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## **Reinvent, re-image, reinvigorate! The importance of a good signage program**

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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 Is your signage outdated and in need of a makeover?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be sending out the wrong message to your customers, one that says your brand, your business, your shopping center is outdated, tired and irrelevant. Don't let your signage send out a message 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 plays a major role in your business, and many retailers fail to take advantage of the power of visual communications. Keeping your image fresh, bright and eye catching will attract new business and provide potential and existing customers with confidence in your brand.

While installing a new sign may not change the way your customers feel about you, creating an effective signage solution may be the first step in an overall business strategy that conveys a clear message of what your customers will experience interacting with you. Well-branded signage is the most effective and strongest way to increase your brand recognition. When considering different signage options, keep these tips in mind:

\* Keep it consistent, visible and legible - Your sign is your "first impression" and it must project the positive image you want the public to have of your business.

\* Tell your own unique story -Consider what it is that your clients, visitors, and customers value about your company and what it is that they will like about the productions and services that you offer them. This is how to keep your brand alive and flourishing.

\* Design - The most important factor in an effective sign is design. Your design must make a powerful statement. A design that can be read and understood with just a quick glance will create the most effective sign. Keep it simple.

Your signs make millions of impressions every day and come to mind when people think of your brand. A well-researched and well-engineered signage program will promote a better visitor experience, improve traffic patterns to your location, and reflect your overall brand image. Here are some key pointers to use in accessing the effectiveness of your existing signage:

### 1. It starts at the beginning

Your signage must be visible as soon as customers approach your property. Your signs should be clear, concise, and easy to read, and there should be a logical flow of information from the entrance to the parking area to the customer destination. Remember that signs on the perimeter of your

property are the first impression many people will have of your brand. Make it a positive one.

## 2. Anticipate pathways, decision points and destinations

Map out every directional challenge a customer might encounter. Determine a hierarchy of information based around primary and secondary pathways, destinations, and key decision points. The sequence of signs and organization of information you create should be simple, clear, and intuitive.

## 3. Determine which signs you'll need where

An overall signage plan will help you to clarify the different types of signs you need. More than likely you'll need a combination of identification signs, directional signs, traffic control and parking signs, pedestrian wayfinding signs, and informational signs.

## 4. Plan for tomorrow today

Signage is often left to the last minute. As you address your signage plan, make sure to consider future needs. Are there facility upgrades or an expansion in your five-year plan? Will there be changes in your parking areas or landscaping in the near future? Are there construction plans for any of the access roads or major highways nearby? By anticipating these future challenges today, you can avoid alienating visitors in the future.

There is virtually no limit to what a good signage program can do for your business. The effects of visually appealing signage, gives retailers the opportunity to improve their customer's shopping experience. The importance of creating customer experiences in the retail environment has been proven to influence consumer decision-making at the point of sale, as well as helping to enforce branding and enriching the overall shopping experience. Keep in mind that your brand identity should remain consistent to reinforce your values continually. Is it time to reinvent, re-image and reinvigorate your brand image?

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