



Choosing the Right Medium for Your Advertising

Advertising Strategy

Media Advantages and Disadvantages

Your choice of media depends on why you are advertising. Simple logic will guide you in many cases, but read through the following information to expand your knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of the various media.

Media selection and placement is the full-time occupation of many people in large companies and advertising agencies. If you're embarking on an extensive advertising campaign, you might consider consulting an media placement expert.

Basic Strategy Comes First

Choosing the best media for your advertising depends on four factors:

1. **Your objective** - *What* you want the advertising to accomplish and by *when*? Knowing what you want to accomplish is critical. It's not information to "just sorta have in your head."

Your advertising objectives should be clear and written. Writing them down forces you to be specific! These objectives should be part of your promotion plan. Most importantly, your advertising objectives should be something that *advertising* can accomplish. That may sound strange, but advertising can accomplish some things better than others. Advertising can accomplish a shift in perception or create awareness, but—aside from specific adaptations of advertising—advertising alone can't create a sale! Many inexperienced advertisers think that *Advertising = Sales*, but that's an advertising myth.

2. **Your target audience** - *Who* and *where* are the people you want your message to reach? Take time to carefully define your audience. Certain media will have stronger appeal to some groups than others. Narrowing down your audience will help you make wise and cost-efficient media choices. For example, the provider of a pet product might advertise in magazines or newsletters for pet owners. Additionally, this business owner may look for special ad placements, such as placing an ad in a special, one-time feature section on pet ownership published by the local newspaper.

Some small business owners think it's a shrewd move to keep the audience definition broad. They laugh and say, "Well, I'll sell to anyone who has the money; that's who *my* audience is!" To reach *all* people, an advertiser would have to buy virtually *all* media—

who can afford that? Even advertising giants like Coca-Cola and McDonald's target their advertising so they don't waste money.

3. **Your message and frequency** - *What* do you want to say and *how often* do you need to say it? The media you choose should carry your message effectively. Again, some simple logic will apply. If you have lots of information, don't choose a 30-second radio spot. If you need to show your product in action, don't choose any print medium. If you need a message repeated with high frequency, for example "Sale ends in two days," you would not choose a weekly magazine where you would get one exposure, but you might choose radio where your ad could run periodically day and night.
4. **Your budget** - It almost goes without saying, but your budget is probably the single most influential factor in your advertising plan. It might make all the sense in the world to place a TV ad or a full-color advertisement in a prominent magazine—but you must be able to afford it! Your budget should be established and written out, too! The advertising budget is part of your marketing plan budget.

Buying just one TV spot is not an effective purchase since research shows that buyers need to be exposed to an ad several times before they take action on a message.

But dollars alone should not be the deciding factor! If you could afford 16 spots on one radio station, 10 on another or one half-page newspaper ad, you would not automatically opt for the 16 impressions. It's not that simple! You would also want to consider who listens or reads each medium, the timing of each medium, and the suitability of each choice for the message you want delivered, too.

Now You're Strategizing! If you've read all the above, you've just had a mini-course in a part of marketing that the "Big Guys" call *creative strategy*. Congratulations! Now you know the basics and some of the terminology as well. Let's move on to information about specific media.

Media Advantages and Disadvantages

Definition: Advertising is paid, non-personal communication delivered through mass media.

Media is part of the very definition of advertising. Advertising is a method of communication that is "paid" for and "non-personal." The message is delivered through mass media—as opposed to face-to-face, or voice-to-voice. So, the medium you choose for carrying your message is *critical* to the success of your advertising!

The following information will help you make good choices. But, always remember: *You should consider each ad message or ad campaign separately. Just because a medium makes sense for one message does not mean it is the best medium for you all the time.*

What you'll see is a list of things to *consider* when choosing your advertising medium. Remember, there is really no right or wrong medium. It depends on your message, your target audience, your objectives and your budget.

(Click on the name of the medium you're interested in to learn about its advantages and disadvantages.)

