

## THE SIGN BRINGS CUSTOMERS

A beginners guide to signage

From	<b>Endpoint</b>	Date	March 2007
------	-----------------	------	------------

To	<b>Website download</b>	Subject	The sign brings customers
----	-------------------------	---------	---------------------------

Address  
165 Tower Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 3LW

cc

**Endpoint** 165 Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LW T. +44 (0)20 7089 2670 F. +44 (0)20 7089 2671 [www.endpoint.co.uk](http://www.endpoint.co.uk)

### “The sign brings customers”

The Fortune-Tellers. Fable 15.

Jean de la Fontaine, 17th century French poet (with no doubt family in the sign business)

Before I joined the brand implementation racket I knew nothing about signage. I still know very little about the technical specification of signs, but I have been blown away by their importance to both the decision making cycle and branding in general. The following pointers will hopefully shed some light on the role signage plays for those more at home with Adwords than AutoCAD.

1. Signage is more important than you could possibly imagine. One of our clients, a leading hotel chain, conducted major research into the effectiveness of their marketing channels in a bid to streamline the business. The results were revelatory: signage out-performed advertising by 50%. That is to say, every penny spent on signage yielded 50% more revenue than pennies spent on advertising. A shocker, I know. For all the time, money and effort we put into chasing the latest trends, the piece of acrylic on the wall outside is working harder.
2. Signage is the cornerstone of workplace branding. For a multinational, brand is what ties the suits in Canary Wharf with the software engineers in Palo Alto. Signage is the physical manifestation of brand and for many workers is their only real daily exposure to your identity. It drives a sense of belonging, permanence and pride. And what is corporate branding worth? Ask the investment bankers at Goldman Sachs, who are literally bombarded with job offers every day. The fact is they turn down near-identical, higher paying jobs at rival firms because there is only one Goldman Sachs. Good signage acts as a daily reminder.
3. Price fixing is endemic. Investment in tooling is prohibitively expensive and these boys have debt to service. Those of you with experience in the print industry will appreciate where I am coming from with this. What's more, so few people client-side truly understand signage and no more know the price of a 3m lacquered totem than the price of uranium. You've been warned!

4. Proper sign design only takes place when design meets engineering. That's not some sappy platitude – the graphic designer must literally sit down with a design engineer and product specialist in order for signage to work. Too often a graphic designer will put together a beautiful photovisual, hand it to the client and be on their merry way. The client then hands the photovisuals to a sign company et voilà, a botched, inconsistent and expensive sign programme. Why does this happen? Because the sign company will offer design engineering 'free of charge' and build the fee into their product costs. Remember, you get what you pay for and product design is a highly specialist field.
  
5. The sign designer's lament – no one pays any real attention to sign design unless its defective. A beautiful back of reception sign sends out a subjective message (see point 2) but the only time a non-designer will really stop and look is when its broken. The internet is awash with images of 'funny signs', typically mistranslations, and yet there are very view forums dedicated to beautiful signs. Take a look at the signs around around you – at the lift, in the foyer – and take some time out to admire the work that has gone into them. If they are shoddy ask yourself what that says about your brand and what subjective effect it is having on customers and employees, and reassess your attitude to signage.

Copyright Endpoint Limited 2007, all rights reserved

**Endpoint** – brand implementation & visual identity management

Rollout services | Signage & wayfinding | Product specification | Brand management

**Brand matters.** Endpoint are international brand implementation and visual identity management specialists. We help clients, architects and designers transform visual identity from two dimensional designs into compelling, real life encounters on buildings, environments and interiors. Our pragmatic approach ensures brands and environments look better and perform better through careful management and smarter implementation methods.

[www.endpoint.co.uk](http://www.endpoint.co.uk)