

Secrets of Selling More Using Signage & Screens

How to Use Signs to Get More
Customers & Sales for Your Hotel



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MMS

Making More Sales
rapid profit growth

HOSPITALITY

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Chapter 1

The Fourfold Strategy to Selling More

Where are you so far? You've created a spectacular business: a beautiful hotel, inn, or resort; you've got a lovely group of people working for you; and the location is just right. Or perhaps none of that is as it should be, yet—perhaps you're still working on perfecting all of the above. That's okay too; as long as you're improving, you're on the right track. And that is the whole point: knowing what are you doing well, what is working and what is not, and how you could do better. Celebrating your little achievements is important. Improving from your mistakes is even more so.

Wherever it is that you stand, what we'll examine in the following pages is how you can improve what you're already doing and how you can use signage to your greatest advantage. With the strategy of tips and techniques embedded in these pages, you'll be armed with the know-how to successfully cultivate what you have. The point of the game in this corner of the business world is to use signage in the most effective way possible, in order to attract as many customers and make as many sales as you can. Guided by the rules and techniques in this book, you'll discover that business improvement has never been easier or more straightforward.

Take a moment to picture this:

You're driving along the highway, and you come across a sign for an inn or a hotel with cursive, coarse, and unintelligible writing. The sign has been pinned down between a bunch of other signs, and the space is so cramped that you can barely make out where one sign ends and where another begins. Even worse, the sign is battered, worn, frayed along the edges, and is in desperate need of washing or repainting. In other words, here is a sign that looks like it has seen better days. Much better days.

In fact, the only reason that this vista of unattractive, clustered signs might even attract your attention is because you're marveling at the layer of dirt atop all that chaos. Sounds a bit extreme, perhaps, but it isn't; I'm sure you've seen your fair share of such signs in various locations.

Now let's pretend that you continue to drive—because surely you wouldn't stop there—and you come across a big, bright, neatly tailored sign, with bold, consistent letters, with vivid and clean colors, with an urgent call to action, and memorable contact information. Apart from being a very attractive sign, it's extremely useful, since it hints at a warm lodging and a hearty meal a few miles ahead, telling you about it before you reach the actual destination. You have time to emotionally and mentally consider the option and prepare yourself for a restful stop.

It's a beautiful sign. It's informative, attractive, and it might even make you smile as you recall an old familiar phrase: *If you are looking for a sign, this is it.*

"It is not your customer's job to remember you. It is your obligation and responsibility to make sure they don't have a chance to forget you."

—Patricia Fripp

There are many ways to attract the right customer (given, of course, that you know who your ideal customer is; we'll examine both ends of that equation). The usage of signs is one of the oldest tricks in the book—yet it's also one of the most powerful and the most underestimated. Like any craft or technique, it can be perfected and utilised to your greatest advantage, as long as you know and practice the right information.

Being seen is half the battle.

The ultimate goal is to expand your range of customers, increase your sales, and improve your business. A business is dead without its customers, just as surely as a fisherman will starve without his fish. You already know that it's essential to reel in more customers, but do you know *how*? The key to success is in choosing and using the right bait—the right signage—to attract more customers, both from your local area (say, a perimeter of 10 km), and from the passing traffic.

“There is only one way... to get anybody to do anything. And that is by making the other person want to do it.”

–Dale Carnegie

Another intelligent (yet often overlooked) technique for skyrocketing your sales and business is by simply utilising and cultivating what you already have. Add on to what currently works. There are dozens of ways in which you could be attaining extra sales within your venue or property, from your inquiries and from the people who pass through. The techniques are simple, straightforward, and effective, but you may have never considered their value before now.

Finally, remember that building upon your current success does not only deal with products, services, or opportunities. The heartbeat of a business is its people, including both the businesspeople and the clients. Securing repeat business is one of the most intelligent and effective strategies for ensuring success. We'll examine how you can get more leads, collect critical data from your customers, and how you can get more out of social media—all through simple signage.

Thus, your strategy for attaining this success is fourfold:

- Attain more customers
- Add more extra sales
- Get more repeats
- Attain more leads

Chapter 2

Your Target Market: What Kind of Fish Do You Want?

Before you go fishing, it's wise to know what you're planning to fish for. You'll choose a different hook and fishing pole for trout and a different one for sardines. You need specific nets to catch oysters, but that same equipment won't work as well for shrimp. And if you're out hunting for sharks, you need a whole other get-up altogether, I'd imagine.

The same holds true for the markets in the business world. You need to know who your ideal customer is so that you can effectively tailor your business in order to target that specific type of customer (your "target" market). Knowing the kind of customer you desire is what helps you recognise, chase, and finally attain the customer.

"Advertising practitioners are interpreters. But unlike foreign language interpreters, [salespeople] must constantly learn new languages. They must understand the language of each new product and speak the language of each new target audience."

