



Sign Up!

**Make the Most of
Your In-Store Signage**

Give Me a Sign

Why this topic? Store signage is one of the most effective and efficient marketing tools at your fingertips. It's applied at ground zero, your garden center, where as much as 60% of the buying decision is made.

This guide offers something for new or established retailers. Whether you produce signage in-house or outsource production, you'll have a better understanding that will make your sign program more appealing and engaging.

The focus here is not on the more permanent storefront sign. Rather, it's a look inside the store perimeter where signage is more readily produced, on demand, and seasonal. I'll share my notions, insights, and examples.

Sign Up!

- Marketing Tool
- Effective
- Functions
- Formats
- Substrates
- Design
- In/Out of House
- Resources

These are the facets of signage we'll consider.

POWERFUL Marketing Tool

- For Small Business**
- Ground Zero**
- Flexible**
- Timely**
- Cost Effective**
- Multi-message**

Don't take the power of your signage for granted:

A powerful marketing tool for small businesses-
builds brand, reflects quality and mission, sets you apart from competitors, nimble, readily made.

Works at Ground Zero- enhances customer experience, supports and is persuasive at point of sale, impulse drivers, silent salesperson.

Flexible



Comes in all shapes, sizes, and colors. From macro to micro, moveable, and changeable.

Timely



Easy to change with seasons, months, weeks, days, holidays, events, and promotions.
Gives you something to focus on- current needs, things you want to push.

POWERFUL Marketing Tool

- For Small Business**
- Ground Zero**
- Flexible**
- Timely**
- Cost Effective**
- Multi-message**

Cost Effective- big bang for the buck. Economical to make now- not so before. Choose from a range of materials and processes. Easy to maintain.

Multi-message- big picture to small detail, price, sell points, services, how-to, navigation, new items. Captures attention and engages customers with information and spotlight. Works 24-7.

- **+75% of Americans have visited a store for the first time based solely on its signage**
- **nearly 70% have made purchases solely because a sign caught their eye**
- **68% of US consumers believe a store's signage is reflective of the quality of its products or services**
- **a small business should have two or three signs around its storefront**

FedEx by Ketchum Global Research & Analytics and ORC International

The study references storefront, but the findings resonate inside the garden center.

Effective Signs

- Clarity
- Location
- Concise
- Consistent
- Format
- Durable
- Quality
- Design

Facets of effective signage.

Clarity

Yes



No



Clarity is the essence of a good sign. Are your signs legible, readable and understandable, and do they stand out in their given location?

Key elements of clarity include:

Fonts- clean and bold work better than decorative and frilly.

Contrast of color- be mindful of combinations of color for maximum contrast in message and background.

Size- take viewing distance into account. What reads well at 4 feet may not work at 20 feet.

Less is more- the more you fill up your space with bits and pieces, the harder the message is to digest.

Location



Location, location, location!

The entire garden center is the playground for signage. Look for your opportunities for placement- high traffic areas, new plant displays, category sections, entrances, etc.

Draw people in to the product- start with larger formats, then scale down sizes at appropriate spots until your customer is face to face with the product.

Complement the environment- take stock of the setting and find ways to integrate your sign in terms of format, size, message, and design.

Effective Signs

- Clarity
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CONCISE- What's the message- to the point- mindful of audience

Consistent



A fine example of brand articulation- consistency in typography, color, and layout enhances and reinforces your brand statement.

Effective Signs

- Clarity
- Location
- Concise
- Consistent
- Format
- Durable
- Quality
- Design

Format- make sure your sign is a good fit for the location and message. More on format later.

Durable- your sign should last as long as the message is relevant. Don't let it get faded and frayed. Redo and refresh as needed.

Quality- remember the survey: quality of signage has impact. Think of your signage as an investment- don't cut corners.

Design- put aesthetic into the function. More on aesthetic later.

Function

Signage wears many hats in the garden center. The versatility of the message coupled with a wide range of formats gives you comprehensive and coordinated options.

Identify



Whatever it is, give it a name- your store, departments, plants, features, benefits, etc.

Convey



Signs are portals to information- explain things, show and tell, motivate, take a deep dive (in appropriate circumstances).

Direct



Tell your customer where to go, where they are.

Safety



Guard against danger and mishap.

Price



One of the more flexible and timely aspects of signs. Easy to update and reset.

Announce



Big events need big trumpets.

Promote



Promote your brand, plants, programs, and departments.

