of stone, brick, split face block
- ▶ A variety of sign types can be mounted to the base: sign cabinets, carved signs, LED message boards
- ▶ Individual lettering can be mounted on the sign face or directly to the masonry
- ▶ Seen at schools, churches, and residential neighborhoods in addition to many office parks and businesses



CHANNEL LETTERS



- ▶ Bold, individual light-up letters that can be mounted to a storefront, wall, or freestanding sign
- ▶ Seen at shopping centers, businesses/offices, restaurants, warehouses



POST AND PANEL SIGNS



- ▶ Consist of two posts and adjoining panel
- ▶ Very economical but can be durable when made with high density urethane (HDU) rather than plywood
- ▶ Seen at offices, parks, and warehouses



DIMENSIONAL LETTERS

- ▶ Individual, non-light-up letters for a classic, polished look
- ▶ Seen at churches, historical areas, main streets, and many areas where illuminated letters are prohibited



CARVED SIGNS



- ▶ Natural, classic-looking signs available with wood or more durable high density urethane (HDU)
- ▶ Can be sandblasted to look more rustic
- ▶ Seen at churches, offices, and residential neighborhoods



LED MESSAGE BOARDS

- ▶ Digital LED displays made for outdoors
- ▶ Can feature whatever text or graphics you want them to and can be updated at any time
- ▶ Seen at churches, firehouses, schools, and businesses



SIGN CABINETS



- ▶ Also called cabinet signs or box signs
- ▶ Full case is illuminated
- ▶ Large area to display messages and graphics
- ▶ Seen at restaurants, cafes, shops, and offices

SHERWOOD Square



PYLON SIGNS



- ▶ Also known as pole signs
- ▶ Tall roadside signs, typically illuminated
- ▶ May include directories of stores in a plaza
- ▶ Seen at shopping centers, outlet malls, and locations stationed on busy highways





CHOOSING A TYPE OF EXTERIOR SIGN
What kind of signage is the right fit for your business?

PRACTICALITY: WHAT IS AND ISN'T POSSIBLE

Finding out what is within the realm of possibility is the first step to choosing your sign. Some things can be eliminated due to logistics alone. For instance, if your storefront is located inside an indoor mall, you're highly unlikely to use a large freestanding sign like a pylon or monument sign; your options would be signs that mount to your storefront.

Generally, a larger concern is what you are legally allowed to do. Many historical areas do not permit illuminated signs, so even if channel letters are your first choice, you may have to go back to the drawing board. Monument signs and other freestanding signs often must be a certain distance from the roadway. Tall pylon signs may be explicitly banned due to zoning restrictions on height.

If you rent your space, your landlord may also outline in your lease certain rules that your sign must follow.

Your municipality's zoning regulations and your lease are great places to start if you're looking to find out what signs you can and cannot choose. Regulations can be complicated and confusing, but a sign company can help you navigate them and determine the right solution.



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Now that you've brushed up on sign vocabulary, it's time to start talking about what type of sign is the best fit for you. The choice depends on a number of factors, including how practical your dream sign is, and how well your sign will accomplish what you want it to do, like branding your business or attracting customers.

If you're installing signage, it's for a purpose, and each sign you choose needs to accomplish that purpose.

FUNCTIONALITY: WHAT YOU NEED YOUR SIGNAGE TO DO, AND HOW IT WILL DO IT

If you're installing signage, it's for a purpose, and each sign you choose needs to accomplish that purpose.

BRANDING

First and foremost, you always need to be consistent in your branding, and how you brand yourself should always be a focus of your business. If you do have the power to determine the type and design of your sign, it has to match your branding. Your sign should put ideas into your customers heads about who you are, what you offer, and what they can expect.

ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

One of the most important concerns for retail and other businesses with storefronts are that customers need to be able to identify your business. Your sign needs to be seen—so if you want it to be visible at night, illumination may be necessary. If you're stationed far from the road, you may need an eye-catching light pylon sign with an LED message board.

The best way to figure out what type will work for you is to **get into the mind of your customers**. Different types of customers behave very differently in response to different types of signs.



Once you have an idea of what type of sign you want, you have to decide what to put on that sign. Working with a graphic designer can be invaluable to creating a professional looking design, but it helps to have an idea of what you want. You and the designer will need to be a team to make the best possible sign for you.

GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

Using few words and big letters is the best way to get your message across. Try to keep your sign to the basics for the best chance of it getting read. If you try to fit too much text, passers-by may simply give up. If you

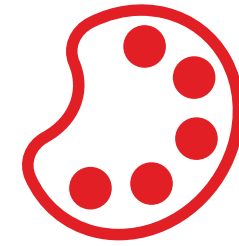
choose an LED message board or another similar sign type, don't let it scroll too fast. Speed-reading should not be a necessary prerequisite to becoming your customer.



Try to keep your sign to the basics for the best chance of it getting read.