Newspapers

Magazines

Internet

Direct Mail

Radio

Broadcast TV

Cable TV

Transit

Outdoor/Billboard

Newspaper Advantages

- Newspapers are still the *number one media for local advertisers* in terms of where advertising dollars are spent.
- Daily newspapers *reach a diverse* (or broad) audience.
- The audience is *locally or regionally concentrated*.
- *Consumers often look for ads* in newspapers, so their mood may already be more receptive to your message.
- Newspapers *deliver timely messages* because they have an established, regular publishing schedule such as daily, weekly or monthly. This allows you to tailor your message to current events, such as weekend entertainment or April tax time.
- The *immediacy* of a daily newspaper's news will cause readers to pick it up within a predictable time frame (i.e. Tuesday's paper is usually read on Tuesday) so advertisers know when readers receive their messages.
- *Copy space is unlimited* in newspapers. You can write long explanatory copy or a few bulleted lines. Of course, longer, bigger ads cost more.
- Technology is improving newspapers' capabilities to create clear photos, better colors and to use new techniques such as scented inks. (See "Reproduction of Photos" below, though.)
- *Readers are actively involved* in reading the paper. The fact that they must hold it and turn the pages produces a higher level of attention.

Newspaper Disadvantages

- *Limits specific audience targeting*. You may only want to reach bike owners, but you'll pay to reach the newspaper's entire audience. However, some papers offer "zone advertising" which allows you to run an ad that is seen only in part of the coverage area. For example, you could place an ad for your pizza delivery service in the "Northwest News" insert section delivered only with the newspapers in the northwest part of the city or newspaper coverage region.
- *Reproduction of photos* has long been considered a disadvantage to using newspaper as an advertising medium, although technology has allowed great improvements. The

problem is created because newspapers must use inexpensive paper to keep their costs down. After all, no one wants to pay \$2.95 for a daily newspaper! However, inexpensive paper does not hold ink as well as higher grades of paper and that affects the clarity of pictures.

- *Many advertisers* consider newspapers the best medium for local reach. This can create heavy competition inside the paper for local businesses. You may hear this referred to as "clutter."
- Newspapers are *not popular with all age groups*. Their strength seems to lie with the aging Baby Boomers. Many newspapers are starting pages and sections designed for young adults, teens and kids, but the effectiveness of these efforts in terms of advertising draw is still not proven.
- Newspapers are *static and two-dimensional*. Electronic newspapers may change this in the future.

Magazine Advantages

- *Great color and photo reproduction* are possible in magazines that are printed on slick or high-grade paper.
- *Selecting a targeted audience can be easy*. Guess who reads *Golf Pro, Old House Restoration, Teen Romance, US News and World Report and Bikers' World?* Furthermore, some magazines have images of their own. They might be considered an authority in their subject area or prestigious, hip, reliable, etc. and this image can "rub off" on advertisers' messages.
- Magazines have quite a range of *layout flexibility*. Ads can contain color or fragrance samples. They can have moving pieces, pop-ups, or carry microchips for sound. Photos can bleed off the page or fold out to larger sizes. This provides advertisers with many options for creating attention-grabbing ads.
- Magazines have a *long life span*. People often save magazines to read at a more leisurely time. When a magazine is read over the weekend or on vacation, the ad is still there and the reader may be in a receptive, rather than rushed, mood.

Magazine Disadvantages

- Because most magazines are printed on slick paper that makes for excellent reproduction, *the costs are higher*—to the consumer and to the advertiser.
- The *timing of reader exposure to your ad is less predictable*. Most magazines carry more features than hard or breaking news, so reading can be delayed, and some ads could go out of date before they are seen.
- *Deadlines for placing advertising art are one month or more before publication*. This means an advertiser must begin work on an ad long before it will be seen by the target audience. This often precludes small advertisers who leave advertising planning to the last minute from using this medium.

Internet Advertising

There are two primary ways to advertise on the Internet:

1. Register your Web site with major search engines so Internet visitors can find you.
2. Place an "ad banner" for your site on another Web site that has a lot of traffic (viewers). Ad banners allow viewers to link to your site when they click on the banner.

Internet Advertising Advantages

- *Relatively cost-effective.* The costs can also be independent of the size of the audience. For example, a Web presence will cost the same regardless of how many viewers your site has. (You will, however, need to make sure your Internet Service Provider can handle the volume of viewers you anticipate having.)
- Advertisers can *target specific types of viewers* by positioning an ad banner on related Web sites. For example, if you're targeting people seeking information on a specific topic, you can purchase ad space on Web pages that are related to this category in the major search engines (Yahoo, Infoseek, Lycos, WONET - The Women's Online Network, etc.). So, an organic herb farmer selling through mail order might advertise through the "organic foods" or "gourmet cooking" category. The indexing structure of these sites allows you to target your audience by geographic location and related interest area.
- *Messages can be timely* because editing the content is often easy and instantaneous.
- *Ads on the Internet can be interactive.* You can request viewer feedback, take orders or answer questions instantly.
- Ad banners can run with as much frequency as you choose. The Internet is constantly available!
- Internet advertisers can potentially reach a global audience. Aside from language barriers, anyone at any location in the world can access information about your products or services.