Engage



Rebirth of QR- the quick path to more and more information.

Coordinated



Connect your various formats and placement in visually coordinated ways- design, color, imagery, and content. Cohesion strengthens the message.

Ambience



It's not all about price and item. Signs can convey emotion, moods, feelings, and the character and nature of your garden center.

Format

The sky is the limit here. From tiny to giant, soft or rigid, various dimensions and shapes, 1-sided/2-sided, options for installation. Take advantage of today's production technology.

Bench Wrap



Bench Card



Right at the product.

Mid-size



Moving outward.

Mid-size



Look for opportunities to sync your signage with the setting. Utilize fixtures and structures

Mid-size



Be creative with unique shapes and sizes.

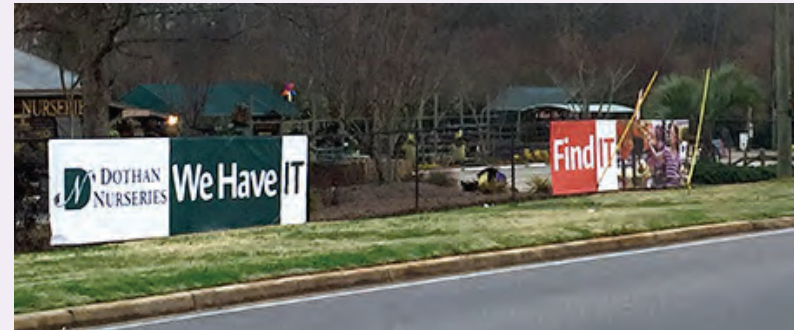
Feathers



Statics



Street

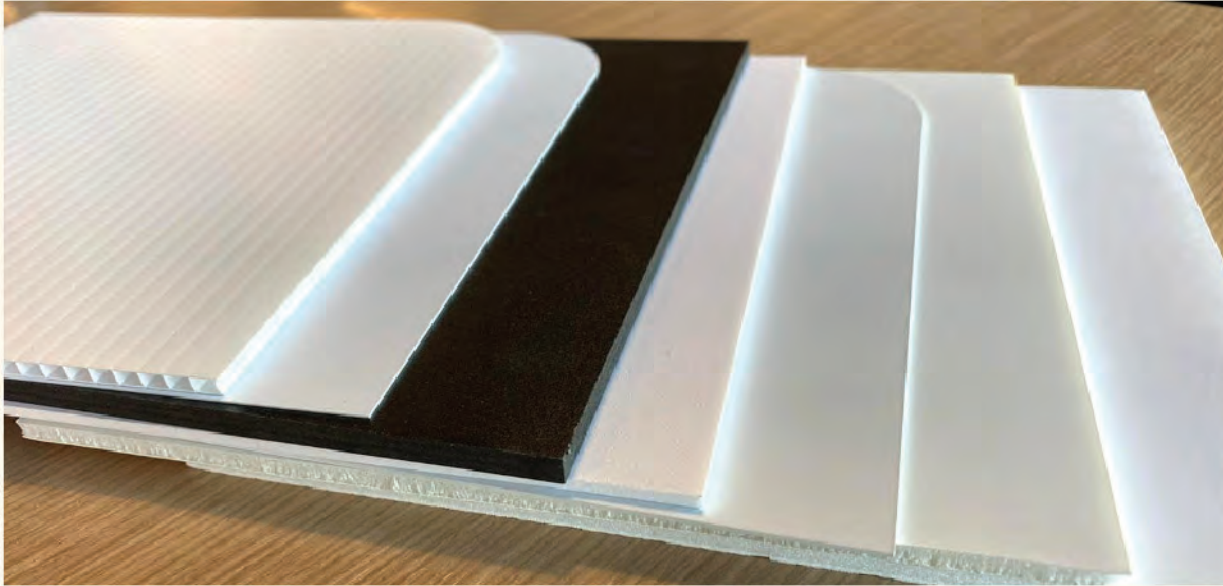


Large



You can spread the message far and wide with today's large format technology.

Substrates

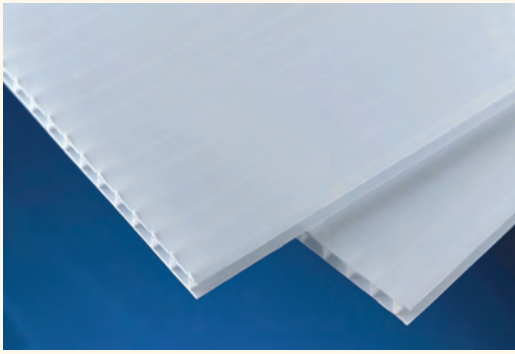


A critical element that impacts function and cost. A handful of the most common options will cover the bases for you.