–Jef I. Richards

The truth is that the marketplace is particularly tough at the moment. But with great challenges come great opportunities. Everyone is looking to catch more customers, but the pond isn't getting any bigger. In fact, fish are jumping to neighboring ponds, and the fishing poles and lines are inevitably forced to become longer. As compared to just five years ago, there are four times as many more people going offshore, mostly to America or Europe.



As people are navigating outside the pond, you need to think outside the box, too. What sort of fish do you really want to catch? Are you looking for a younger groovy crowd? The lone and tough hikers and backpackers? Traditional families? Businesspeople and corporate professionals? Honeymooning couples? Each type of customer is going to be attracted to a different type of sign. They all want different visuals, and they will all find appeal in different words. A modern, sharp-looking sign would appeal most to a corporate professional; a bonding and family-oriented visual would appeal to grandparents who are outing with their families and; couples are more attracted to the promise of log fires and spas. Knowing what sort of people you're targeting will help you decide on the content and format of your signs.

Based on American studies, half of the business of new companies within the first six months comes from signage.

Chapter 3

Signs: Attract Your Market and Reel Them In

So now that you know what (or, more specifically, who) you want to attract, how do you attain it? The second part of the equation, given that you know your market, is to reel in that market. How will you attract your customers? What are they looking for? What are their needs and desires? How can you solve their problems? How can you give them exactly what they want? And, just as importantly: how do you convince them that you can do all of that?

That's where signage comes in. Your sign is what can lure a client through the door or push a client away from it. Effective signage is not a luxury in today's world; it is a necessity.

"Marketing is the art of meaningful differentiation."

–John Lederer

Internal Signage

That said, there are many different types of signage that you can use. Illuminated signs, branded signs, flags, A-frame signs, banners, notice boards, websites, doormats, etc. Just a handful of the smallest, easiest, yet very effective types of signs include:

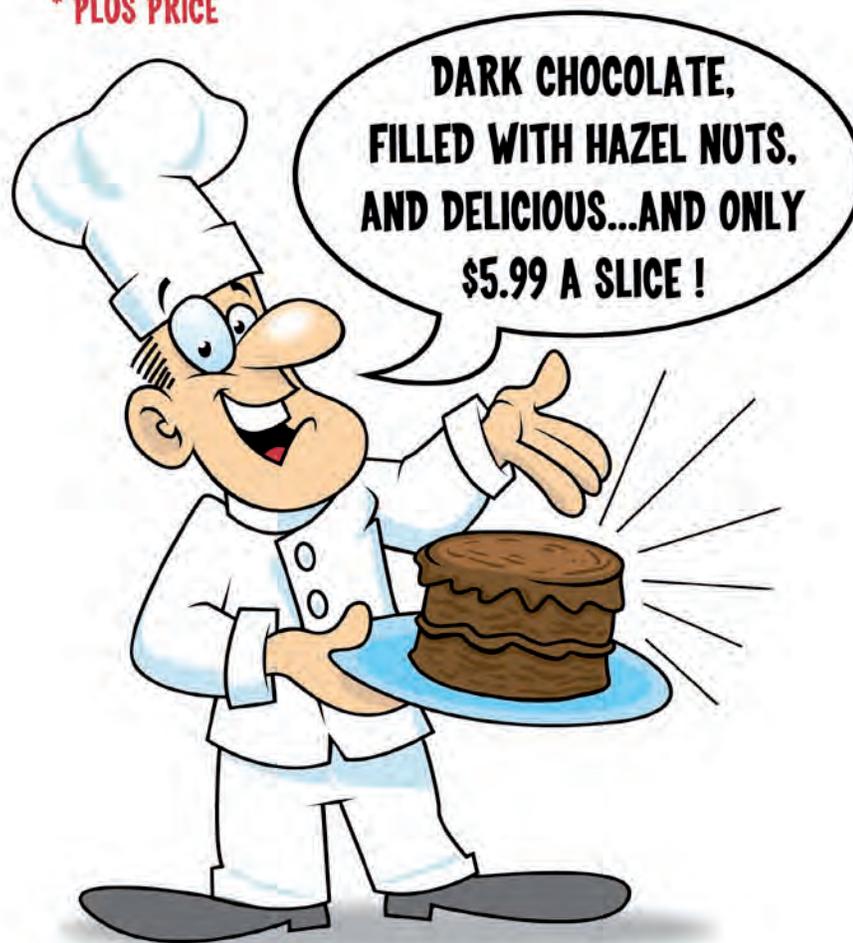
- **A-Frames:** These draw visitors and tourists; any pedestrian walking by your building. Because sometimes, all you have to do is just draw them in from the street. (These signs tend to be light, so make sure they're not in the way and that they're weighed down; if they hit or trip people, you're liable.)
- **Mini Exhibition Banners:** Ideal for counters and tabletops. These are like tiny little banners, A4 or A3 in size, and very easy to handle and reorganise.

