Everywhere you look in the world there is a growing need for sign businesses. Whether street signs for a new development in the area, a new business or restaurant or even vehicle lettering, the sign business is forever changing. Over the years it has become an extremely profitable and easy to learn business. There are not many businesses these days in which a person can get started for under $3500 and have the equipment he or she needs to provide customers with high detail and eye catching designs at an affordable cost.

Aside from being an extremely lucrative business venture, a sign business is not a very complex business to maintain. Customers range from college students looking to make extra money to professional graphic designers looking to enhance the quality of their work. People choose to get involved with sign making for a variety of different reasons. The purpose of this guidebook is to help YOU choose your path in this industry and we hope it helps.

**GETTING STARTED!**

I first got into the sign making business back in 1998. I was fresh out of college and my father had purchased his vinyl cutter, software and startup equipment from Beacon Graphics. At first the business was part time for me, helping my father weed vinyl for various types of signs in our garage, which we had transformed into our own little sign shop. It was simply a part time job in which my father made life a little easier for me when it came to paying the bills. Little did I realize it would soon become a huge part of my career.

I continued to work part time with my father until eventually taking over the business full time. It was then that I took my first step into realizing what this business is truly all about ... personality, imagination, creativity and dedication. Being in the sign business can require a lot of patience and at the same time can become very lucrative. If you have a good eye for detail, the patience of a saint, a good graphics design background and an energetic personality, you can be successful in this business.

There are many aspects to this business and it is your decision as to which road to take. The sign making industry is forever changing and newer, more efficient products are being released to enhance your creativity and imagination. Through this small tutorial, I hope to give you a better knowledge of what it takes to get started in the sign making industry. Perhaps this feature will give you a better insight as to what to look for when selecting equipment and which features are really truly necessary when selecting software, which materials are good for which applications, or maybe this will just enhance your respect for the business, as I know it has mine. Enjoy!
STEP 1. DOES YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD NEED A SIGN BUSINESS?

Most people will drive up and down the same highway everyday and pass the same shops, the same restaurants, the same realtors, and banks without even looking around them. When you get into the sign business there is no customer database that is handed to you giving you a breakdown of who needs a new sign. The people around you are your bread and butter- your customers. Take a drive around your neighborhood. Try to notice any new offices, shops or deli’s that may be opening soon in your area. Visit any construction sites, or even your local police and fire department. Making yourself as well known as possible is very important. Once you get started in the business, most of your future business will come from referrals and word of mouth.

Some of the best marketing tools for getting yourself recognized in the field can be very effective and yet extremely inexpensive. Most people may choose flashy 3 x 5 cards with all kinds of crazy designs all over them that have a habit of flooding the paper with useless material and less emphasis on personality. Less is more in this business. Allow me to explain that theory. I do not mean stick to the most basic designs with no special effects such as shadows or outlines, I simply mean to use the appropriate designs for the appropriate times. A 60 year old deli owner is not going to be interested in a full color glossy print with flames and car graphics surrounding it. Just as an 18 year old looking for flames on vehicles is not going to want to see an old fashioned wooden sign with pastel coloring on it. Stick to something simple that captures your personality. Keep the basics in mind; your name, services, a small graphic, and your contact information. See below.

In the first design, a more simplistic technique is used, getting the point across without flooding the card with useless images making it hard for the customer to understand. The customer is going to be relying on you to give their business the look it needs to achieve their goals. The more professional you appear to them, the more professionally they will treat you.

Good Layout Design

Poor Layout Design

STEP 2. THE TOOLS TO SUCCESS AREN'T ALWAYS THE ONES YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS

Many people think all it takes to maintain a successful sign business is to consider themselves a "hard worker". Not entirely true. A good sign maker can at times be perceived as better with his mind than with his hands so it can be true at times it's all in the head. We all have an unlimited amount of ideas that flow through our minds each and every day. The question is, "why don’t we put them to good use?"

Most of the time when a customer comes to you with a new business venture they may not have the exact look in mind for their business. Think of your customers as a blank piece of paper. It's your job to get inside their heads and at the same time, get a feel for what they are looking for without having to have them explain themselves over and over again. Your customers are not always going to know exactly what they need, it's going to be up to you to help them.
This is where your creativity comes in to play. A lot of customers have a specific way they want their sign to look. Others however, leave it up to you to decide. At this point, it would be good to get a feel for what kind of person your customer is. Do they seem like a creative, edgy individual? A person who would be more than welcoming to fresh new designs? Is he someone who simply wants a neat looking, professional sign? Your design should be a depiction of your customers personality, needs, and requests all rolled into one.

