Signs and the Downtown Experience
Craig Berger, Fashion Institute of Technology and Craig Berger Management Consulting
Signs and the Downtown Experience

Goals:
- Show the positive impact of Landmark, Digital Signs, and Wayfinding signs on downtown, urban and suburban environments
- Compare positive views of downtown signs to successful strategies for urban revitalizations.
- Develop an assessment approach for comparing the relative effectiveness of different strategies.
- Develop strategies for making signs a tool for economic development.
Signs and the Downtown Experience

By Craig Berger for the Signage Foundation, Inc.

1. Landmark Design Survey
2. Digital Sign Design Survey
3. Urban Wayfinding and Identity
Attitudes Towards Suburban and Downtown Signs Have Changed Significantly in the Last Decade
Consumer and Institutional Experience are Blending
Institutional Brands Are Becoming and Essential Part of the Urban Fabric
# Apple Is the Most Productive Retailer in the United States

Retail sales per square foot in the United States in 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retailer</th>
<th>Sales per square foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Stores</td>
<td>$6,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany &amp; Co.</td>
<td>$3,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lululemon athletica</td>
<td>$1,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>$1,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micheal Kors</td>
<td>$1,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Comfort</td>
<td>$1,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Religion</td>
<td>$1,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera Bradley</td>
<td>$1,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birks &amp; Mayors</td>
<td>$1,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairway Market</td>
<td>$1,081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on latest reported trailing 12 months. As of November 2012.

Source: Retail Sails
As Standards and Competition Have Increased
The Effectiveness of Landmark Signs in Urban Environments:

Testing Methodologies
Slide Show Survey
Ranking of Metrics
Strategy Comparison Survey
Tour
Participants

80 Participants in 3 Cities
• 90% outside the design/fabrication community
• Volunteers selected online from a pool of 150 people
• 55% female
• 40% minority
• Average Age of 41
• 65% own cars
• 85% have driven in the last year

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Signs Foundation is seeking volunteers to participate in an important survey on on-premise commercial and institutional signs. The survey will be about three hours in length and will include a bus tour. Volunteers will receive a $40 honorarium for their time and refreshments will be included as part of the program.

SURVEY DATE: JULY 17

The survey will start and end in Downtown Chicago at 4:30 PM at 60 East Van Buren Street.

Interested volunteers please contact Craig Berger at craigberger19@comcast.net
Slide Show Ranking Survey

Ranking Metrics on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being most in agreement and 1 being least in agreement.

The sign is:
- Legible
- High Quality
- Appropriately Scaled
- Enjoyable To View
- Informational
- Unique
- Part of the Architecture, Interior or Landscape
- Not Distracting
- Appropriate for the Setting
- Supporting of the Overall Brand Identity
- Well Designed
- Exciting
- Memorable
Top Weighted Scores

**Legible:** 2.63 and 12% of weighted score
**Informational:** 3.92 and 11% of weighted score
**High Quality:** 5.17 and 10% of weighted score
**Enjoyable to View:** 5.71 and 9% of weighted score

Other attributes include:
** Appropriately Scaled:** 7.25
** Unique:** 9.08
**Part of the Architecture, Interior or Landscape:** 8.67
**Not Distracting:** 9.92
**Appropriate for the Setting:** 8.25
**Supporting of the Overall Brand Identity:** 8.21
**Well Designed:** 6.96
**Exciting:** 7.63
Neighborhood and Suburban Analysis

Integrated Landmark Design

4.04 Score
Highest of the Four Strategies

67% complementing the community and 56% as important to the quality of the community

Top 3 Scores
Wendy’s
Dairy Queen
Dunkin Donuts
Neighborhood and Suburban Analysis

Integrated Landmark Design

4.04 Score
Highest of the Four Strategies

67% complementing the community and 56% as important to the quality of the community

Top 3 Scores
Wendy’s
Dairy Queen
Dunkin Donuts
Key Lesson: Integration of the pylon sign, landscape and architecture
Neighborhood and Suburban Analysis

Integrated Landmark Design

3.98 Score
Second Highest of the Four Strategies

50% complementing the community and 50% as important to the quality of the community

Top 3 Scores
McDonalds
Walgreens
Town Center Landmark Stores
Key Lesson:
Symbol, type, architecture combination for the greatest impact
Downtown Chicago
Where signs are crucial to economic development
Downtown Chicago
Over 30% of the signs shown are seen as central to the success of suburban and neighborhood environments and in fact enhance those environments.
Downtown Chicago

Supporting the Urban Brand

Over 30% of the signs shown are seen as central to the success of suburban and neighborhood environments and in fact enhance those environments.
Downtown Survey

Downtown approaches that were analyzed
Overall 90% complementing the community and 30% as important to the quality of the community

Large Format Print Integration: 4.31
External Projected Signs: 4.15
Dimensional Parallel Signs and Displays: 4.40
Architectural Integration: 4.29
Large Format Print, Mural and Display: 4.30
Multiple Approaches on the same Establishment: 4.48
Key Lesson:
Diversity, Dimensionality and Layering for Maximum Effect
North Side and South Side

The clear relationship of commercial sign success to economic development
Leading Issues

• Much greater desire and acceptance of sign scale, diversity and messaging downtown.
• Much greater desire for skillful integration of sign and architecture in suburban context.
• Like in wayfinding, limiting and accenting messaging is hugely important and has a significant impact on sign acceptance.
• In both suburbs and city scale matters, particularly with sign messaging.
• Need for solutions that fit the scale of the environment
Leading Issues for Downtown and Suburban Environments

- No significant difference in view of internal and external illumination in suburban context. Internal illumination is better accepted and viewed in urban environments.
- Design quality and diversity is a large positive with multiple materials and approaches receiving greater acceptance.
- Branding is beloved and diversity of brand approaches is enjoyed.
- Positive responses to materiality and landscape integration over heavy graphic integration. Graphics have a positive response as a support to the dimensionality of sign programs.
Opportunities

• Develop Best Practices with sign guidelines
• Sign Boosterism
• Encourage Architectural Integration of Signs
• Reinforce Legibility and Illumination
• Allow for greater creativity for Downtown Signs
• Promote signs as a tourism strategy through landmarks, pop-ups and integrated sign approaches
Philadelphia
Orientation and scale in Wayfinding
Downtown Survey

Key Wayfinding Elements

Pedestrian Sign and Maps
Maps
Building and Street Illumination
Dynamic Landmarks
Gateways
Opportunities

• Signage investment for every major streetscape and infrastructure project
• Best practices portfolio
• Aggressive sign company marketing
• DOT partnership
• Clear legibility standards
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