

Sign Buyer's Guide

SIGN MATERIALS

EXPOSED

What The Sign Industry
Doesn't Want You To Know:
"The Good, The Bad & The Ugly"

By: Tim Harrelson

Why Do Sign Companies Only Tell You The “Good Stuff” About Signs?

(How can you make an informed decision with only half the facts?)

This Sign Buyer’s Guide will open your eyes with insider information never before revealed. You’ll see “the good, the bad & the ugly” about all the popular sign materials.

Armed with this knowledge, you’ll be able to confidently decide which type of sign material is best suited to meet your unique individual needs.

Let’s get started!

Warm regards from the south,



Tim Harrelson

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P.S.

Choosing the right sign material is important. However, if you fail to focus your attention on the most important aspect of all - the design -you risk wasting your money on a completely ineffective sign.

What your sign looks like is determined much more by the layout, artwork and color scheme than the background material itself. Our Art Department can help you discover your sign’s hidden marketing potential!

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Interior Signs

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Magnetic Signs

Custom Magnetic Signs are still the *only* choice when you want the flexibility of re-using the same sign over and over again. It's fast and easy to remove magnetic car signs and put them right back on. Dollar for dollar, magnetic signs are one of the most cost effective ways to advertise your business.

Are You Worried Magnetic Signs May Harm Your Vehicle's Expensive Paint Finish?

How much is a new paint job on a vehicle these days? Hundreds of dollars right? Or if your paint job is damaged by using standard magnetic sheeting, you could take a serious loss on the resell value of your vehicle.

Almost every sign company in America uses the same type of magnetic sheeting for signs. Brands may vary, but the *type* remains the same.

Ordinary magnetic signs offer *zero protection* from the magnetic material itself rubbing & wearing against your vehicle's delicate paint finish.



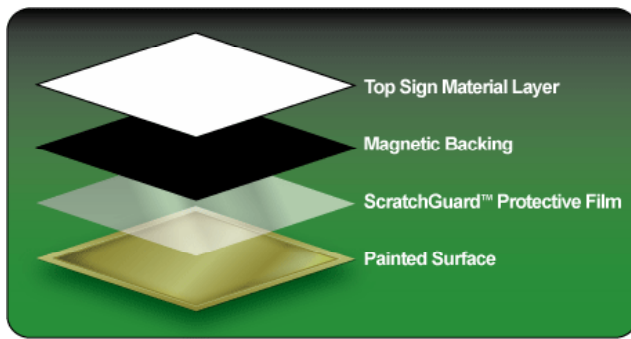
*Why take a chance using ordinary
magnetic signs?
Scratch*Guard Magnetic Signs
also protect against rust!*

Scratch*Guard™ Brand Magnetic Sign Material is dramatically different

Scratch*Guard Magnetic Signs have a highly durable, micro-thin protective film which is permanently bonded to the magnetic sheeting. This critical layer of protection has been specifically designed to preserve the expensive finish on your vehicle not just from scratches, but from surface rust too!

Since this protective layer prevents the magnetic sign material itself from coming in contact with the painted surface, you never have to worry about Scratch*Guard Magnetic Signs damaging your paint.

What keeps your magnetic signs from just “flying off” while you are driving down the road?

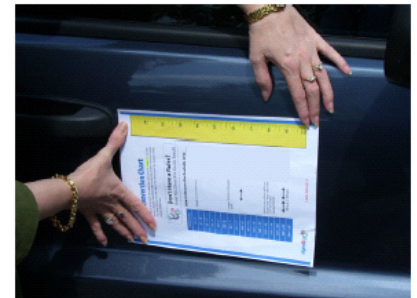


One of your first considerations should be the strength of the magnetic sheeting being used for your new pair of magnetic signs. Make sure the magnetic material itself is **30 mil thickness** (not 20) with **14-16 magnetized poles per inch**, just like *Premium Scratch*Guard Brand Magnetic Signs*. Most magnetic sign material sold today has only 10 or 12 magnetized poles per inch creating a much weaker magnetic bond. Naturally, these signs are more prone to *flying off*.

However, even the strongest magnetic signs in the world will fly off if used improperly. By taking these simple precautions, your brand new magnetic signs can give you years of targeted advertising exposure;

- **If you’ve had body work done and there’s too much plastic body filler (Bondo) in the doors, the magnetic material may not have enough metal to stick to properly so double-check the accident history of your vehicle**
- Some new model car doors and bodies are actually made of plastic, fiberglass and aluminum. Before ordering magnetic signs, just be sure the doors on your vehicle are “*magnetic receptive*”. You can use any refrigerator magnet to test the doors if you have any doubts
- **Magnetic car signs must be installed on a smooth, flat surface with no grooves or sharp humps. To ensure the best bond to your vehicle, you must make sure your custom magnetic sign does not overlap any body side molding or trim. Measure the available area before you order.**

If you don’t have a ruler handy to double-check the measurement, there’s one included in our Sign Catalog.



Caution: Improper storage and handling can permanently harm your magnetic signs and affect the magnetic bonding strength. Here are some tips to extend the life of your magnetic signs;

- **Never store magnets face to face**
- Don’t fold or crease the magnetic sheeting
- **If you roll magnetic signs too tightly, they could crack**
- When not in use, store your magnetic signs flat on a refrigerator or the smooth area of a file cabinet

- **Never clean the back of the magnetic material with *Armor All* or similar interior car cleaner. This will make the sign too slippery and may result in your magnetics flying off the vehicle**
- **Never keep magnetic signs on your vehicle while running through an automatic car wash**
- **If you've taken your signs off and stored them improperly, try placing the signs down flat on the **hot** hood of your vehicle. The heat will relax and smooth out the material which will make it conform tightly to the contours of your doors.**

What's The Downside To Magnetic Signs?

The flexibility of being able to take the signs on and off again carries another small risk. Although it rarely ever happens, we occasionally hear reports of magnetic car signs getting stolen right off vehicle doors. Who would steal your magnetic signs? Teenagers? Competitors? Who knows. Again, it's rare, but it can happen.

Additionally, all magnetic sheeting manufacturer's recommend weekly cleaning of your magnetic signs and the surface area they are attached to. So be sure to factor in the time for routine maintenance into your final buying decision.

What's the best alternative?

Unless you absolutely need to take your signs off regularly, vinyl lettering may be a better option for you. You can easily apply (and it is easy) vinyl lettering to your doors, along the bed of a truck, the tailgate and even the windows.

Vinyl graphics do not require any maintenance of any kind, plus you can enjoy these added benefits;

- **Vinyl lettering isn't permanent - it's “semi-permanent”**
- However, vinyl vehicle graphics can last 7-10 years outdoors, as long as you choose the right vinyl
- **And with a special removable adhesive, the vinyl graphics can be removed in order to preserve the resell value of your vehicle.**



Since there's no background, vinyl lettering and graphics display a cleaner, more professional & "permanent" image of your business.