CHOOSING A SIGN DESIGN
The basics of branding and design

COLOR



As far as color relates to clarity, contrast is paramount. Distinguishing between letters and background should be the least of your customers' worries. Using too many different colors can also be difficult to read if you're not careful. Bright letters on a dark background or vice versa is the safest choice, but other options can work too if executed well.

FONT



The right font to use depends on the type of sign and your business's branding. As a general rule, it's best to use simple, easy to read typefaces to ensure your customers do not have to struggle to understand your message. **The content of your sign doesn't matter if your customers cannot read it.** Still, there are many exceptions—for some businesses, choosing a more stylized font is essential to exhibit your branding.

BRANDING CONSISTENCY



Your sign's design needs to be consistent with your branding, whatever your branding may be. If your restaurant churns out the most luxurious hamburgers in town, your sign should reflect that. If you are the fastest barber this side of the Mississippi, your sign should reflect that. Even if your branding is minimalist and your organization favors function over form, your sign should reflect that. **Colors, fonts, copy, graphics, and the materials your sign uses can help you convey your brand's message.**

The only thing worse than confusing a customer with an unclear sign is confusing a customer with a sign that is perfectly clear on the wrong message.





HOW TO SHOP FOR YOUR SIGN SHOP

Finding the right sign provider for your vision

HELP WITH PERMITTING

Dealing with zoning regulations and applying for permits and variances is often a frustrating process. Business owners with a lot to do don't have the time to figure it all out, let alone file paperwork and visit town offices where they have to wait for hours. If you want to install a certain type of sign (such as an LED sign) in an area where they are not allowed, you may be able to apply for a variance for it, but this could require attending a town meeting and fighting for your sign.



The whole process can be extremely time-consuming. If you choose a sign company that has navigated the bureaucratic waters before, you'll be in a much more comfortable position. Your sign company should be willing to deal with all the paperwork, the minutiae, and all the waiting.

“ Finding a company with a wide range of sign capabilities will help ensure that the sign they make is the perfect fit for your business. ”

Eventually, someone is going to have to make this awesome sign you're envisioning, so you're going to have to choose a sign company. No matter how good a design is, if it can't be brought to life, it doesn't matter.

CAPABILITIES AND TRAITS YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR IN A SIGN COMPANY

- ▶ Help with permitting
- ▶ Sign design
- ▶ Quality, in-house manufacturing
- ▶ Professional installation services
- ▶ Repair services
- ▶ Consultative support



SIGN DESIGN

Like permitting, handling the design process doesn't fit into the schedule of a busy business owner or manager. A sign company should be able to greatly improve upon any ideas you have and create a sign that looks great and conveys your message. The company you choose should hire experienced designers who are familiar with modern design trends.

QUALITY MANUFACTURING

Once your design is finalized, it will need to be constructed. Some sign installers may outsource this leg of the journey, even though it is arguably the most important step of the whole operation. Full supervision of every aspect of the sign's creation is essential to ensuring the quality and longevity of the sign. A sign company with in-house manufacturing capabilities is, therefore, your best bet.

REPAIR

Your sign company's phone number should be in your cell phone, ready to be dialed at a moment's notice. If your stunning sign needs an urgent fix, you should be comforted by the knowledge that your sign company will be on the job straight away. Certain types of signs also may need more repairs than others—for instance, fluorescent lighting is more likely to burn out than LED lighting. Your sign company should provide you with the most durable, energy-efficient sign available, but they should have the capacity to service your sign quickly if anything goes wrong.



PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION

In addition to manufacturing capabilities, your sign company should be able to install your sign properly and securely so it lasts as long as possible. Sign companies that lack the right tools or who don't employ a team of talented installation experts cannot guarantee the proper installation of your sign.

An incorrectly installed sign is more susceptible to weather damage and won't last for its expected lifespan. Expert installers should be able to make use of a full range of installation equipment to get your sign installed the right way.

CONSULTATIVE SUPPORT

Your sign company should provide more than just permitting, design, manufacturing, installation, and repair capabilities. They should also be willing to work with you closely throughout the project lifecycle and answer any questions you have. Every sign project is unique, and your signage provider should treat them as such. When vetting sign companies, see how willing they are to address your specific concerns.



KC Sign & Awnings will take you from an idea to the design process, manufacture the sign for you, install it securely, and maintain it when necessary. All of the signs we sell, we fabricate at our state of the art in-house facility. We've got fully stocked 60-foot crane trucks, 45-foot lift trucks, trailers, excavation equipment, and a dump truck all chomping at the bit to help you unveil your sign to the public quickly and safely.

Most importantly, our consultants, designers, fabricators, and installers, along with your personal project manager, are the best in the business. We've worked with many businesses to design, manufacture, install, and maintain great signs, and we'd love to work with you.

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT SIGN PROVIDER? LOOK NO FURTHER!



READY TO GET THE GREAT SIGNAGE YOU DESERVE?

1-888-651-7446

CONTACT US