Internet Advertising Disadvantages

- Internet advertising should not be approached in a vacuum. Instead, it should be one component of a comprehensive Internet marketing strategy.
- Although the popularity of the Internet is rising remarkably, it is difficult to gage the impact of advertising on the Internet.
- The range of costs to advertise on the Internet can vary greatly. It is best to compare a number of highly-frequented sites to determine the best way to spend your advertising dollars.

Direct Mail Advantages

- Allows you to *target your message to a very specific audience*. Pick one street of houses or all residents of a city. Target college freshmen or just college freshmen at one college who own a car. Mail to all of your customers or just to those who spend an average of \$25 per visit to your store. The possibilities are as endless as your mailing lists accuracy allows.
- This is a relatively expensive medium. However, if you are able to focus on only high-probability purchasers, *cost effectiveness can be good*.

- Direct mail *messages can be personalized* to add reader appeal.
- You *can evaluate its effectiveness*. If you compare the number of responses to the number of pieces mailed, you can calculate the response rate. If you include coded coupons or response cards you can keep track of *exactly who responded and from where*.
- Mail *readers are actively involved*. People read their mail when *they* choose. So, for at least second or two, your message will have their undivided attention while they open and scan it.

Direct Mail Disadvantages

- Many people don't like *unsolicited offers* and many are skeptical of their validity.
- Increasingly, busy people *don't even open what they view as "junk mail."*
- Using this method of advertising *requires thorough maintenance of mail lists*. Many advertisers do not like to bother with updating mail lists. With outdated lists, however, mail goes to undeliverable addresses and wastes your money. Another possible glitch: Mail may contain out of date messages, spell names wrong, or address a person who has died and these kinds of *errors annoy, or worse yet offend, the recipient*.
- Some groups are concerned about the *environmental impact* of resources used for advertising mailings.
- This is a relatively expensive medium.

Radio Advantages

- Radio messages are *mobile*. They can be heard at work, on the beach, in the shower, in the dentist's chair or even while shopping in your store.
- Radio is an *intrusive medium*. A listener does not have to be actively involved in getting your message to hear it.
- Radio *allows for target selection* based on:
 - *Geography* - listeners will be in a concentrated area defined by the station's signal,
 - *Time of day* - the audience will change between morning drive, midday and overnight programming.
 - *Format* - different audiences can be reached by choosing different formats such as talk radio, alternative rock, blues rock, classical, easy listening, etc.
- Depending on availability, *it's often possible to get an ad on a station on short notice*. This allows advertisers to react to sudden developments, such as a retailer selling fans reacting to a heat wave or a competitor's special offer.
- *Your message can run with as much frequency as you choose* (or the station's format allows). For example, you could run an ad once a day for a year or twice an hour for a day.
- Radio is mostly *local* in its appeal. You can tie your message into local events, weather, or locations to heighten the relevance of your message to the listener.
- *Your radio ad has a voice*. It can be friendly, serious, sad, childish, macho, humorous—whatever suits your message. Above all, the voice can be conversational, a quality that makes it very easy to listen to and understand.

- Radio time is *relatively cost-efficient* to purchase.
- *Radio ad production is fairly simple.* Send a finished spot, a script or a fact sheet to the station and they will take it from there. Many will create the spot you want to run on their station for free.

Radio Disadvantages

- Radio has *no visuals*. Don't use it to talk about a product that a listener may not already understand. Some ads use "the theater of the mind" very effectively to create pictures in a listener's head (like when you hear a pop can open and someone drink). Be careful, though. This type of ad should be done well and may call for a professional writer—an extra expense that is well worth it in the long run.
- Some radio *audiences may be "fragmented."* For example, if there are four stations in the market that appeal to women 25-49 years old, then an advertiser may have to buy all four to effectively reach that group. This can be cost prohibitive.
- *Air "clutter" is a problem.* Your ad may be first, second, sixth or tenth in a commercial break. This can detract from the attention level.
- *There is no hard copy.* Your ad airs and then it's gone. If a listener missed an important piece of information, like a phone number, there is no way to know when it will be on again. (There are writing tips and placement plans you can use to minimize this problem.)
- Station-produced ads use station talent. It's free and that's good, but you run the *risk of the ad sounding very similar* to other ads produced by the station and also to the DJ's regular on-air conversation. This sameness can detract from the listener's attention level.

