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Re-energize your retail location - Center Plaza case study on what your signage says about your brand - by Richard Poyant

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What does your signage say about your brand? Is your signage outdated and in need of a makeover? You may be sending out the wrong message to your tenants and their customers, one that says your brand, your business, your shopping center is outdated, stale or irrelevant. Don't let your signage create a perception that you're not proud of.

In today's competitive retail environment, the strength and relevance of your brand image is more important than ever. Signage and "streetscape" play a major role in your business and are an untapped opportunity to target a critical mass audience of potential customers so close to your front door.

How can retailers create a unique and exciting shopping experience that will draw consumers to their center rather than shop online? Building a vibrant, fresh, bright, and striking environment will attract new customers and businesses and will strengthen and enhance your new brand.

Creating an effective visual solution is the first step in an overall business strategy that conveys a clear message of what your customers will experience when interacting with you. Powerful visual branding is the most cost-effective way to maximize your impact on shoppers.

When exploring different visual design options, consider the following:

- Keep it consistent, visible and legible – Your "streetscape" is your "first impression" and must project the powerful image you want the public to have of your center.
- Tell your own unique story – Consider what your tenants, visitors, and customers will value about your location, tenant mix and unique property features upon opening or revitalizing your center. Determine what they will like about the products and services that you offer and leverage those characteristics in the design. This will ensure a strong and successful brand for years to come.
- Design – One of the most important factors for an upcoming brand is the design development. Your design must make a commanding statement. A design that can be read and understood with a

quick glance will create the most effective sign. Keep it simple.

Your updated “streetscape” will make thousands of impressions every day, creating top of the mind awareness. A well-researched and well-engineered branding program will promote a better visitor experience, improve traffic patterns to your location, and reflect an overall powerful brand image.

When cbt Architects approached Poyant in 2017, they were looking to re-energize Center Plaza, a 9-story retail and office complex located directly across from City Hall Plaza in Boston, Mass. The goal was to transform the ground floors of this once dull and uninspired location into a vibrant retail destination for the Boston community.

Center Plaza is a brick and concrete structure with a unique semi-circular shape, which was the norm for many building developments in the 1960s. As part of its transformation, it was important to be mindful of the original design intent and its relation to other historical buildings constructed at that time.

Synergy Investments, owner of Center Plaza, partnered with cbt Architects as their design firm and Commodore Builders as the general contractor responsible for the building’s remodel and transformation. Poyant had the opportunity to collaborate with these firms on the goals for the project:

- Create a refreshing new look that not only conveys an attractive shopping experience but also transforms the property into a destination for the tenants’ target audiences.
- Maximize the visibility of the retail-focused ground floor for the mixed-use building.
- Improve the wayfinding for retailers and services offered at the property.

With these goals in mind, the Poyant team began work on several signage elements for the location, including tenant entry signage, Brow ID signage, and wayfinding products. Poyant fabricated and installed the signage package that would aid in refreshing and updating the look and feel of Center Plaza.

The entry signage for tenants and Center Plaza itself are face and side lit channel letters. Each tenant also has a main ID brow sign that features a unique color-changing LED lighting system. New parking signage and wayfinding kiosks with updated directories were also important factors in the new sign package – allowing visitors and customers to easily and quickly navigate the property during their shopping experience.

“The unique design and placement of this building created additional challenges with signing the property. Sign size and placement was critical to address the heavy pedestrian and vehicular traffic without creating confusion and clutter. We were able to achieve this and accommodate the needs of both retail and office tenants with a signature sign program like nothing else found in Boston,” said Gary McCoy, senior account executive for Poyant Signs.

Poyant is proud to have partnered with cbt Architects and Commodore Builders to help achieve the goals for this large project through outstanding collaboration and dedication from all members of the project team. The Center Plaza Renovation was successful in providing a “streetscape” that reflects an energized shopping experience and destination for the city of Boston.

Our singular focus is, and always has been...Building Your Brand, Building Your Success. The Center Plaza project was completed in June of this year, on-time and on-budget, and is considered a huge success by all involved.

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