And with our exclusive "Goof Proof Guarantee", we take all the risk. You'll get professional results every time, but at substantially reduced, do-it-yourself prices. Here's the link to Vinyl Graphics if you wish to compare your options.

And finally, in certain situations, static cling vinyl is yet another option. Static clings can be used on **interior car or storefront window glass**. It's removable and reusable because it sticks to glass without using adhesive. If your windows are too tinted though, the lettering can be very difficult to see. In most cases, if you choose to go with a static cling vinyl sign, bright colors such as white or yellow are usually the most visible and eye-catching.

Vinyl Lettering & Graphics

Are you unsure which type of vinyl to choose because you don't know these key differences? Do you even know what your options are?

With the hundreds of choices available in vinyl graphics, it's easy to get confused. You could easily pay entirely too much and still not get the results you expect.

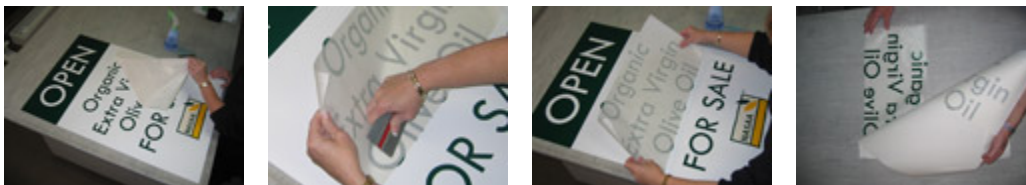
Since vinyl letters graphics are used to produce the text and images on 94% of all signs, it's in your own best interest to know which type of vinyl graphics to specify in the production of your new signage. Otherwise, you risk making a costly mistake. With these *insider secrets*, you'll be able to choose the perfect type of vinyl lettering for all your new custom signage and vehicle graphics.

What exactly are vinyl letters and graphics?

Vinyl letters and logos are cut from vinyl roll stock resembling the same type of material in which bumper stickers are made out of. A computer controlled cutting machine called a plotter, scores and contour cuts the vinyl sheeting into custom vinyl letters and graphics.



When vinyl graphics and logos are applied, it almost looks as if they were printed right onto the surface. **There is no clear or white background** as with a bumper sticker or other type of decal.



Where can vinyl letters and graphics be used?

Vinyl graphics are perhaps the sign industry's most versatile invention to date. They readily stick to most surfaces including;

- Trucks
- Trailers
- SUV's
- Vans
- Cars
- Buses
- Windshields
- Boats
- Storefront Windows
- Office Doors
- Interior Store Walls
- Trade Show Booths
- Banners
- Plastic
- Wood
- Metal

Computer generated vinyl letters and graphics are so durable, they can last more than 10 years, even through multiple car washes. Not only are vinyl graphics used to letter commercial and emergency vehicles, they are also used to produce the lettering for all types of rigid plastic signs, wood painted boards, aluminum panels and other advance composite sign background materials (Alumalite, Aluma-Wood, etc.).

You can choose any letter style, color, artwork or company logo and have it converted into a highly professional, beautiful, multi-colored vinyl graphic image.

Do You Know The Secrets To Getting Professional Looking Signage At Do-It-Yourself Prices?

If you've never put on vinyl letters before, the process can seem pretty intimidating at first. You don't want to "mess up" and have crooked letters. Or worse, botch the job so badly that you have to buy new letters all over again.

We have made our vinyl letter sets so easy to apply, they are literally "goof proof". Your new vinyl letters, logo and/or graphics will come;

- **Perfectly Aligned**
- Pre-Spaced, and
- **Ready-To-Apply as whole words together**
(not letter by letter)

Save About 70% Over Full-Service Prices!

Yes, you really can save about 70% off by lettering your own company vehicles, trailers, boats and/or storefront windows. And with our [fully illustrated, step-by-step guide](#), you'll see first hand just how easy it is to apply vinyl letters yourself.

In fact, when you use our [Vinyl*Magic Application Kit](#), we guarantee you'll get professional results every single time. *How?*

With our exclusive "[Goof Proof Guarantee](#)". If you mess up one letter or even the whole set, we'll send you the replacement letters you need absolutely free of charge.

In fact, we'll even pay the extra shipping costs!



What Is The Best Type Of Vinyl For Vehicle Lettering & Permanent Signs?

If you plan on having your new vinyl lettered sign in service for **2 years or more**, you should choose genuine “*2 mil thickness, High Performance Cast Vinyl Films*”. This specification is universally recognized by sign companies nationally and will remove any confusion as to the type of vinyl graphics you expect to be used for your signage.

Otherwise, if you just assume high performance vinyl graphics will be used, you will likely end up with intermediate vinyl lettering and graphics *instead*. Intermediate vinyl graphics are perfect for;

- **Banners**
- Temporary or short-term outdoor signs, and
- **Long term interior signs.**

However, on vehicles, windows, boats and permanent outdoor signs, high performance vinyl graphics are *strongly* recommended. The small difference in the overall price (approximately 30%) will extend the useful life of your signage by 300% to 400%!

Here's A Quick Tip:

In order to preserve the resell value of your vehicle, Vinyl letters can be removed with the help of a hair dryer or inexpensive heat gun.



High performance vinyl graphics have a larger selection of colors to choose from, superior fade resistant qualities and won't shrink like intermediate vinyl. When intermediate vinyl graphics shrink, they can leave an ugly adhesive residue around the edge of each letter. And as vinyl shrinks, cracks frequently develop in the graphics as it literally pulls itself apart. This doesn't happen right away but when it does, it literally looks as if someone took a razor knife and sliced the vinyl. It's not a pretty sight.

Vinyl Graphics & Lettering You Can See At Night



Although there is a vinyl that actually “*glows in the dark*”, it is designed for interior use only. What most people are referring to when they are seeking vinyl lettering for night time visibility is *reflective vinyl*. Reflective vinyl is the same type of vinyl used on **STOP** signs and other street signs.

Reflective vinyl graphics “*light up*” by reflecting light back at night such as when your headlights shine on a **STOP** sign. Without a light source though, the reflective vinyl has no light to reflect back and remains dark. Therefore, if you use reflective vinyl letters for a stationary sign that either won't catch the headlights or is not lit with exterior lighting, it will **NOT** be seen. So there's no point in spending the extra money.



Since reflective vinyl lettering is 74% brighter to the human eye than non-reflective vinyl graphics, they can add extra punch to a sign at night that has exterior lighting. High Performance Reflective Vinyl Graphics are durable outdoors 7-10 years.