- **Brochure Racks:** If you put these up around eye-level height, they're easy to read, and a colorful and entertaining brochure is a welcome distraction when people are waiting somewhere and need something to do. Studies show that people typically scan just the top half of a brochure, so you need to have some sort of *call to action* and a powerful visual right up there at the very top in order to entice them.
- **Table Talkers:** This is when you've got ads actually built into the table. Most folks are dying for something to fiddle with while they're waiting at the table—waiting for the menu, for the food, for the receipt. Grant their wish and give them something to deal with! They'll probably be intrigued with the little built-in QR Code that says *Click here and Like us on Facebook!*
- **The Specials Board:** I've written a whole separate book on the Specials Board—that should give you an idea of how special and rich it is (and how special and rich it can make your business!). People are innately attracted to the Specials Board, because they perceive it to be fresher, a better deal, easily accessible, and so forth. You can even fill it with high margin dishes—they don't necessarily have to be cheap; "special" means fresh, unique, in limited supply, etc. Put the most popular choices on there and go hard. Only 20% of people love variety.
- **Cake Cabinets:** If you make these informative, you're going to make more money, guaranteed. What's that dessert there in the middle? Could be a tiramisu. Could be something else. If you put a sign on it, it's more likely to sell. Be specific and follow the *Three Dot Rule*: describe something by using three characteristics—plus the price—because that amount sells more than anything else. *Gluten-free, delicious, filled with hazelnuts, and it's only \$5.99/slice! Diet, dark chocolate, infused with raspberry bits, at a limited-time offer of \$2.95/bar.* Descriptive, but not overloaded. Perfect.

THE THREE DOT RULE :

DESCRIBE SOMETHING USING THREE CHARACTERISTICS

*** PLUS PRICE**



- **Posters:** Hang these up in the foyer, the halls, the reception room—any place that gets lots of traffic. You need to show your customers all that you offer. Have any fantastic photographs of functions? Blow these up and frame them. You want to show beautifully decorated spaces, lots of people, and scenes that are respectively atmospheric for the business.

"We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little better."

—Jeff Bezos

Online Signage

One of the best spots for free ads is also one of the most overlooked. How wonderful would it be to get subtle yet effective exposure every time that you send an email? Well you can, if you make good use of your email signature. Website banners, headers, and footers are also very effective, as are ads in the newspapers or magazines of your sponsors or alliances.

A visually enticing and informative website is a necessity in today's business world. Today, everyone has a website that represents their business; it isn't about merely creating a site, it's about creating the best one possible. Be sure to include plenty of lovely visuals, including photographs of past events and functions: birthdays, anniversaries, corporate celebrations, holiday parties, dance nights, and so on. People want details: photographs, testimonials, menus, special or extra features... the more you bait the hook, the more fish you catch!

External Signage

A very popular and effective option is that of road signs, especially the highway billboards. It can be tricky to obtain permission or space for something like that, but there are many ways to be seen on the road. You could strike a deal with a farmer and plaster a sign on the side of a shipping container in his or her plot by the road.

Creating a professional sort of fellowship with local businesses is a highly effective strategy for getting more exposure and ensuring more sales. There are plenty of companies around who would be delighted in any form of cross-promotion; what's better than a win-win situation? Consider sponsor clubs, charities, philanthropic groups, sports organisations, local newspapers and magazines, conference venues... the list goes on and on.

"If you don't get noticed, you don't have anything. You just have to be noticed, but the art is in getting noticed naturally, without screaming or without tricks."

–Leo Burnett

Sign up with alliances near you! It's easy. Just take the first step: ask them. Show them how it's a win-win situation. What's the worst that they could say? No? Well, then you don't lose anything more than you had before. If you never ask, the answer is always *no*; so obviously, if you ask, your chances of getting that *yes* increase exponentially!

You could also cooperate with the local transportation or shipping companies to place ads on the sides of buses, trucks, or trains. Apart from vehicle signage, notice boards, banners, and exit signage in car parking lots can be great reminders, too. Other great spots for accessible ads are on the windows, walls, or in the WCs of local cafes; all these places enjoy lots of traffic, and your sign is sure to be spotted. You can do some spectacular cross-marketing with local businesses that are in your region. Remember: *location, location, location...*

Sometimes the best signs are right under our noses. We tend to look where we step, most of the time, so floor mats, doormats, or other types of floor signage is very popular and effective as well. How about signs on shirts: logos on sweatshirts, branded images, and contact information on vests and jackets? Make the most of everything you've got. Height is indeed important; most of us won't even notice signs that are above eye-level. In fact, various studies have videotaped the motion of people's eyeballs, and show that people tend to look mostly at the space that is between the eyes and the bellybutton. If you have a very low sign, know that most people will only notice it from a fair distance away.

"If you want to be found, stand where the seeker seeks."

