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# SIGN LAYOUT TIPS

**By Phil White, Signarama Limerick**

You can use signs for such a wide array of purposes from advertising to conveying safety information. There are aspects that signage needs to make it a success. You can arrange these in a variety of ways to suit your sign's specific purpose.

## TEXT

The primary purpose of any sign is to communicate information to its audience. Yes, images can convey certain messages. But oftentimes, not as clearly as you can with words. Here are a few reasons why words can be the ideal solution:

Writing can help you to achieve the goal of the specific sign. What do you want to accomplish? Do you want to sell a particular product? Are you promoting a charity or cause? Use words when advertising something or describing something. Use text to communicate some terms and conditions or disclaimers.

The following are principles which you need to consider when it comes to text:

**Font:** It's essential to use a well thought out professional font on your sign. The focus should be on finding a font that is simple and legible.

**Size:** The typeface needs to be large enough to read. You shouldn't need to squint. The words might look great up close but be impossible to make out once it is up.

**Spacing:** You should pay attention to spacing. The closer letters are to each other, the harder they are to read.

**Amount of words:** It is not only about the font and size but also about the number of words. Signs are much more difficult to read if there are too many words. People don't want to spend too much time reading. Keep it as concise as possible.

**Contrast:** The color of the writing should stand out against its background.

## GRAPHICS

Even though the script is the key to conveying specific information clearly, don't discount images. Graphics are still an essential element of signs. Graphics not only make a sign more interesting to look at but can also make it more memorable. This can help you to achieve your specific goals.

*(Continued on page 56)*

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## SIGN LAYOUT TIPS

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Another way in which graphics are used on signs is through symbols. Symbols are a mark or character used as a representation of an object, function, or process. These are images whose meaning will be recognized by most people. Therefore, they are most often used on safety and warning signs like exclamation marks and on directional signs like with arrows.

Whatever image you go with, try to make it as impactful as possible. You probably only have one chance to catch a person's attention.

### BRANDING

Branding is a practice through which a business creates a design, symbol or name that is easily identifiable as theirs. This is essential to help the audience recognize the company or other venture to which it is relevant.

Here are ways you can incorporate branding on a sign:

**Logo:** If your company has a well-established logo this should be featured somewhere on your signage.

**Name:** You could print your company's name somewhere on it. It should be legible. You don't have to use both logo and name if one would be enough to tell people whose sign it is.

**Colors:** Does your brand have a specific color palette? If so, it can be a good idea to incorporate this on the sign.

**Motto:** A tagline can make your business much more memorable if it is catchy. If it fits the purpose of the sign, you could incorporate it too.

Remember that your brand identity will be more effective if it is consistent. For this reason, you should keep it recognizable across all your platforms.

However, this aspect isn't necessary for all signage. For example, there is typically no reason for a safety sign to show off a brand. As a matter of fact, many informational and directional signs won't need to be branded.

### COLOR

Few things in the world can have such a powerful effect on our minds as color can. It can be challenging to imagine signs without it. Even if you make your signage black and white, it is still an important feature to consider.

Color is a brilliant way to catch people's attention. Bright and bold shades can help you make sure your sign stands out from its environment. Additionally, you can use color to make small parts of the sign more visible. It can literally be the best

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highlighting tool. You can emphasize the most essential elements of the product by printing it in a different color or one that contrasts with its background.

### CALL TO ACTION

All types of signs are made to lead its audience to one action or another. Create a sign to persuade people to buy a product or service from your company. Persuasive signs are probably the most flashy and exciting of all the signage products.

Not so differently, safety and warning signs are there to stop people from doing something that can harm them or others. And so forth.

No matter the sign, this is where the call to action comes in. This is any device which is used to prompt a response in the audience.

A call to action should clearly tell the audience what you want them to do. It can be just a few words or a few sentences, but it should contain a verb of some kind. Words that you can use are: **Buy; Hire; Call; Click; Donate; Visit; Share; Register**

### INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS

Nowadays, another fantastic feature that you can include on your signage is interactive elements. These are devices

that allow your audience to interact with the product physically. This adds a whole new level of depth to the experience.

They're great at grabbing people's attention and they keep your audience interested longer.

Add a QR Code for your customer to scan. This could take them to your website or registration page.

An easy way you can implement this is to make signs that encourage people to take photos with it – like large selfie frames.

### OTHER TIPS TO DESIGNING SIGNS AND THEIR LAYOUT

**Save space:** Don't overwhelm your audience with new input. You really don't have to fill every inch of your sign. Instead, stick to the essentials. Focus on making the critical message come across.

**Top to bottom and left to right:** This is how we read, so it makes sense that the layout of your sign should match this style. Our eyes are trained to move this way. Therefore, you need to keep this in mind when planning the flow of the sign.

**Focal point:** Successful signs usually have one primary central point. This can help you to grab people's attention. Experts use lines to lead your eye to this center. On top of this, they use contrasting colors to highlight the point.

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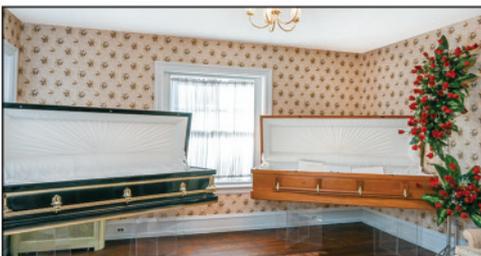
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