Watch Out For These 3 Types Of Vinyl

1. Fluorescent Vinyl



There are certain types of vinyl which are more expensive and yet have an extremely short life span. *Fluorescent Vinyl* graphics are often requested because of it's brilliant, eye-catching color. Although it doesn't glow in the dark, it's color is so bright, it seems to give off it's own light. However, the fluorescent pigments are not UV stable (the rays of the sun washes out the pigment).

The sun usually turns these vibrant colors milky white in as little as **3-6 months**. There is one fluorescent vinyl brand we found that has built-in UV inhibitors and is rated for up to **2 years outdoors**. In either case, fluorescent vinyl graphics should only be considered for short term outdoor promotions. Indoors, it can last several years as long as the vinyl does not get any direct sunlight through storefront glass.

2. Simulated Metal Looking Vinyl

Mirror Chrome, Brushed Chrome, Mirror Gold and Brushed Gold vinyl resemble the appearance of metal and are frequently requested by clients. However, even though these vinyl films are more expensive than standard colors, the vast majority of these metallized polyester films are **rated for only 6-12 months outdoors**. If you search hard enough, you can find certain metallized films rated for up to 24 months.



We discovered a manufacturer who uses a proprietary process to extend the life of these metallized vinyl films **up to 5 years outdoors!** The price is virtually the same and they offer more finishing options. Call us for details and pricing.

3. Special Effects Vinyl



These eye-catching vinyl graphic films include, Holographic, Difracto, Metal Flake, Multi-Lens, Mosaic, Carbon Fiber, Fantasy Crystal and Diamond plate. These specialty films are designed for interior signs and **short term** outdoor applications. The "special effects" break down in as little 6-12 months outdoors.

What The Sign Industry Doesn't Want You To Know About Vinyl Graphics

There is a dirty little secret the sign industry has been hiding from the public for years. And this everyday practice continues to cost unsuspecting consumers much more than they realize.

Most people don't know that the sign industry is almost completely unregulated. As a result, sign companies are free to conduct business, behind closed doors, in any manner they choose. Some sign shops conduct business ethically. Unfortunately, far too many sign shops don't and consumers usually can't tell the difference, until it's too late.

Here's What's Happening

One of the easiest ways for a sign shop to cut costs is by **substituting** intermediate vinyl letters when high performance vinyl is clearly called for. *The raw material cost difference is around 300%!* For some sign shops, the financial incentive to save that much money on material costs is just too tempting.

Again, intermediate vinyl is a great product, but it was never intended for extended outdoor use on vehicles and permanent signs. If you personally make the decision to save money by choosing intermediate vinyl graphics over high performance, that's your choice.

However, it's not at all uncommon for a sign shop to pretend to offer "*superior quality*" and then substitute intermediate vinyl graphics instead of using the high performance vinyl the customer should be getting. Unfortunately, customers don't know the difference until after the standard 1 year warranty has expired.

The Root Of The Problem

Part of this problem started 20 years ago with the vinyl manufacturers making false claims that their intermediate grade vinyl lettering was "*Rated Outdoors For 3-5 Years Outdoors*". Sign shops trusted this information to be correct and substituted intermediate vinyl lettering for use on vehicles and permanent signs. After all, upwards of 5 years is not an unreasonable lifespan for a sign, right?

Unfortunately, it didn't take long to see this 3-5 year rated vinyl start fading and cracking in as little as 6-12 months! Although intermediate vinyl graphic films have improved over the years, it still shrinks, cracks and fades in a third of the time of high performance vinyl.

Most vinyl manufacturers today claim their intermediate vinyl films will last 5-6 years outdoors, but we continue to witness far too many failures in just 12-24 months. Where do we see all these failures? On signs everywhere, in full public view along the highway, which fade in a very short time after being installed.

The Paradox

The same vinyl manufacturers who over rate their intermediate vinyl graphics, **under rate** their high performance vinyl films. In many if not most cases, high performance vinyl letters have **far outlasted** their 5, 7 or 8 year ratings. With few exceptions, 2 mil, cast high performance vinyl lettering maintains its dimensional stability (doesn't crack), is highly fade resistant and lasts for several years, even under extreme salt water marine conditions.

One Final Word On This Subject

Lighted signs are now commonly decorated using specialized High Performance Translucent vinyl graphics. These films are specially designed to transmit light evenly through the colored vinyl graphics at night. When this type of vinyl lettering is used, lighted sign faces can easily last 7-10 years outdoors.

However, intermediate vinyl graphics light up just like “*the real thing*”. To the untrained eye, there’s no difference until the intermediate vinyl begins to show signs of fading in 6-12 months. So be aware that substitutions are just as common on lighted sign faces as non-lighted signs.

How Can You Protect Yourself?

When the type of signage you want calls for High Performance Vinyl graphics, ask for it by name. Make it part of the written specifications on your order. You’ll minimize the chance that an unauthorized substitution will be made because you are making it clear you are an informed buyer who knows the difference.

Custom Vinyl Banners

Are You Worried Your Temporary Banner Won't Be Worth The Investment? What If It Doesn't Get Noticed Or Make The Right Impression?

When compared to other forms of advertising like radio, newspaper or TV, custom vinyl banners are still one of the most attractive and cost effective ways to promote any business or special event. Whether you're announcing a new business, having a special sale, drawing visitors to a trade show booth or advertising a particular product, colorful eye-catching banners grab attention and stimulate interest!

Custom vinyl banners are one of the most versatile products ever offered by the sign industry. Banners are;

- Durable outdoors
- Easy to hang and display
- Waterproof
- Flexible
- Lightweight
- Portable
- Durable
- Tear Resistant, and
- Conveniently stored for reuse.

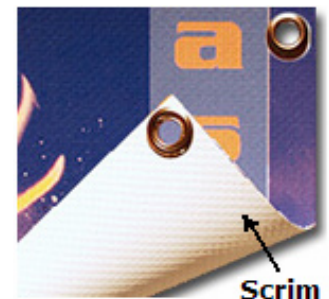
Vinyl banners can be customized to virtually any size, shape or color scheme. The banner material itself is commonly decorated using either computer generated vinyl graphics or a full-color digital printer. When lettered with high performance vinyl graphics, we've seen heavy duty vinyl banners last as long as 10 years outdoors.



What Is The Best Type Of Banner Material To Use Outdoors?

For most outdoor banners, we recommend using “13 ounce heavy duty banner material”. The part that makes the banner “heavy duty” is the nylon scrim woven into the waterproof fabric. This strong, tight weave provides the much needed tear resistance during high winds.

However, even when using heavy duty banner material, the grommets (eyelets) can tear right out of the corners if the banner is not hung properly.



We include **Banner Installation Instructions** with every order to prevent the wind from ruining the appearance of your banner.

For Two-Sided Banners, Which Material Is Recommended?



Standard heavy duty banner material is “translucent”. You can see light through it. So if you put letters on both sides of this banner material, you can see a faint image of the letters on the other side of the banner. This “ghosting” effect is distracting and doesn’t look professional.