Broadcast TV Advantages

Broadcast TV is "free TV" transmitted over the air and is most commonly associated with large TV networks such as ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox.

- TV offers your message *sight, sound, motion, color and all the special effects* you can afford. It is a powerful medium with sensual impact.
- TV ads are *intrusive* in nature. The viewer does not have to be actively involved to receive your message.
- TV allows for *target selection* based on:
 - *Geography* - Where the signal reaches. (Don't forget to check if the station is carried elsewhere on cable TV.)
 - *Time of day* - Different target audiences watch TV at different times.
 - *Program* - Certain programs or kinds of programming will appeal to certain groups. Observe the ads carried by a particular show. You can make some assumptions about who is watching, but for certainty about where and when to place your ad, seek the help of a media buyer or a TV rep.
 - *Network* - Some networks, like Nickelodeon or ESPN, have identifiable audiences that may match your target audience.

- TV still has a certain *prestige or glamour that can enhance* your message. Some consider it "the big league" of advertising. You know, think of someone who saw her neighborhood grocer in a TV spot—they'll often tell others (and the grocer) "I saw Jackie on TV!"
- TV is costly, but because it may be targeted, it may be quite *cost-effective*.
- TV ads can *engage the viewer's emotions and empathy*. You can see joy or hurt in someone's eyes, you can hear a voice tinged with the pain of a headache or the pride of a new parent, you can watch in amazement—or in disbelief—as a product is demonstrated.
- *Most TV is viewed at home*. People feel safe at home and they aren't exposed to what others think. If they've been worried about aches and you have a message about how to cure them, you've got a listener and, hopefully, a customer.
- Because of all the above, TV advertising is especially effective in helping to create an image for a product or company.

Broadcast TV Disadvantages

- To advertise on TV, you must produce a spot or pay to use one produced by someone else. *Production fees on top of the cost of air time* makes TV spots cost prohibitive to many advertisers.
- *TV seems complicated to small advertisers*. If you think it is the right medium for your message, don't be put off by what you don't know—call a station or an ad or production agency for help.
- *Messages get "zipped"* as viewers click to other channels and *"zapped"* as viewers mute them or turn them off.
- *Viewers that have grown up with TV and big-screen special effects are somewhat skeptical, if not downright cynical, about what they see*. And they don't appreciate gimmicks.
- Although TV can be targeted by geography, time of day, programs and networks, it is still a broadcast medium with a broad, non-targeted reach. Cable is considered "narrowcast" and is a good, viable medium for reaching specific groups.
- *Audiences are more fragmented* than ever as the number of channels increases, not to mention alternative uses for TV sets like video games, computer hook-ups and movie rentals. The days of any message reaching 40 percent or even 30 percent of the viewing audience on one network at one time are past. ("Fragmented" is explained above in "Radio Disadvantages.")
- *Commercial breaks in programming are becoming more "cluttered."* Your spot may be first, third or seventh in the lineup. The viewer's attention level can be affected.
- Because TV is still considered by many to be "big league" advertising, *small advertisers run the risk of looking amateurish* next to a national advertiser with a slickly produced spot. There is some merit to looking like a friendly, small or local advertiser, but don't accept sloppy production in order to cut costs. No amount of savings is worth the damage you can do to the customer's perception of your business or product.
- *Buying TV time is fairly complicated*. The help of an expert adds to your costs, but may cut your losses, too.

Cable TV Advantages

- You can buy time on programs that have very specific audiences. For example, you might buy onto a show that is about caring for infants to reach young mothers, or you might buy onto a show about sewing, wallpapering, landscaping, auto repair, local musicians, book reviews, etc. and reach a more clearly defined audience than if you bought time on a network show with bigger ratings and a higher price tag.
- The *cost is lower* than broadcast TV because you are reaching a smaller audience.
- *Production costs* may be more affordable.
- You *may find more innovative production people* here. Often cable production teams hire young writers, producers and technicians who want experience and are eager to work with you. They are often right out of school and right on top of new trends and techniques.
- Because cable only reaches into linked homes, you *know who your message is reaching*. These homes may be concentrated locally. Superstations are different: They reach huge cable audiences and charge accordingly.

Cable TV Disadvantages

Almost all the advantages of advertising on cable TV have a flip side disadvantage.

- *Small reach.*
- *May have less experienced production crews.*
- Reaching specific customers, but *not reaching potential customers.*
- Cable TV as a whole is drawing huge numbers of viewers, but because of the increasing numbers of viewing choices, *audiences can be very fragmented and viewers may stay with a program for a shorter period of time.* ("Fragmented" is explained above in "Radio Disadvantages.")