—Sidney Lanier

Distance, in fact, can work greatly in your favor sometimes, especially if you're trumpeting the existence of your hotel, lodge, resort or restaurant. McDonald's has worked out that it takes us about 1-1½ km to check if our families or friends are hungry when we're all cruising down the road in the car. Therefore, by the time we get to the destination of the fast-food business, we've already been reminded of our hunger, have checked and confirmed that everyone else is hungry (or would appreciate a bathroom break) as well, and we are mentally prepared to stop. If you stake a sign out on the road right in front of your business, folks will have to make a lightning-quick decision—*Do I need to use the toilet? Do you want to stop? Will we eat here?*—and we're not so good at those. Chances are, many potential clients will keep driving by, thinking to themselves, *Oh, I'll just look for a more opportune stop a little later.*

Chapter 4

Extra Sales: How to Get the Most Out of Anything

The second part of your strategy is the classic formula of add-on selling, up-selling, and suggestion selling. Setting targets, hosting competitions, offering incentives, and promoting package bundling are just a few ways in which you can sell more to your already existing clientele. As in any aspect of marketing and sales, signage plays a critical role in ensuring your success.

Here are just a handful of techniques that can work wonders. Think about how easily and effectively you can implement them in your own business!

Food and Drink Combinations

A lovely frosty-cold glass of refreshing liquid on a hot summer day sells like a beauty; a hot cozy mug of liquid warmth is much cherished during the cold winter months. What would you customers appreciate most? It's always a great idea to add some extras to the menu. *Would you like some wine with that? Would you care for dessert after your dinner? Would you like some tea after your lunch?*

Extras sell well. You make the suggestion; your customer makes the decision. *By the way... with this coffee you can have a muffin for only an extra dollar. Or, Would you care for a biscotti with your tea? If you order one, you can get a second one at half price.*

Upsizing is another great option to put on the table: *Okay, one mocha coffee coming up. Would you like the large?* You can easily work in some extras for group deals, too, like selling them a bucket of ice with a whole lot of drinks.

Desserts are particularly fabulous—it really is about the cherry on the cake! I used to create a rack with a sample of the four most popular desserts, and we just used to bring them out and position it on the table, showing the four best desserts that were available. The visuals really get people's mouths watering.

“Know what your customers want most and what your company does best. Focus on where those two meet.”

–Kevin Stirtz

Before They Come...

Remember that your customer is a customer before he or she walks through the door, before he or she even shows up! As such, you want to cater to his or her preferences and his or her needs. Think: what else could he or she possibly need? How could you make his or her life easier or more interesting, even before he or she arrives?

Give your customer a call beforehand, just as a reminder or a confirmation—but also as a savvy marketing technique: *“Mr. Smith, I’d just like to confirm that you’re booked to arrive next week, on November 7th. You might want to book for a half-day tour. You want to book in the restaurant. Would you care for the premium welcome package, with a massage at the spa?... We can put you in a room with a plasma screen TV for only an extra \$10 ... Would you like to purchase our special indulgence pack for your girlfriend/breakfast pack for your family/sports pack for your kids?”*

**YOUR CUSTOMER IS A CUSTOMER
BEFORE HE WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR !**



Holiday or Group Packages

What'll it be? A Luxury Holiday? Villa Holiday? Budget Holiday? All Inclusive Holiday? You can link packages to pretty much anything:

- Holidays (Christmas, Summer vacation, Spring break, Carnival...)
- Tourist attractions (cultural festivals, geographic landmarks, historic locations...)
- Transportation options (airplane flights, cruises, scenic train trips, car rentals...)
- Activities (ski, scuba-diving, horseback riding...)
- Timeframes (last-minute, weekend deals, book-in-advance...)... and so forth.

The opportunities are as boundless as your creativity!

Reception and Room Treats

There's always somebody around the reception desk and room—people checking in, people checking out, people asking for directions, people asking for wireless Internet codes, people asking about hotel hours, people asking about local attractions, people waiting for friends to show up... the list goes on and on. But have you ever considered what a hot-spot this venue is for promoting bucket-loads of deals?

Tempting tidbits like chips, candies, coffee cards, and chocolate bars are excellent treats to sell at Reception or in the room. People associate these goodies with relaxation, vacation, and on-the-run snacks, so they're ideal in the hotel environment. Stock the area with addictive products: chips, coffee, and chocolate always sell well. Just make sure your prices aren't outrageous; I won't buy (and will be peeved at) the far-too-expensive bottled water in my room. You have to match the price point of the next-door 7-11 or petrol station (otherwise your customer will simply go and buy from there). How many people buy a bottle of beer that's \$15? Stock a fridge with snacks, drinks, and reasonable prices, and those could sell very well.

“Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the client or customer gets out of it.”

