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Consulting a professional sign company can securely position your brand in today's market

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The economic outlook for 2011 continues to improve and developers and business owners have increased their expansion and growth plans, as investment capital becomes less costly to secure. Maximizing the return on investment by retaining existing and bringing new customers to your door is the challenge all of us face daily.

With entertainment and shopping dollars becoming scarcer in today's tight economy how does a business achieve success?

First, you must establish a presence, a brand awareness that compliments your customers need, and then once the customer has engaged your company you must provide them with a memorable customer experience that delivers value.

The competition is fierce regardless of the industry or product offering, and making your brand stand out from your competitors is paramount to your success. Each of us in our daily lives is blitzed with images and sound bytes that have been designed, studied, redesigned and launched to drive us out to purchase the latest gadget or visit the trendiest spots.

So what is the most cost effective way to build brand awareness and establish your market presence?

Studies have shown that the average American is bombarded with over 1,800 advertising messages a day and out of all that noise the single most effective advertising vehicle to reach your target audience is on premise signage. As customers drive or walk by your store you have about 3 seconds to grab their attention and pull them in. On premise signage is the only chance you will have when the customer is ready to buy and it better stand out because your competitor will be sure that their brand does.

Strong signage that is properly designed, located, and well fabricated will enhance the overall image of your product and your brand. However, inadequate poorly designed signage will conflict with your brand image; send an unclear message, which in turn will drive customers to your competitor.

So how does a business owner make sure their signage is effective?

Work with the professionals. A business owner must rely on the expertise of many to survive in today's challenging market place. A professional image consultant will conduct an interview to analyze your business needs, what your market strengths are, along with your weaknesses, and then recommend a signage and graphic package that will enhance your market position.

Your investment in this identity program could be the single most important decision that you as an owner make. Businesses that participate in this process typically realize a 35% to 55% increase in sales volume in the year following the installation of their personalized brand identity program.

Signs are not just signs; they are what identify you to the world and firmly place an image of who you are and what you represent in your customer's mind. This single fact is so important that every

part of your signage program needs to enhance your message, your brand image, and what you are all about to your potential customer.

There are many companies that can produce a sign, but only a few will even ask about your brand and even less will then know how to maximize your dollars to produce a clear return on your signage investment.

The following questions will help you strategize who you are in the marketplace and what you need to do to reach your true market potential:

- What services / products do you provide to your customers?
- What motivates your customers to do business with you?
- Who is your competition?
- What value do you uniquely provide to your customer?
- How does your customer perceive your company/brand?
- How can your image and identity set you apart from your competitor?

Answering these questions is critical to realizing your full business potential throughout your organization. Seriously contemplating and answering these questions will provide the framework for developing the "value experience" that will create ambassadors of your brand.

The following links will provide a wealth of information:

- SEGD, The Society for Environmental Graphic Design (www.segd.org), is a great resource to research the impact a well designed signage environment can have on an architectural space.
- SBA, Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov/starting/signage), contains well developed articles discussing the value and impact of on premise signage and business development.
- ISA, International Sign Association (www.signs.org), is the sign industry trade association that provides zoning, fabrication, and general sign information.

Consulting with a sign company that recognizes the critical role your sign identity program has, will play a key role in securely positioning your brand in today's marketplace.

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