Transit Advertising Advantages

Transit advertising includes ads seen on buses, subway cars and entries, trains and taxis.

- *Exposure to one ad can be long* if ad is inside a transit vehicle.
- Frequency, the *number of times a viewer is exposed to an ad, may be high* if the viewer uses the same method of transportation repeatedly. For example, a person may ride the same subway to and from work 10 times a week.
- Ads on the *exterior of buses and cabs are seen by large and diverse audiences*. You can also say that *some of the audience is captive*, too, if you consider the number of drivers stuck behind a bus or the number of walkers waiting for a stopped bus to move past.
- The ad *message can be timely* because often the person riding mass transit is on the way to shop, eat or visit an entertainment outlet.
- Ads can be *geographically targeted* because you know the people are all in a certain area at a certain time.

- Ads can be *somewhat lifestyle targeted*, too. Some transportation travels through very distinctive neighborhoods.
- This method of advertising tends to be *quite inexpensive* in both absolute and relative terms.

Transit Advertising Disadvantages

- Your ad *design is usually limited* to the size of frames or holders you ad will be placed in.
- People on mass transit are often *not in a receptive mood* or they may be so used to ads appearing in certain spaces that they don't even see them.
- Transit ads are *hard to target*. Your ad reaches a lot of people, but many are not even potential customers.
- You *may not have mass transit* in your advertising area. For example, many cities and towns don't have subways or bus service.
- Subways, buses or other mass transit environments *may not suit the product image*.
- The *surroundings may detract from your message*. A mud-splashed bus, a graffiti-sprayed subway car or a crumbling subway entrance wall may not be the showcase you had in mind!

Outdoor/Billboard Advertising Advantages

- *Big, splashy messages attract attention*. Using this medium you *must* be short and to the point!
- *Your ad has impact*. Technology is allowing for more and more innovations like talking, moving, smoking, changing and twinkling billboards. Hot air balloons, blow-ups, flags, banners and other eye-catching devices are an option, too. You can even hire "rolling billboards" on the back of a truck that drives a route you choose to make sure your billboard is seen by the right audience numerous times.
- Your ad *reaches lots of people*, many of whom see it *repeatedly* as they travel regular routes.

Outdoor/Billboard Advertising Disadvantages

- It's *hard to reach a specific audience*. You might be able to target a neighborhood, but can't be more specific than that.
- Your *creativity is inhibited by space limitations*.
- It's *hard to measure its effectiveness*.
- Your *ad may become weathered or vandalized*.
- *Costs can be quite reasonable* for a billboard that you want to leave up for a sustained amount of time. However, innovative adaptations can become quite expensive.

(Women's Economic Development Agency, Atlanta, GA;
Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, Grand Rapids, MI, 6/97)

http://www.onlinewbc.gov/docs/market/mk_adv_medium.html

SIGNS... AND SMALL BUSINESS



How to select a sign for your business



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What Is a Sign?

Most businesses, regardless of size, depend heavily on signs. Signs help people find you; attract people who pass your establishment; present an image of your business; and tell potential customers what goods or services you offer. Signs are the primary form of advertising for small business.

On-premise business signage differs from outdoor advertising billboards which market national products. On-premise signs tell people who you are and what goods and services you sell. Signs are a form of landscape art enhancing your commercial area and surrounding environment.

Signs are a link between transportation and communication. Each year, 40 million people travel more than 1.7 trillion miles by automobile. Your sign is the most effective way of reaching this mobile group of potential customers.

What Signs Can Do for Your Business

Information and Directional Functions. Signs identify a business and provide information about it. A noticeable and readable on-premise sign not only alerts the public, but tells them about services offered, prices and hours.

Service Trade Area. A trade area is the marketing vicinity from which a business owner draws customers--usually within a half mile to a mile of the business. Trade areas differ in shape and size depending on the business and its reliance on transportation networks and may vary seasonally. A sign communicates important information to consumers located in or passing through the immediate trade area.

Build Image. Signs are an effective marketing tool in building an image for your business and in helping you identify the market segment you are trying to reach. Through materials and design, a sign can appeal to a given group of potential customers. Color and lighting effects can enhance the impact and psychological response to your business.

Enhance Advertising Recall. Signs reinforce other advertising expenditures by repeating commercial messages. Many national firms incorporate their logo into their mass media advertising campaigns, such as television, thus increasing product or service awareness.