Therefore, by specifying a “16 ounce *blockout banner material*” for your double-sided banners, you will avoid the see-through effect while adding significant strength to your new banner. For

maximum durability and wind resistance, double-sided banners should have hems and grommets placed every 30”.

Street Banners Have Special Requirements

Most municipalities now have strict rules regarding how street banners are to be made. It’s a matter of public safety. We know these requirements and routinely provide street banners for special events, parades and festivals.



Street banners should be made using 20 ounce, extra heavy duty blockout banner material with a super tough webbing sewn into the hem for extra reinforcement. Grommets should be placed every 2’. Wind slits substantially reduce wind loads and are now usually required by municipalities on all street banners.

What Is The Best Type Of Banner Material To Use Indoors?

The same banner material that’s used for outdoor banners is great for indoor banners too. If your audience is going to be viewing your banner up close though, we offer a premium “Super Smooth” banner material option at no additional charge.

Which Type Of Banner Material Is Recommended For Trade Shows?

Trade shows are all about drawing new customers by putting your best foot forward. One of the best looking banner materials for trade shows is the Super Smooth banner material because it looks great up close.



However, since a trade show is where everyone is “showing off”, there is a more popular, higher end option to consider to make sure your booth stands out in the crowd.

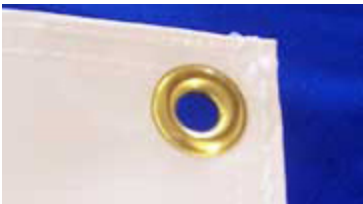
If you wish to project the best possible Corporate Image, there’s nothing better than a full-color **Polyester Plastic Banner**. When digitally printed on a high resolution printer, this plastic banner material will project the highest quality appearance possible. It’s so durable and flexible, it can be used again and again with a portable, retractable banner stand.

Our premium trade show banners are printed directly onto the polyester plastic film using our high resolution, full-color printer and then protected with a vinyl film overlay on the back to preserve the image from show to show.

For other banner display and mounting accessories, please refer to our Sign Catalog.

Custom Vinyl Banner Finishing Options

Banners can be used indoors or out. How the banners will be used, (displayed), normally prescribes how the banner is finished. When displaying banners outside always think safety first. Be sure the supporting structure is sound, banners hung out in the open can be subject to significant wind loads. Be sure you have enough tie points and strong enough banner construction.



Style A, Hemmed edges with grommets top and bottom as needed, (number of grommets depends on banner size). Most common finishing, useful for a variety of applications. Best for mounting against a wall or fence.



Style B, Hemmed edges with grommets top and bottom as needed, with rope sewn into the top and bottom hems, rope ends extend out from the banner edge making ties, length can be specified. This adds versatility and strength to the basic grommet style, allowing the banner to be tied between poles or other secure fixtures.



Style C, Hem edges with rope sewn into the top and bottom hems. Rope extends from banner making ties, length can be specified. For banners tied between secure fixtures, this is a strong construction, it spreads wind forces over the length of the banner.



Style D, Hemmed sides with webbing sewn into top and bottom, webbing extends as needed for ties. This is an even stronger construction for banners that may be subjected to higher wind loads.



Style E, Hemmed sides, webbing top and bottom with grommets spaced as needed (depends on banner size). Adding grommets offers more tie down points, this is especially helpful to support larger banners to eliminate sagging, if the supporting structure will allow for it.



Styles F, To support banners on hardware, sleeves can be sewn into the top and bottom, The sleeve can be sized to fit the hardware, The circumference (dia. X 3.14) of the supporting pole, divided by 2 plus an inch will calculate a good sleeve size.



Style G, Grommets can be added to the top and bottom in an extra extension above and below the sleeves for more versatility in display options.



Style H, Street, or light pole banners are usually finished with sleeves top and bottom with a grommet just below the top sleeve and just above the bottom sleeve.



Style I, For a very strong construction which will be attached using ties you supply, sewn in webbing with “D” rings offers a very reliable solution. For large banners, to add tie points, grommets can be added to the top and bottom, or even sides.

Coroplast Brand, Corrugated Plastic Signs



Coroplast is a tough, *waterproof*, corrugated plastic sign material which resembles the appearance of “*plastic cardboard*”. The hollow-fluted design of Coroplast makes this sign material extremely lightweight, easy to handle and display in a number of ways.

Corrugated plastic signs are not as flexible as banner material or as rigid as solid plastic sheets. Although custom corrugated plastic signs are commonly used outdoors, high winds can damage the corrugated sign material. Corrugated plastic signs are intended for interior signs or short term outdoor signs, up to 2 years.

The lightweight properties of Coroplast have made it a popular alternative to poster board and foam core mounting board. Foam core is not waterproof and the surface is much more sensitive to damage than corrugated plastic. Common uses for Coroplast corrugated plastic signs include;

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yard signs• Real Estate Signs• Garage Sale• Political Signs• Special Event Signage• Directional and Informational Signage• Industrial | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Golf Tournament Sponsor Signs• Contractor Promotional Signs• Point of Purchase• Window Signage• Temporary Signage• Advertising signage• Trade Shows |
|---|---|

Sizes

Custom Corrugated Plastic Signs can be made in one piece up to 4' x 8'. Larger sizes are possible if multiple sheets are installed together on a flat surface. Coroplast signs are 3mm (approx. 1/8" to 3/16") in thickness. 18" x 24" is the standard size used for most real estate and political signs.



Installation, Mounting & Display Options



Corrugated plastic signs fit all standard real estate frames or you can use the more economical Coroplast sign stakes. Coroplast can be attached to a door, hung inside a window or from ceilings,

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frames or Stakes• Suction cups• Double-sided tape | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Velcro®• Hanging (grommets / eyelets)• Self-supporting (with an easel) |
|--|---|

Coroplast signs have hollow “Flutes” that run either horizontal or vertical. Standard is to have the flutes running vertical to allow for an optional Coroplast sign stake. If you prefer horizontal flutes, you must make a special request.



“Cheap” Coroplast Corrugated Plastic Signs Don’t Have To Look Cheap

Most people looking at signs don’t know what they’re made out of ... nor do they really care. When you look at signs, what do *you* see? The message, the colors and any graphics, right?



You can dramatically increase the effectiveness of your advertising display by focusing on these design elements. With an attractive layout and color scheme, you can turn any ordinary piece of “*plastic cardboard*” into a highly effective sign for your business!

Let our Art Department help create an alluring, eye-catching design for you.

Coroplast Myth Exposed

Coroplast corrugated plastic signs aren’t quite as “*cheap*” as you may have heard. The public perception of Coroplast corrugated plastic signs is that they are *cheap* because the materials are obviously so cheap. When compared to other sign materials, corrugated plastic sign sheeting is indeed much cheaper to buy.