—Peter Drucker

Local Activities

The choices are nearly limitless in this category. I remember arriving at the top tourist park in New Zealand, and within 10 minutes of arrival, the folks there had sold my group \$376 worth of New Zealand Maori Park tickets. Sell the sorts of things that would appeal most to your target market: anything from jet-ski or snowboard hires, bike or car rentals, and cultural city tours, to Internet access, phone cards, and reduced tickets to local poker, open-bar, or dance nights in town.

One lovely idea I've spotted in a number of places is a "suggestion list" of sorts: i.e. "The Top 10 Things to See and Do in Sydney Australia." That sure makes it easy for your customers! On the one hand, you solve the problem of how people can best enjoy their stay: *What's a good idea to do around here? What's recommended? What should we see? Anything that we can't miss? What's really popular? Where can we mingle best with the locals?* On the other hand, you also subtly tie down the customer: *We've only seen three of the top 10 sights! They said the view from the Sydney Harbor Bridge was a spectacular panorama! Renting a car to the Blue Mountains would be fun. And how could we leave without visiting Kings Cross? Maybe we should stay an extra day or two...*

Entice them with tasteful and beautiful photographs. Run a short video of the most attractive local landmarks and sites. Don't forget to brand your photos and videos; add your logo, feature your package. If they can't extend their stay, you'll have given them the right incentives to come back!

Loyalty Products, Souvenirs, and Packages

Before your customers depart, could you sell them anything extra, just to make their lives easier and their stay more memorable? Absolutely! You want to get them to rebook the room, sell them a loyalty card, and promote some local products and collectables. Maybe you could sell them a bottle of water, a cold drink, or a delicious snack for the drive home.

If they've enjoyed their stay, you can easily convince them to come back, especially if they're convinced that rooms sell fast. In the summer, just put up a sign at the desk or the door—*Book Now for Christmas!*—featuring an attractive deal and the necessary contact information (you could even point them over to the Reception desk and they can book on the spot!). Don't be surprised if they walk over and ask you the details: "I think I should book now for Christmas, how do we go about doing that?"

"Loyal customers—they don't just come back, they don't simply recommend you; they insist that their friends do business with you."

—Chip Bell

Chapter 5

Taking Names: How to Ensure Returning Customers

If you want your customers to come back, you must find a way of keeping in touch. There are a number of ways—some of them subtle, all of them spectacularly effective—to collect their information. Here are some of the best strategies for getting their data:

■ *Competitions*

- Business card draw: *Drop in your business card and win a \$100 venue voucher! (Drawn 8pm on the first Friday of the month.)*
- Count the candy/jelly beans, and win! *Guess the number of jelly beans in the jar and win! Write your name, contact information, and your estimation of beans.*
- Product competitions: *11 Great Prizes to be won! Scan QR Code or Enter Here.*
- E-Loyalty Programs: *Get an eCoffeeCard! Just download the free app, scan the café's code, and start collecting stamps!*
- Holiday competitions: *X-Mas Holiday Happy Snap Competition! Win a \$2,500 gift voucher just by sending us your favorite X-Mas Holiday photograph! Find out how to enter: [Facebook Page], [Hotel Website].*

■ *Keep tabs on the information in your existing **Accom Database** (PMS)*

■ ***Note past prospect enquiries** in your email or day book.*

■ ***Use your personal network** to connect with clients: Friends Reunited, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.*

“Make every one of your customers feel acknowledged, appreciated, and heard. You have to make them feel special, just like when your great-grandmother walked into Butcher Bob’s shop or bought her new hat, and you need to make people who aren’t your customers wish they were. Social media gives businesses the tools to do that for the first time in a scalable way.”

