

PRODUCT GALLERY - SIGNAGE



Distinctive signage that is consistent with a company's brand helps differentiate it from competitors

Branding Your Building – The Importance of Signage and Architecture as Expressions of Corporate Identity

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A *brand* is a mixture of attributes – both tangible and intangible – which, if managed properly, create value and influence for an organisation. 'Value' has different interpretations: from a client perspective it is the promise and delivery of an experience; from a business perspective it is "the security of future earnings. Brands offer clients a means of differentiating themselves in a highly competitive world.

Brand presence is the impact a brand creates whenever, and wherever, it is seen, touched or experienced. Simply put, brand presence is about how the brand appears, how it looks ... how it stands apart ... how it commands attention ... how it is perceived on the shelf, inside/outside the shop, in the marketplace, on the web, in the lobby of an office building or as a building on a skyline. A strong brand can espouse values that can take years to create and are far beyond that of the product or service. This value will not only reassure people of their purchasing decisions and will also allow them to feel associated with the brand. Brands are not simply products or services. Brands are the sum total of all the images that people have in their heads about a particular company and a particular mark.

Signage helps define a brand. The primary function of on-premises signage, which portrays brand identity, are:

- Emphasising words, graphics or symbols that are associated with the products or services offered by a company helps develop its brand equity
- Signs serve to aid in the recall and reinforcement of other media advertising efforts
- Signage consistency. If you have a fantastic new ad campaign with your branding on it, why have poor non-lit signage outside your premises?
- Assisting purchasing decisions made by the customer
- Contemporary signage should reflect the character and architecture of its surroundings. Well-designed signs create a sense of place in financial and business districts, commercial and lifestyle environments, retail outlets and tourist destinations

- Signage instils familiarity. This powerful psychological tool is applied to help increase a client's recall (how well a message is remembered within a short period of time) and recognition (how quickly a message is correctly identified) of their brands

The Irish economy is dominated by retailing and service business activities. This has elevated the importance of commercial signage. Some organisations take this concept further by creating a standard signature building where the building's appearance further reinforces the corporate message and brand image. The rationale behind this is that the sign on your premises is a business's 'handshake' with the public. It is the first impression being made on potential customers.

The idea of a company building as an intrinsic part of the corporate identity is not a new one. Examples of large corporations using their buildings to articulate who they are was evident in the summer of 1929, when a race for the sky broke out on the island of Manhattan. Automobile tycoon Walter Chrysler battled the Wall Street powerhouse Bank of Manhattan Trust Company for the title of world's tallest building. Just when it appeared that the Bank was going to win, a needle-thin spire was added to the top of the Chrysler building making it the tallest building in the world at the time. Chrysler decorated his skyscraper with hubcaps, mudguards, and hood ornaments, just like his cars, ensuring that such a distinctive building made his car company a household name.

Companies want to build structures that articulate who they are. The challenge for architects is to translate the ephemeral qualities of a corporate image into tangible structures of concrete, steel and glass. Signage is what fuses the architecture and corporate identity.

Gaelite is one of Ireland's largest and most successful sign design, manufacturing and installation companies. We have been managing brand presence in Ireland since 1933. The key to our success is understanding and knowing your business. In 2005, Gaelite held a neon signage design competition, which was won by architect Noel Brady for his 'neon nation' design for the Habitat façade.