However, what you may not realize is that it takes **exactly** the same amount of time and material to design and decorate a corrugated plastic sign, as it does an aluminum sign. So the reality is, the only cost difference to make an aluminum sign instead of a Coroplast sign is the difference in the raw material cost of the aluminum panel itself.

For example, the cost difference between aluminum metal sign and Coroplast corrugated plastic signs is only about \$4.00, for a standard 18” x 24” sign,. And yet the aluminum sign looks much more professional and will last *at least* 5 times longer than a Coroplast corrugated plastic sign. Just thought you might like to know.

Aluminum Metal Signs

The choices for Custom Aluminum Metal Signs are broader ... and more confusing than ever. Once you know the strengths and weaknesses of each type of aluminum metal sign material available, you’ll be able to properly select the one best suited to your individual needs.



Your Aluminum Metal Sign Material Options Include;



- 1. Aluminum** – Solid metal sign material with a baked on enamel finish
- 2. Aluma-lite** – Aluminum with a rigid, corrugated plastic core
- 3. Aluma-Plastic** – Solid plastic core
- 4. Aluma-Wood** – Solid wood core

Let's begin with the simple, traditional aluminum metal sign panel.

Custom aluminum metal signs are strong, light-weight and among the most durable of all sign materials. Even with the steady price increases world wide in the raw cost of aluminum, this sign material is still quite cost effective and remains in high demand for its unbeatable qualities.

When you are looking for a perfectly smooth, baked-on, high gloss factory painted finish, custom aluminum metal signs project a first class image. Aluminum customized signs are guaranteed by the manufacturer not to peel, flake, rust, corrode, or fade for a full 10 years. Additionally, a custom aluminum sign can never rot or deteriorate like a standard wooden sign.



Most Common Uses

• Real Estate	• Informational	• Parking Lots
• Contractors	• POP Displays	• Trailers
• Commercial	• Industrial	• Exterior Walls
• Marine	• Safety Signs	• Street Signs
• New Business	• Corporate	• Gates
• Directional	• Construction	• Fences

What Are The Most Popular Sizes For Custom Aluminum Metal Signs?



Since real estate agents and contractors buy so many aluminum yard signs, one of the most common sizes is 18" height x 24" width". We also stock real estate frames which accommodate a 24" height x 18" width aluminum sign panel as well.

Keep in mind though that aluminum sheeting can be easily cut to any "odd" size to meet your individual needs. Odd size pricing just uses the next standard size up.

Other popular sizes include;

- 2' height x 3' width
- 3' height x 2' width, and
- 2' height x 4' width.

The sizes above can also fit into a sturdy angle iron step stake for a convenient and portable display. If you are in an area which has seasonally high winds, you should strongly consider upgrading the thickness of your custom aluminum metal signage for these larger size signs.

The thicker the aluminum, the less likely the aluminum metal sign panel will buckle or be ripped from the bolts which attach the sign panel to the sign frame. Increasing the thickness of your custom aluminum sign from a standard .040" to a medium duty .063" or extra heavy duty .080" gauge aluminum will enhance the durability of your aluminum signs. Generally, the larger the size aluminum sign you want, the thicker the metal material needs to be.

Did You Know?



Interstate signs, street signs and STOP signs are made from .080" thickness aluminum.

Which Thickness Aluminum Metal Sign Material Is Best For Custom Building Signage?

When buying custom aluminum signs to mount to a building, you *can* use .040" gauge aluminum for signs up to 2' x 4' in size. Technically, you can use .040" gauge aluminum for sizes all the way up to 4' x 10' provided you mount the metal flat against the a wall with enough screws. The larger the panel size though, the greater the tendency to bend. As a result, a large thin gauge aluminum metal sign can have a wavy or rippled appearance when installed, especially on a corrugated metal building.

Therefore, when you want a bigger building sign, we recommend increasingly thicker gauges of aluminum with the optimum heavy duty thickness being .080" gauge aluminum. The next thickness down is .063" medium duty thickness. On smaller size signs (up to 2' x 4') even a modest increase to .063" gauge aluminum substantially increases the stiffness, appearance and rigidity of the metal sign panel.

What Is The Recommended Thickness For Hanging Aluminum Signs?

For *exterior* aluminum hanging signs, you can use .040" for sizes up to 18" x 24". Some people use this thinner .040" thickness all the way up in size to 2' x 3', but we don't recommend it. For sizes over 18" x 24", we recommend at least .063" thickness aluminum signs.

And for larger hanging signs like 2' x 4', 3' x 3' or 3' x 4', .080" gauge aluminum works best for these heavy duty applications.

When in doubt, it's better to go too thick than too thin because the heaviest .080" gauge aluminum we stock is still less than 1/8" thick.

Are Custom Aluminum Metal Signs Suitable For Installation Between Two Posts?

While you can install larger aluminum signs (like 6', 8' or 10' long) on or between posts, you have better options to choose from;

1. *Aluma-Wood* is the strongest and most rigid exterior grade sign panel available with it's dense, 1/2 inch thick solid wood core
2. *Alumalite* (1/2" thickness) has almost the same panel strength as Aluma-Wood making it a popular choice for larger signs. 1/2" Alumalite is the **2nd** strongest sign material
3. *Alumalite* (1/4" thickness) is still a strong, highly rigid background material and has the **3rd** highest panel strength
4. *Aluma-Plastic* sign panels have 10 times more strength than .040" aluminum sheets. Aluma-Plastic is not quite as stiff as Alumalite, but is still considered a rigid sign material making it **#4** in strength

On a scale of 1 to 10, with "10" having the highest relative strength, here's how each aluminum sign background material compares to one another;

Rigid Background Materials	Relative Panel Strength	Standard Material Thickness
Aluma-Wood	10 Strongest	.50" 1/2"
Wood	9	.50" 1/2"
AlumaLite	8	.50" 1/2"
AlumaLite	7 Medium	.25" 1/4"
Aluma-Plastic	5	.187" 3/16"
Aluminum (Heavy)	5	.080" 5/64"
Aluminum (Medium)	3	.063" 1/16"
Aluminum (Light)	1 Lightest	.040" 3/64"

Many standard aluminum colors are readily available including;

- Black
- Yellow
- Green
- Blue
- Red
- Mirror Silver
- Mirror Gold
- Brushed Silver
- Brushed Gold
- Orange

However, these factory painted aluminum colors are only available up to .040” thickness. White aluminum is available in thicknesses all the way up to .080”.

When you need a more rigid sign panel in a color other than white, you have three great options to choose from;

1. Unpainted aluminum sheeting can be completely covered with self-adhesive vinyl at our shop in your choice of any color. By the way, all street signs are simply covered with reflective vinyl. They're not painted and last for years on end.
2. We can spray paint or powder coat thicker aluminum sheets any custom color you choose, or;
3. You can choose a rigid composite aluminum material which has a broader range of factory painted colors available such as *Aluma-Plastic, Aluma-lite & Aluma-Wood*.