Generate Impulse Business. Signs generate business by catching the attention of visitors and newcomers who traverse a trade area. Studies show approximately 50 percent of all consumer items are purchased on impulse sales directly attributable to signage drawing consumers to the point of purchase.

What Your Sign Can Do For Your Community and Neighborhood

Enhance Aesthetic Environment. Signs enhance the environment by making certain zones of the city more attractive and dynamic and giving them a particular atmosphere. Because the environment is so important, quality signage conveys an image of responsible citizenship by a business owner.

Help Community Safety. Signs perform two major community safety functions: crime reduction and traffic accident reduction. A well-placed, visible, attractive sign helps direct vehicular and pedestrian traffic, allowing ample time for driver decision making, thus reducing the potential for traffic accidents. Government studies found highway vehicle accidents actually decrease at intersections where there is commercial signage. Ambient lighting from signs is a major crime deterrent in urban areas. Police reported a 30 percent rise in crime when downtown signs were turned off during the energy crisis of the 1970s. People feel safer entering well-lighted commercial areas.

Advantages of Signs to a Small Business

A Sign is Necessary to the Success of a Business. Many industries can attribute a large percentage of business to their signs. Some fast-food outlets attribute as much as 80 percent of their business to their on-premise signage; the travel industry 30 percent; gas retailing 50

percent; and hotels and motels 50 percent. A visible, readable sign can make the difference between profit and loss for many businesses.

Advertising Cost Benefits. When compared to other advertising costs such as radio, newspaper, television and direct mail, an on-premise sign is inexpensive. For example, the cost per 1,000 adult exposures with a sign is only a few pennies for 24-hour-a-day coverage. In addition, an on-premise sign cultivates cumulative, long-term awareness of a business, stimulating repeat or "brand-loyal" buying of the products and services offered. For businesses with a limited advertising budget, a sign is an inexpensive method to maximize returns per dollar spent.

Economic Considerations

Financing. A business plan should include signage as a major part of the marketing strategy. Because signage is vital to a small business it should be included in any loan package. Your sign is a permanently visible part of your business and should be considered as an investment. Signs are the most efficient, effective and consistent revenue-generating device for small business.

Choosing Appropriate Signage. Consider type, cost and maintenance before selecting a sign. Many sign companies have designers to provide cost-effective signage. Many start-up businesses order a sign based on an attractive business card or letterhead design, but small businesses can learn from large multinational corporations who understand the importance of a recognizable logo. Rather than ordering a sign from a business card or letterhead, start with designs suitable for an integrated business-marketing plan.

Type and Design. There are many types of permanent, on-premise signs to serve your business--freestanding, high-rise, low-profile, wall, projecting, roof, marquee, backlit awning, awnings, etc. Type and size of sign are often regulated by local zoning ordinances.

Also consider illumination, which draws attention to your business around the clock, and changeable message capabilities, such as electronic message centers or readerboards. When choosing a sign, remember to consider the image of your business, the profile of your potential customers and the cost.

Purchasing or Leasing a Sign. It is advantageous to purchase or lease your sign from a reputable company. Experienced sign companies are licensed and bonded contractors who are familiar with uniform building codes and regulations. Reputable companies deliver quality goods, thus reducing maintenance costs and potential public liability. A good company carefully designs and constructs signs adhering to local building codes and design standards which enhance the environment and create a good image for your company.

Maintenance. No business can afford to have its sign in disrepair. A dilapidated sign implies you are not concerned with your business or your image or that you are going out of business. Some signs are virtually maintenance-free while others require more attention. Establish an appropriate and cost-effective maintenance routine for your sign or lease your sign to secure built-in maintenance service.

Legal Considerations

Permits. As signs must meet zoning requirements, most cities require permits for permanent installation of an on-premise sign. Many zoning codes restrict size, height, setback and other locational factors. Reputable sign companies are experienced in obtaining necessary permits for construction and installation of the sign structure. These companies can provide engineering specifications required by regulatory entities' services should be included in the company's bid.

Variations. Sometimes a zoning code restricts the type of signage for a given area. For your business to have a sign that satisfies visibility and readability requirements of the location, you may need to apply for a variance to the existing zoning code and regulation. If a business owner can prove the need for a modification of the regulations and hardship if the modifications are not obtained, the local planning agency can grant a variance application process.

Insurance. A properly designed, permitted and constructed sign will reduce your potential liability insurance problems.

<http://www.asbdc.ualr.edu/fod/4512.htm>