–Gary Vayerchuck

Chapter 5 Taking Names: How to Ensure Returning Customers

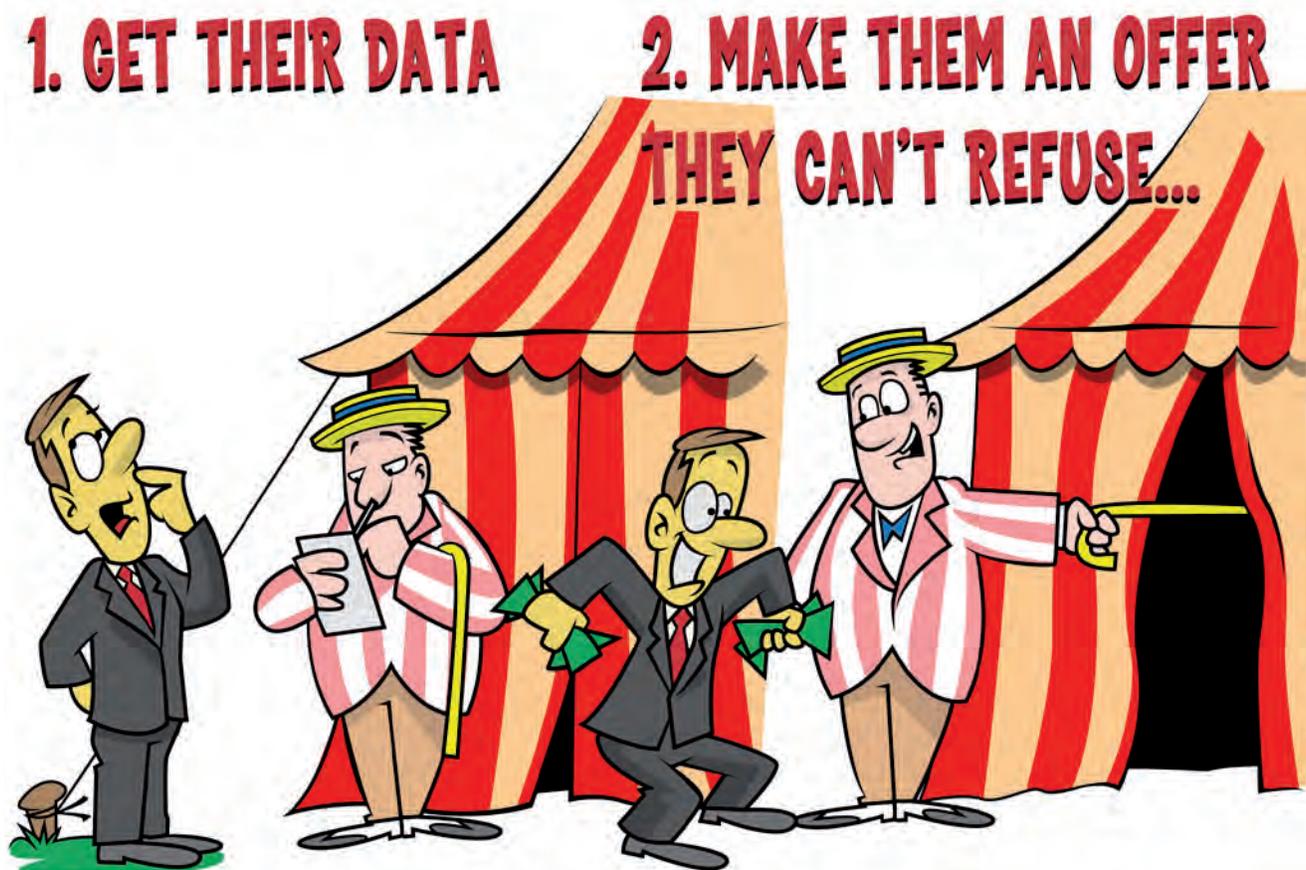
Step two? In order to lure back your customers, make them an offer they can't resist. The key point to remember here is: do not focus on price!

- **Use Seasoned Pricing** (based on supply and demand)
- **Add Value** with extras and local add-ons.
- **Sell the Value and Give Incentives**—lure them with reasons to come. Give them a big enough WHY!

It's important to focus on *value* deals, not *price* deals. When you're zoning on the price, you can bet that your customer will be, too—even more than he or she may have been before you brought it again to his or her attention. Avoid damaging your price integrity, and beware these common, but desperate offers:

- *Stay for four nights, pay just for three!*
- *\$10 meal deals—kids eat free!*
- *Sale, Sale, Sale! 50% off, 70% off!*

If you only sell on price, you have nothing useful to sell.



Chapter 6

The Key Elements of Successful Signage

Keep in mind that any given individual is typically bombarded with over 3,000 messages every single day. Talk about information overload! More than ever before, you've got to work to make your message stand out from the crowd.

There are business truths that have prevailed for a reason; they work. For instance: "The better your branding, the more effective your advertising." Invest your time, energy, and resources in building a good brand; use less ads, push more subtly, and build more trust by appealing to people's emotions and emphasizing the benefits. What do people gain from you? What's the best that you have to offer? What values can you touch upon? What experience can you promise?

"An image is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan, or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product, or service."

—Danie J. Boorstin

Top 10 Tips for Excellent Signage

- **1. Prioritize.** It's important to know what information you've got to include on a sign. There's a lot of things you may want to convey, but you'll have to do it with as few (and as powerful) words and visuals as possible. Include these external signage elements, listed from most important to least important:
 - *Business name*
 - *Products / services / opportunities sold (names, symbols, pictures, brands, departments, categories)*

- *Company logo*
- *Your positioning statement (i.e. "The Fresh Food People")*
- *An offer: A call to action; X for Y; What you do; A slogan*
 - *Call Now...*
 - *Book Now...*
 - *Like Us...*
- *USP (Point of Difference): a guarantee, warranty, limited-time offer, or something else unique*
- *Keywords for your industry*
- *Additional claims (i.e. "best falafels in Australia!")*
- *Directions and parking signs*
- *Opening hours*
- *Contact information (phone number, website)*
- *Years established*

■ **2. Choose Color and Contrast.** If you have to choose between color and black-and-white, color should win every time. Make use of contrast, but be aware of your positioning. Some color combinations have a stigma as being "cheap" even though they are "loud" (black/red, black/yellow, red/white), since these are typically used for "sale" signs. There must be adequate difference in tone, not just color.