Usually, **Option #3** is not only the **best choice**, it's the most cost effective (but not always). For example, if you are looking for a gold metallic background color for a 2' x 3' x .080” aluminum metal sign, the most cost effective solution would be to simply cover the metal sign panel with gold metallic vinyl. It's fast, it's easy and highly durable.

Setting up to paint such a small sheet from stock or having to buy a whole 4' x 8' sheet just to get a small section of a special color isn't always practical. We'll gladly provide you with the best option to suit your individual needs at the time of your order.

Life Span

Aluminum Sign Material will outlast the vinyl lettering that is put on them. Intermediate vinyl lettering is intended for short term outdoor signs and is rated for 3-5 years. Our High Performance Vinyl Graphics will last 7-10 years outdoors, even under extreme environmental conditions.

Aluma-Plastic Metal Signs

As the brand name implies, *Aluma-Plastic* is made of both aluminum and plastic sign material. Two factory-painted sheets of aluminum are permanently bonded to both sides of a high density plastic core, sandwiching the plastic sign panel in between.

The solid plastic core adds body, thickness and rigidity to the sheet. In fact, Aluma-Plastic metal signs have 10 times more strength than a sheet of .040" aluminum making it the **4th** strongest sign panel (*Aluma-Wood* metal signs are **#1** in panel strength). Yet the material is still lightweight at only 32 pounds for an entire 4' x 8' sheet.

Aluma-Plastic Offers More Finishes and Color Options Than Any Other Rigid Sign Panel On The Market Today



From classic black & white to bright gold, bronze, mirror silver and marble finishes, Aluma-Plastic metal signs can help your business signage project a highly professional corporate image.



Aluma-Plastic composite sign material will not swell, wick water, corrode, rot or delaminate even under prolonged water exposure. The manufacture guarantees the painted finish against cracking, flaking and peeling for 10 years making it a durable and reliable outdoor sign grade material.

The fade resistant surface of Aluma-Plastic metal signs makes vinyl re-lettering simple. You can change the lettering again and again with minimal or no “ghosting” at all (ghosting is seeing the faint images of vinyl lettering that has been removed).

Most Common Uses For Aluma-Plastic Signs Include;

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| • Corporate | • Real Estate | • Hospital |
| • Architectural | • New Construction | • University |
| • Trade show | • Commercial | • Military |
| • POP Displays | • Marina | • Industrial |
| • Contractors | • Directional | • Business |

Caution:

During handling & installation, extreme care must be exercised. The painted finish is not as scratch resistant as you might think. Although Aluma-Plastic metal signs are highly weather and fade resistant, the paint can be easily scratched if you're not careful.

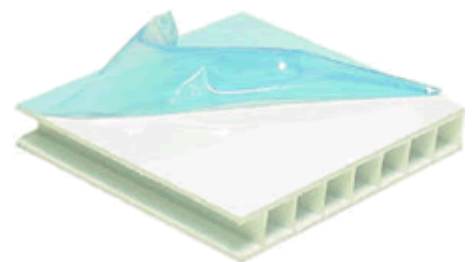
When cleaning the surface, only use a mild soapy water solution and the softest cloth you can find. Don't use dry paper towels as they can put extremely fine scratches in the paint which may be visible up close.

Alumalite Metal Signs

Are you worried about premature deterioration or rot ruining your signage? A growing number of consumers have concerns about using wood as a component in the raw materials used for their sign. As a direct result, metal sign background materials like Alumalite and Aluma-Plastic are in high demand.

Alumalite is a strong, aluminum composite metal sign panel with a high density, copolymer corrugated plastic core. Similar in construction to Aluma-Plastic, *Alumalite* has two factory-painted sheets of aluminum permanently bonded to both sides of a corrugated plastic core, sandwiching the plastic panel in between.

It's this plastic corrugated core that gives the Alumalite metal sign panel it's strength and rigidity. When using a ½" thick Alumalite, the panel strength is virtually the same as *Aluma-Wood* (1/4" thickness is standard though). Alumalite metal signs have become a popular alternative to wood painted signs for it's durable, lightweight properties.



Applications

Alumalite metal signs are also the perfect solution when the panel weight must remain low while retaining excellent rigidity. The relatively light weight of Alumalite makes it an excellent choice when mounting considerations or mobility prohibit the weight of heavier wood core sign panels.

Finishing

To create a finished appearance, the edges of the Alupalite metal sign material can be capped with either white or black plastic trim. Edge capping enhances the appearance of Alupalite by making it look like a solid aluminum sheet.

Life Span

The painted Alupalite metal sign finish has a 10 Year Manufacturer's Warranty against cracking, flaking or peeling. Alupalite will usually outlast the vinyl lettering that is put on them. Intermediate vinyl lettering is intended for short term outdoor signs and is rated for 3-5 years. Our High Performance Vinyl Graphics will last 7-10 years outdoors, even under extreme environmental conditions.

Colors

White, Black, Red, Green, Blue, Yellow, Almond and Bronze. The fade resistant surface of Alupalite makes vinyl re-lettering simple. You can change the lettering again and again with minimal or no "ghosting" at all (ghosting is seeing the faint images of vinyl lettering that has been removed).

Caution:

During handling & installation, extreme care must be exercised. The painted metal sign finish is not as scratch resistant as you might think. Although Alupalite is highly weather and fade resistant, the paint can be easily scratched if you're not careful.

When cleaning the surface, only use a mild soapy water solution and the softest cloth you can find. Don't use dry paper towels as they can put extremely fine scratches in the paint which may be visible up close.

Please Note:

When mounting Alupalite signs with screws or bolts, the corrugated plastic core can **compress** because it's **hollow**. When you attach the sign, **TIGHTEN THE SCREW BY HAND**. When the screw head is flush with the sign panel, **STOP!** Continuing to tighten the screw will permanently damage the panel by compressing or squeezing the material together.

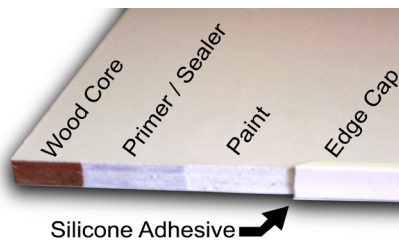
If you screw the Alupalite metal sign too tightly, this will create a circular shaped "ding" around the screw head and it will never come out.

Most Common Uses For AlumaLite Metal Signs Include;

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| • Corporate | • Real Estate | • Hospital |
| • Architectural | • New Construction | • University |
| • Trade show | • Commercial | • Military |
| • POP Displays | • Marina | • Industrial |
| • Contractors | • Directional | • Business |

Aluma-Wood Signs

Advanced Aluma-Wood sign material has a solid plywood core permanently sealed with aluminum sheeting factory bonded to the surface. The thickness and density of this pre-finished aluminum metal sign board makes it one of the strongest panels in the sign industry with greater impact and wind resistance than AlumaLite, Aluma-Plastic or straight Aluminum.



