


How to Conduct a Sign and Graphics Audit of Your Building

 Your signs and graphics are fine ... or so you think! But for many business owners and facility managers, over time they become like wallpaper. And without a second glance or further thought, you assume they're performing as intended — to alert, promote or inform.

Perhaps your assumption is wrong. As time marches on, it's entirely possible that the signage you've put up is letting you down!

But what to do? Conduct a sign and graphics audit (i.e., review) on a regular basis — perhaps quarterly or every six months. You certainly wouldn't want to let an entire year go by without one!



WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING YOUR REVIEW?

With an open mind and wide-open eyes, be on the lookout for:

- > **Aging:** While some well-regarded businesses occupy the same site so long that they and their signage reach landmark status, most do not. A periodic replacement is often in order with a refreshed design to renew consumer interest in your business.
- > **Branding:** When logos are upgraded, signage is often the last element to be refreshed. Then, too, businesses evolve. It's not uncommon for "Bob's Dry Cleaners" to become "Bob's Dry Cleaners & Expert Tailoring."
- > **Colors:** Severe weather and airborne pollutants are tough on paint, and so is the sun. Ultraviolet (UV) rays are especially harmful and can fade or discolor signage over time.
- > **Condition:** Metals rust. Brackets become loose. Guy wires fray. Just like cars, houses, buildings and even business owners, periodic maintenance is a must for signage! Begin with a thorough inspection from top to bottom!
- > **Lighting:** Bulbs burn out and even long-lasting LEDs (light-emitting diodes) can fail. Because illuminated signs attract more consumer notice than non-lighted types, non-working elements also gain more than their fair share of (negative) attention!
- > **Opportunities:** New sign and graphics technologies hit the marketplace steadily. Floor graphics and printed acoustic ceiling tiles are but two newer opportunities you may be overlooking. Bright, energy-efficient and long-lasting LEDs in place of older incandescent or fluorescent lighting are another!
- > **Regulations:** Outdoors, municipal codes govern many signs while indoors, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) often rules. While regulations don't change often, you wouldn't want to find yourself behind the times. Fines for non-compliance can be costly.
- > **Visibility:** Are overgrown tree limbs or shrubbery obscuring your signs? A trim may well be in order. If you're leasing your site, it may be the landlord's responsibility to cut them back. Also be on the lookout for neighboring signs that may be obstructing the view, even your own! It's not uncommon for a seasonal display to block the view of an important sign or graphic!

HOW BEST TO CONDUCT YOUR AUDIT?

To ensure a thorough effort, take a systematic approach. Start outside and work your way in. Better yet, begin a block or two away and approach your location as a motorist would to visualize what they see and what they don't see.

Then, whether inside or outdoors, work in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction — examining every surface and its signage or graphics from top to bottom.

Another tip? Enlist the aid of a trusted confidant who will walk with you with a notepad or tablet in hand to jot down ideas. A “yes man” who assures you that all is well will do you no favors. In fact, it's probably best to take along someone experienced in graphic design who has a trained eye for attractive solutions.

Best yet is having an experienced signage provider conduct the audit with you. Like no other resource, they'll be the one who can identify any visual communication opportunities you may be missing.

YOUR EFFORT WILL BE WELL WORTH IT

Signage industry research confirms what you probably already know; good signage is good for business, ... and vice versa:

- > Nearly 8 in 10 consumers said they had entered a store or business they had never visited before based simply on its signs, [per a study commissioned by FedEx Office.](#)
- > Roughly 60% of businesses reported that changing the design or enhancing the visibility of their

signage had a positive impact on sales, number of transactions and profits, with an average increase of about 10%, according to [research from the University of Cincinnati.](#)

- > Over 50% of people indicated that poor signage (e.g., bad quality, misspelled words) deters them from entering a place of business, according to the FedEx Office survey.



For more information — including free signage and graphics audits — contact us. At Image360®, we know the best practices for signage, graphics and displays for small businesses and we use these talents and insights to benefit your company or organization. A national resource with a network of nearby Centers, at Image360 we distinguish ourselves not only with comprehensive solutions but also professional results.