■ 3. Ensure Readability

- *A major factor in a sign's readability is in the **height of its letters**. That is best determined by the background space. For example, for a viewer who is 30m away from a sign, the minimum readable letter size is 75mm and the maximum impact is 250mm. If the viewer is in a passing vehicle or if the sign is printed on a fabric that flutters, the letters should be even taller.*
- ***Avoid decorative fonts** with a lot of contrast in stroke weight. Very thin typefaces fade into the background (especially over time), and thick typefaces fill in from a distance. Examples of fonts with even stroke weights: Helvetica Bold, Clarendon Bold, Arial, and Verdana.*
- ***Avoid using all caps.** These are difficult to read, especially when there are many, and they appear to be "screaming" off of the sign (which is desperate at best and rude at worst). A normal series of large and small caps helps the reader's eye progress through your message. Did you know that people actually read by scanning the shapes at the tops of the letters? If you use all caps, that shape is a very unhelpful straight line...*

- **Space accordingly.** Use normal or loose letter spacing and line spacing, especially with larger signs. Loose letter spacing ensures that the letters won't appear to run together, particularly if the sign is viewed from an angle or at a distance.

- Signs that contain at least two lines of text should ideally have leading (space between lines) that's one-half the capital letter height of the font.

- If you've got to stack lines, make them just three.

- **4. Use Graphics.** A great picture truly is worth a thousand words, so why not use that to your advantage, especially given the limited space that you have? Spend time and effort into creating the perfect, memorable image. You aren't likely to forget McDonald's golden arches any time soon, are you?

- **5. Choose Your Words Wisely.** From the top! You want to entice your reader with a brilliant heading. Get to the point—fast—in order to gain and keep attention. Use consistent terminology and choose words that sell.

- Use **emotionally descriptive** words and phrases:

- Romantic
- Cozy
- Cute
- Exceptionally spacious
- Purpose-built
- Unique
- Well-maintained
- Light and airy
- Elegant
- Gorgeous
- Very impressive
- Funky
- Cool
- Delightful
- Naturally light
- Superb
- Comfortable
- Modern

- *Luxurious*
- *Attractive*
- *Charming*
- *Traditional*
- *Quiet*
- *Stunning*
- *Exciting*
- *Beautifully decorated*
- *Bright*
- *Roomy*
- *Immaculate*
- *Secluded*
- *Close to facilities*

- **6. Keep it Simple.** Be straightforward, precise, and quick. Your reader won't spend more than a few seconds on your sign, at least initially. You don't want to confuse people, so avoid technical jargon and keep the letters and words simple and clean.
- **7. Build Your Brand.** To build a brand—the "image" of your business—you have to be consistent. Think carefully about the colors, logo, and typestyles that you want, and use those across all of your business communications: stationary, business cards, internal and external signage, product packaging, etc.
 - If your logo translates well into signage, why not use it to brand your business? Try to pick up a typeface or color from the logo. But think ahead: make sure it's readable and attractive in black-and-white as well, so that you can use it on your fax cover pages and other black-and-white stationary.
- **8. Choose the Best Location.** Put the right sign in the right place for maximum exposure.
- **9. Maximize Attention.** Your signs shouldn't just be informative. Ideally, it's got to be persuasive, enticing, exciting, and memorable. You can use flags, banners, fluorescent or bright colors, high contrasts, keywords ("free", "best", "now"), big fonts, stunning imagery, and so many more techniques that will make passersby stop and stare. Make an offer or a call to action; make sure your sign *sells*.

- **10. Keep it Clean.** You want to keep the fonts and colors consistent, attractive, and vibrant. The easiest ways to ruin a sign are to make it cluttered, messy, and filthy. The saddest thing is checking out a sign that's faded or moldy, dirty, or broken or smashed. Your sign reflects your business; like it or not, a neglected sign implies that you neglect your business. It shows how much you care—or, how much you don't. A bad sign is even worse than no sign at all. It's broadcasting: "I *don't* care."

"People ignore designs that ignore people."

—Frank Chimero

Moving beyond the basics, there are some really spectacular books out there that you can come across, about designing ads and signage. Just a handful of recommendations:

- *Scientific Advertising*, Claude Hopkins
- *Tested Advertising Principles* (4th Edition), John Caples
- *Cash, Customers, and Ads That Sell*, Brad Sugars
- *Ogilvy on Advertising*, David Ogilvy.