The Aluminum metal sign panel is bonded to the plywood core and comes with a factory baked-on, high gloss painted finish warranted not to crack, chip, flake or peel for 5 years. All edges are sealed with a plastic 1/2" cap which not only protects the product from moisture, but also creates a finished edge.

When using a contrasting color like black edge cap on a white sign, the black edge cap automatically serves as a decorative 1/2" border on the sign. If you don't want a border on your white sign, choose white trim cap instead so the trim cap will blend in with the sign.

Applications

When you need a sturdy, rigid sign panel designed to last for many years outdoors, Aluma-Wood signs are ideally suited for permanent outdoor business signage, construction site signs, real estate signs, wall mounted signs, post and panel signs, hanging and fence mount signs.

Colors

White, Black, Red, Green, Blue, Yellow, Almond and Bronze.

The fade resistance of the durable aluminum metal sign

surface makes vinyl re-lettering simple. You can change the lettering again and again with minimal or no "ghosting" at all (ghosting is seeing the faint images of vinyl lettering that has been removed).



Caution:

During handling & installation, extreme care must be exercised. The painted metal sign finish is not as scratch resistant as you might think. Although Aluma-Wood is highly weather and fade resistant, the paint can be easily scratched if you're not careful.

When cleaning the surface, only use a mild soapy water solution and the softest cloth you can find. Don't use dry paper towels as they can put extremely fine scratches in the paint which may be visible up close.

Please Note:

The manufacturer of Aluma-Wood has done an exceedingly **poor job** of letting sign companies know how important it is to seal the wood edges properly. While this may seem like common sense, the "*fine print*" on the manufacturer's website also warns that their "*warranty is null and void if their product is not sealed with their proprietary sealer*".

In order to keep the manufacturer's warranty valid, we only use the recommended sealer as a watertight moisture barrier. When combined with the plastic edge capping, Aluma-Wood is guaranteed not to delaminate for five (5) full years!

Unfortunately, most sign companies are simply not aware of this warranty condition and fail to use the proper sealant which could lead to premature failure of their signs (and warranty), even though they use the same sign material!

Rot-Safe™ Wood Painted Signs

Won't today's wood painted signs just be rotting out tomorrow?

Using the wrong type of plywood for an exterior custom wood sign is a disaster waiting to happen. The plywood boards available from national home improvement warehouses are for "interior use only". And yet consumers and sign companies alike still attempt to use these boards for permanent outdoor wooden signs. No wonder wood painted signs get such a bad reputation.

Even so-called "treated plywood boards" are completely inappropriate for use in signage because of warping and problems with paint sticking to the treated surface.

What Are Your Options?

Rot-Safe™ Wood Painted Boards are a true, commercial grade, exterior sign panel. The factory painted and double sealed edges lock out moisture, keeping your custom wood painted sign looking brand new for years to come.

The raw material for our **Rot-Safe™** Wood Painted Signs starts with a high quality MDO (**M**edium **D**ensity **O**verlay) plywood core. The plywood core is made with the same waterproof adhesives used in marine plywood. A special hardwood veneer face - sanded before the overlay is applied - minimizes wood grain show-through, even after it's painted.

The tough MDO overlay is a high fiber sheet which has been treated with a resin formula for optimal paint adhesion yielding superior surface performance and much longer life than other wooden sign materials.

Rot-Safe™ Wood Painted Signs also feature solid inner plys and a tight core gap which means fewer and smaller edge voids for greater weather resistance. No other custom wood painted sign stays as smooth for as long. Although the wooden sign panel itself is sealed at the factory with commercial primer and paint, computer generated vinyl letters and graphics are applied to the painted surface resulting in a premium, commercial quality wood painted sign.



Whether you are looking for a temporary site sign or a permanent sign for your business, Custom Wood Painted Signs will project a highly professional image for years to come.

Life Span

Here in 2006, we still have wood painted signs in use today that were originally installed for our clients in 1989 that have never required replacing or repainting so if you need to display a permanent sign, wood is still an excellent choice.

Our **Rot-Safe™** Wood Signs will usually outlast applied vinyl lettering and graphics.

Acrylic Plexiglass Plastic Signs

If you are seeking cost effective Corporate Signage, there is no other sign material quite like Acrylic Plexiglas. This plastic sign material has a unique luster and sheen all it's own. The deep glossy appearance of brilliantly colored Plexiglass signs display a first class corporate image.

Acrylic plastic signs are rigid yet lightweight, thin and quite easy to mount with screws, double-stick tape, adhesive and with other plastic sign holders.

In recent years, the raw materials and manufacturing processes of plastic sheeting have vastly improved making custom Acrylic Plexiglass Plastic Signs a highly sought after product. The pigments in the Acrylic plastic sign material hold their colors better than ever before.



Unlike corrugated plastic signs, Acrylic Plastic Signs have a perfectly smooth, slick surface.

You will find Acrylic Plexiglass Plastic Signs most commonly used inside;



- Corporate Offices
- Retail Stores
- Universities, and
- Hospitals

And used as;

- Identification Signs
- Directional Signs
- Wall Signs
- Hanging Signs
- Promotional Signs
- POP Displays, and
- Trade Show Signs.

The Acrylic Plastic Sign Material is dimensionally stable so it's also perfectly suited for use outdoors when properly installed using the right plastic sign holders.

Popular Sizes

Individual custom plastic signs are cut to order from 4' x 8' sheets to fit your unique, individual needs. Common thicknesses include 1/8", 3/16" and 1/4" plastic.

Sheets of Acrylic Plastic Sign material are also available in oversize sheets on special order. However, for sizes larger than 4' x 8', we strongly recommend using a modified acrylic plastic which has superior strength and shatter resistance as described below.

Please note:

Acrylic Plastic sheeting can **crack or break** under stress such as too much wind or due to vandalism. If you need a high impact plastic sign material, you have two readily available options;

1. Acrysteel Plastic Signs have **10 times** the impact strength as standard Acrylic Plexiglass and is perhaps the most popular of all the plastic sign materials used today for lighted signs
2. Lexan Plastic Signs have **50 times** the impact strength as standard Plexiglass Signs (Lexan is a common sign material, but it's so tough, it is also used as bullet proof glass!)

These high impact plastic sign materials are commonly used for larger signs, especially outdoor lighted signs. In certain “high risk” applications where breakage may occur, using these high impact plastic sign materials may be desirable for smaller signs as well.

PVC Plastic Sign

Are you looking for a professional quality, interior plastic sign?

When used inside, these plastic signs are inexpensive to purchase, yet highly durable and professional in appearance. The smooth satin surface has almost zero glare or reflection which has a conservative appeal.

