

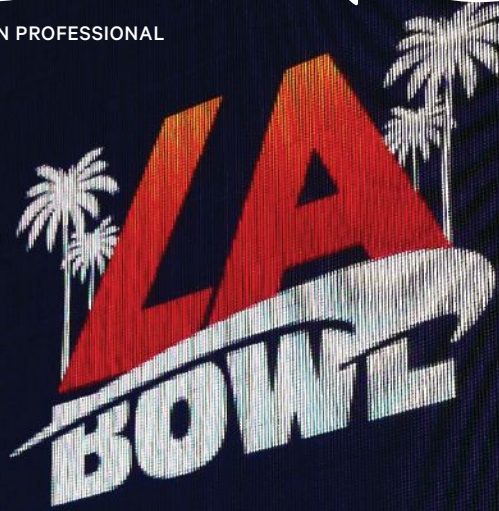
SIGNS OF THE TIMES

JULY 2021 / THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SIGN PROFESSIONAL

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40
AWESOME
THINGS

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MARK KISSLING ON PRINTS AND WRAPS

BRAND THANKING YOU

Observations and “brand” new advice for you and your retail clients.

With their ability to convey images, logos and color combinations, digital prints provide some of the very best opportunities for branding. So, when retailers turn to sign companies for branded prints and wraps, they can use your help to make both first and lasting impressions on their customers.

→ RETAIL CORES

Elaine Scrima, VP of operations for GSP Companies (Clearwater, FL), has worked with a lot of retail customers, whom she noticed lately have approached branding from two different directions. “We have received requests to rebrand specific areas and we have been asked to rebrand the entire store from parking lot to interiors,” Scrima said. “Convenience retailers tend to focus on specific areas such as coffee, fountain [drinks] and foodservice.” In general, retailers are focusing on aesthetics, resulting in more requests for large wallpaper murals to support branding, as well as large displays of local artists, “to bring a local touch to retail,” she said.

Already under pressure from a pre-pandemic customer shift away from traditional retail sources toward Amazon, many retailers have had to reinvent themselves over the past 18 months and are moving more towards loyalty- and rewards-based marketing/promotions, Scrima said. “They are incorporating delivery, curbside pick-up and even drive-through messaging opportunities that they would have never previously considered. This segment will continue to grow and they will need to find additional ways to market those services,” she added.

Scrima reported seeing retailers moving more toward single- or no more than dual-themed messages for their storefronts. “Mixed messaging or having so many messages on the storefront [blurs] the value proposition and oftentimes the brand gets lost for the consumer,” she said. “There are too many things to look at and process.” However, focusing on just *one* promotion, an offering or a service, creates greater potential to draw someone into the location. “Otherwise you are just advertising and providing a



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discount to the people who were coming into the location to buy that product anyway,” Scrima said.

→ BE IMPRESSIVE

And here is where savvy sign companies can add value to their relationships with retail customers, by counseling those retailers to focus their branding opportunities. Just make sure that before you dole out this sage wisdom, you do the rest of the necessary prep work. “Visit their locations prior to any meetings and come prepared to ask a lot of questions,” Scrima said. “Understand their current brand. Understand how they got to where they are before you try and figure out how to get them to the next destination.”

She could not stress enough how important it is to listen and understand the strategy or messaging the client wants communicated to the consumer. “That theme should be the choreography of the messaging that ties all the elements in the location together,” Scrima said.

So, what, specifically, should sign companies do once they’ve listened and come to a complete understanding of the retailers’ intentions? Scrima suggested showing three proposals. “More than three, people get confused.” If they don’t like those, come back with three more. “Get creative; think out of the box. Show them something they don’t realize they need until they see it,” Scrima said. “Many retailers are a combination of NTI’s (new to industry), mergers and acquisitions and legacy locations. It’s a brand evolution and it can’t be a one-size-fits-all solution.”



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TRUE TALES

A GAME OF CHICKEN

One of our better customers is opening a new food-service facility. He wanted the biggest and most signs possible. We designed the many signs, including an immense pylon sign, knowing that it had little to no chance of getting approved. We presented the project to an angry zoning board all worked up from the case before us — neighbors fighting over chickens. They approved everything. Now we need to figure out how to complete the project.

Doug Bray, Alpine Sign (Dallastown, PA)