The Psychology of Color

- **Warm hues:** Create a mood of excitement and warmth; stimulate activity and creativity.
 - Reds: Energy, passion, power, excitement.
 - Oranges: Happiness, confidence, creativity, adventure.
 - Yellows: Wisdom, playfulness, satisfaction, optimism.
- **Cool hues:** Establish a passive, calming atmosphere; promote peacefulness and tranquility; thereby, reducing tension; aid concentration.
 - Greens: Health, regeneration, contentment, harmony.
 - Blues: Honesty, integrity, trustworthiness.
 - Violets: Majesty, beauty, inspiration.
- **Neutrals:** Add stability and balance.
 - Whites, grays, browns

“The whole world, as we experience it visually, comes to us through the mystic realm of color.”

—Hans Hofmann

Outsourcing: The Affordable Solution to Outstanding Signage

It's critical that your signage is current, up-to-date, and appealingly cutting-edge. You don't want it to appear old or out-dated; remember, it reflects the image of your very business. Once upon a time, revamping your signs would have cost quite a pretty penny; in the present day of outsourcing, however, there are a number of ways to get quality work at a very reasonable cost. You don't have to do it *all* yourself... just get the right things done well!

Some starting-point ideas:

- **Do-It-Yourself.** You can purchase a second-hand printing machine, use backlit lighting, get some great photographs blown up big, and make your own beautiful posters.

- **Invest Wisely.** There are some things you should put down some cash on the table for. Hero Photos sell much better than your average images; just check out sites like www.hospitalityphotography.com.au or www.imageimagine.com.au to get an idea.
- **Change it Yourself.** If you put up graphics on a plasma screen TV or on a website, you can learn to change them by yourself, free of cost, anytime you want. It'd be lovely to have a marketing plan that parallels the calendar year: *Today we're celebrating St. Patrick's Day! This March 17th, you get free beer refills with each dinner purchase... March 18th, Julius Caesar's Birthday. Join us tonight for a Roman Toga-themed party in the downstairs lobby.* You could literally promote stuff every single day of the week.
- **Outsource Your Work.** If you know where to look, you can get high quality work at reasonable and even lucrative prices. There are many outsourcing network sites online, including www.oDesk.com and www.guru.com, amongst many others.

Marketing materials that you can outsource:

- *Logo and brand designs*
- *Business cards*
- *Brochure designs*
- *Sign and screen designs*
- *Articles/editing*
- *Magazines*
- *Blog posts*
- *Story writing*
- *Video animations*
- *Video editing*
- *Video tag titles/logo*
- *Youtube uploads*
- *Survey and research*
- *Online rep-reviews*
- *Reports and administrative work*

Effective and inexpensive tools and resources for marketers:

- *Google Apps (mail, calendar, docs, sites)*
- *Mailchip.com (email newsletter service)*
- *www.digitaldm.com.au (digital magazines)*
- *www.istockphoto.com, www.dreamstime.com (royalty-free photos)*
- *www.surveymonkey.com (survey tool)*
- *www.squarespace.com (killer website design and hosting)*
- *www.everynote.com (capture/find digital files instantly)*
- *www.ReQall.com (never forget anything again)*
- *www.aviary.com (free alternative to Photoshop)*
- *Dropbox or www.Yousendit.com (send large files easily)*
- *www.vistaprint.com.au (low-cost business cards)*

Chapter 7

Your Most Skilled and Silent Salesperson

There's one more role that your signage can play. Did you know that you can drastically improve customer service just through the use of a few signs? It could be anything from: ***Press Button For Service, to: Is this a great place or what? Whether it's good or bad, I need to know. Call me on 9540-1933 or email tim@tradies.com.au.***
-Tim McAleer, General Manager... *Guaranteed 48 Hour Response*



“Your best customers leave quite an impression. Do the same, and they won’t leave at all.”

–SAP ad

The Ultimate Signage Checklist:

- *Entrance Signage (make your hotel look professional!)*
- *Billboards (around the venue, especially facing busy roads and highways)*
- *Corflutes (on any special projects)*
- *Banners (for shows and expos)*
- *Highway Signs (get a container and put a sign on it; find a friend farmer to loan a couple feet of his or her lot)*
- *Directional Signage (make the hotel easy to find with pointers)*
- *Promotional Signage (installed at alliance shops, offices, clubs, charities, associations, etc.; on fences, toilet doors, store windows, etc.)*
- *Vehicle Signage (especially on rear windows or the sides of trucks/buses)*
- *Stickers (for inside electrical switchboards)*
- *Flyers (for letterboxing)*
- *Promotional Products*
- *Business Cards*
- *Postcards*

Consider signage to be your most silent salesperson. It can be the blight or the beacon of your business, depending on how you create it. If you take the time to do it right, your signage can embody the most skilled and savvy salesperson you’ll ever have the pleasure to enlist.

By designing and implementing better signs, and using them to promote all your high-margin products and services, you give your business a much-deserved opportunity to skyrocket in terms of success. Excellent signage can get your customers through the door and into your open, hospitable arms. All that’s left for you is to provide amazing service and products.

I know you’ll ensure that they won’t soon forget you.