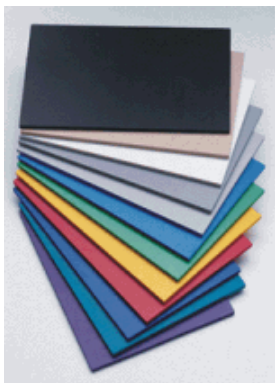
Just like Acrylic Plastic Signs, PVC Plastic Signs are rigid, lightweight and install easily with screws, double-sided tape, adhesive, Velcro and with other plastic sign holders found in our Sign Catalog.

Caution: Recommend for “Interior Use Only”

Although most sign companies still recommend PVC Plastic Signs for outdoor use, we strictly recommend PVC Plastic Signs for **“Interior Use Only”**. *Use PVC Plastic signs outdoors at your own risk.*



While many people love the results they've experienced with their PVC Plastic Signs displayed outdoors, we have personally witnessed far too many occurrences where the plastic becomes so hot in the sun, it can cause the plastic to warp (badly). With so many better options to choose from for outdoor signage, why take the chance?



The PVC Plastic Sign material comes in white and several standard, rich, vibrant colors. In recent years, the raw materials and manufacturing processes of PVC Plastic sheeting have vastly improved making Plastic PVC Signs a highly sought after product, especially for retailers.

PVC Plastic Signs are often used inside Offices, Retail Stores, as Hanging Signs, Promotional Signs, Sale Signs, Directional Signs, Point of Purchase Signs, Identification Signs, High End Trade Show Signs, Interior Signage and virtually anywhere else you need to professionally display your message.

Popular Sizes

Individual custom plastic signs are cut to order from 4' x 8' sheets to fit your unique, individual needs. Common thicknesses include 1/8", and 1/4" plastic. However, PVC Plastic Signs are readily available up to 1" thick!

Acrysteel Brand Plastic Signs

Perhaps the most common outdoor plastic sign material in use today ... and for good reason!

Acrysteel brand plastic is a high impact modified acrylic plastic which is commonly used for outdoor signage, especially lighted signs. Although not as tough as "steel", Acrysteel is a very tough, UV stable plastic sign material.

Available in both white and clear, we almost always start with white and apply vinyl graphics for a professional quality appearance. When used outdoors, the plastic's white pigment is unusually stable and stays bright white for years, even under the harshest environment.

As a result, you can change the lettering again and again with minimal or no "ghosting" at all (ghosting is seeing the faint images of vinyl lettering that has been removed). This flexibility is ideal for shopping centers where tenants regularly change over the years. Instead of buying all new plastic panels, the same plastic can be used over and over again.

Acrysteel Plastic Signs have 10 times the impact resistance as standard Acrylic Plastic Signs.

Lexan is even tougher with a whopping 50 times the impact resistance as standard Acrylic. In fact, Lexan is so tough, it's one of the only plastic sign materials guaranteed by the manufacturer (General Electric) against breakage for 10 full years!

However, the one drawback to Lexan though is that it starts to show signs of "yellowing" in as little as 2 years outdoors. The plastic just doesn't stay as bright white as Acrysteel.

On the other hand, Acrysteel doesn't have a guarantee against breakage, not even for one day.

If you consider your new sign to be in a "high risk" environment where breakage is a real concern, Lexan is probably your best choice. But if you consider your new sign to be in a "low risk" area, Acrysteel is probably the better choice.

Whether you choose Acrysteel or Lexan, both plastic sign materials are considered to be "*the best of the best*" in the sign industry.

"The End"

If you found this Buyer's Guide useful, please drop me line. I would love to hear your feedback, "*the good, the bad or even the ugly*".

Warm regards from the south,



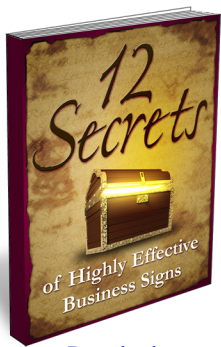
Tim Harrelson
Head SignChef
www.TheSignChef.com
1-800-899-6272

P.S.
Forwarding this report to other business professionals you know is a thoughtful gesture. They'll be grateful you cared enough to take a moment and send it to them!

Free Bonuses

Yes, practically everyone likes getting something for free.
Especially when that something has real value.
Inside these special reports, you'll discover valuable information.
Information that can help you avoid making expensive sign mistakes.
And give your business a sharper, competitive edge for years to come.

I've also included marketing reports exclusively designed for small businesses.
One of these reports actually turned my thinking about marketing **upside down!**
This key insight made a profound difference in my own small business.
I hope it does the same for you too.



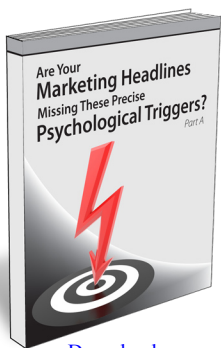
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Is Your Signage Missing These Critical Components That Grab Customers Off The Street?

Do you really understand what makes one sign attract attention while others remain virtually invisible? How much business will you continue to lose if your signs fail to get noticed or spark consumer interest? Not knowing these *simple*, yet profoundly important secrets may very well be costing you more ongoing business than you realize.

Once you discover the "[12 Secrets of Highly Effective Sign Design](#)", you can use this knowledge to dramatically enhance the effectiveness of all your custom business signage.

A \$49.95 value, these "[12 Secrets](#)" are available free, for a very limited time. You can download a save a copy to your computer right now.



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If you download only one report, this is it. A \$59.95 value, these secrets to writing [Attention Grabbing Headlines](#) are available free, with our compliments!

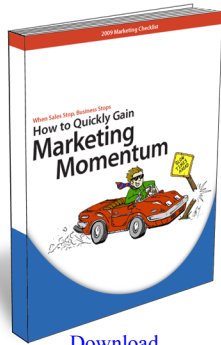


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"Biggest Marketing Problem"

Are Your Business Solutions Your BIGGEST Marketing Problem?

Sales and marketing professionals are often taught to emphasize the features, benefits and solutions their product or service provides. But how and when should you address your clients' most pressing problems?

This eye-opening report turned my thinking about marketing **upside down**. And it's yours now just for the [clicking](#). So clickity clack and e-mail me back with your feedback. I'd love to hear from you!



[Download](#)
"Marketing Momentum"

How To Quickly Gain Marketing Momentum

When Sales Stop, Business Stops!

So keeping your marketing engine humming along is kind of important. Let your foot off the gas for even a second and you could lose momentum. And that can be dangerous. Especially during these times of economic uncertainty.

So here's a list of marketing options and ideas to ponder. This list is a great brainstorming and goal planning tool. It can help you clarify how you want to promote and grow your business. You can [download](#) it now, with our compliments.

This Report Courtesy of



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