Basics

- Indoor/Outdoor
- Rigid/Flexible
- Durability
- Lifespan
- Colorfast

Aspects to take into consideration.



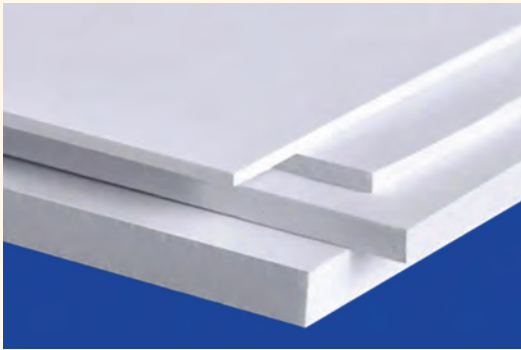
Corrugated



Vinyl



Adhesives



PVC



Mesh Vinyl



Fabric

Corrugated plastic- inexpensive workhorse for short-term messages.

PVC- (polyvinyl chloride) hard smooth resin in various weights, great looking print output, very durable to the elements.

Vinyl- the go-to for opaque banners, large and small.

Mesh vinyl- lets various degrees of light to shine through, great in windy settings, super print qualities, particularly suited for giant sizes.

Adhesives- stick them everywhere- floors, walls, ceilings, and items.

Fabric- for a special look and function. Great color saturation.

Design

- Message
- Setting
- Brand
- Layout
- Color
- Images
- Fonts
- Flexible

Good design is a combination of elements-

Message- the reason to be, choose words carefully, be mindful of the audience, be brief.

Setting- Consider the spot and surroundings. Setting and sign should work together.

Brand- remember, the sign reflects brand. Give it your signature, your logo.

Layout- Work for a pleasing balance of the elements.

Color- maybe the most important thing you sell – be appropriate, take advantage.

Images- proper resolution of photos and art are essential. A general rule of thumb- 1” = 1’ at 300 dpi.

Fonts- easy to read, consistent, not too many, reflect your brand.

Flexible- Design with the idea that your sign may need to translate to different formats and processes.

In-House Out-of-House Production

**To Do or
Not To Do**

There are pros and cons for having signs produced in-house or going to an outside source. Determine which route suits your circumstances.

I touch on the pluses and minuses of the process, but you need to look hard at the cost factors. Signage is more than ink and paper.

In-House

- Control
- Quick Turn
- Technology
- Maintenance
- Staff
- Expertise

On the plus side, you have more hands-on control of the process. Typically, you can turn your production quicker. And digital technology and equipment are much more accessible and affordable than in times past.

On the downside, you are responsible for maintaining any equipment. You need dedicated and trained staff for operation. And the process calls for a level of expertise and understanding, from design to printing to installation.

Out-of-House

- Fit the Need
- Expertise
- Partner
- No Equipment
- Free Up Staff
- Time Factor
- Communication
- Less Control

On the plus side, you have a wider range of options in terms of technology and equipment. You can rely on the expertise of people who do this sort of work exclusively. You can develop good partnerships and working relations with your vendors- they'll look out for you. You forego the big headache and responsibility of printing equipment. And you free up staff from the necessary efforts in design and production.

On the downside, you add a layer of time as you're fitting into someone else's scheduling. You're adding a layer of communication, which is usually the root of error and misunderstanding. And, you add a layer of complexity as you give up some hands-on control of the overall process.

Group Resources

One of the great values of The Garden Center Group is the wealth of resources and expertise at your disposal through Service Providers and Sponsors. Get in touch!



Partners for Success & Sponsors

Don't forget the offerings and programs for signage from Group Partners and Sponsors. They have tailor-made solutions to help you sell the particular products you buy from them.

Working Together



The bottom line- putting all these components together in cohesive and coordinated ways will give you a sign program that will enhance your brand and increase sales. Sign(s) Up!

I'm glad to help you in any way- developing a brand template for your signage, layout/design for particular items, and/or print production.

Here for you!

Tom



TOMKEGLEY

COMMUNICATIONS

C R E A T I V E S E R V I C E S F O R H O R T I C U L T U R E

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