As a suggestion, when you purchase your sign making equipment, one of the most under-rated item would be the plotter pens. Plotter Pens are either fiber tip or roller base miniature markers that can be put into your vinyl cutter in place of the blade holder to draw with. Trust me on this, there WILL be customers that will require sample after sample. You can purchase a roll of drawing paper and literally feed the paper through the machine and draw the exact size of the image out with the plotter pens. This will give your customer an ideal visual of what the finished product will look like without having to waste vinyl.

NOTE: Plotter Pens are available in Black and Four Color Packs

STEP 3. BE PREPARED
Just as any other business, mistakes can and will happen. Some mistakes can be due to weather. Others than be due to lack of communication. Sometimes the mistake can be the fault of the customer but of course, they won’t be the first to tell you that. Design yourself a specification sheet, giving your customer a scaled down drawing of what the sign will look like. Provide detailed measurements, color identification, pricing and specifications on delivery and installation.

On the bottom of this form, include a disclaimer with a spot for the customers signature on the bottom. Any changes you make to the project would of course require a new specification sheet. By having your customer sign off on this form, you are protecting yourself from being held responsible for any errors with the project that were not made on your behalf. This is not a perfect world, mistakes can and will happen in this business, but it's always nice to have a little insurance policy in your back pocket.

EXAMPLE:

NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS

All Spec Sheets MUST be signed and approved prior to start of production. Any changes made to job after production has begun will require a new spec sheet and signature, with any costs for wasted materials as being the responsibility of the customer. A deposit will be required on all jobs over $100. NO EXCEPTIONS. For outdoor signage, (Your Name) will NOT be held responsible for ANY damage to signage that is brought to the customer’s attention prior to production. All signage is weather insured and should any job be destroyed or damaged due to inclement weather beyond customer’s control, (Your Name) will provide a replacement for only 50% of original job cost. All checks to be made payable to (Your Name) and balances are due upon job completion. NO EXCEPTIONS

Customer Signature  Date
STEP 4. CHOOSING THE RIGHT MACHINE

Choosing the right vinyl cutter can be as complicated or as simple as you choose for it to be. Like buying a car, there are many features you should look for when purchasing the right signmaking machine for your business. There are many brands of vinyl cutters, some claim to be better than others. Let’s face it, they all cut vinyl, that’s what they were made to do. The question is, which will get the job done right. Listed below are some of the most popular features and myths in regards to what to look for and what to avoid.

SPEED. Most machines will operate anywhere between 18 and 33 inches per second. This would be a pretty moderate speed for vinyl cutting. There are of course many machines out there that boast a cutting speed of up to 60 inches per second, however the bottom line here, “Would you feel comfortable turning away from a machine that would be rolling your material through it at a speed of 60 inches per second?” Didn’t think so. Of course a fast machine is a good option to have, but being a little more realistic can also mean playing it safe.

TRACKING. Tracking can be one of the most overrated features in a vinyl cutter out there. If you are looking to do vehicle graphics and you are going to be doing 6 foot long cuts with your cutter, then all it would really require on your end is to take the time to properly line up the vinyl. There are of course a lot of vinyl cutters that coin the bragging phrase of “tracks up to 15 feet”. In all honesty, you can track a 15 foot long graphic, but just how would you apply such a long graphic? The graphic would need to be cut at some point anyway. My best advice would be to simply play it safe and cut no more than 6 to 8 feet of vinyl at a time.

PRESSURE. Ok, let’s get a few things out on the table. Pressure. “The strength a vinyl cutter has behind it to cut through the recommended material for the right sign job.” There are machines out there that do in fact provide a cutting pressure of up to 600 grams of force. The fact is that this pressure is absolutely useless to someone wanting to make vinyl signs and lettering. Two and three millimeter vinyl can be cut with the average 100gf-120gf. A good 24” vinyl cutter will be able to cut sandblasting material, which is 30 mil. at 250 grams of force. The thickest sandblasting material can be cut on a 30” machine at 225 grams of force. Therefore, what material is going to even fit through a vinyl cutter that would require that much pressure. None that I would recommend feeding through it, that’s for sure.

SUPPORT. This is something I just cannot stress enough. There are salesmen and there are product specialists. Having been on both ends of the business, “the sales end” and “the sign making end”, I feel that anyone looking to sell the product, should KNOW the product. The company you purchase your machine from should be the one who is going to provide you with technical support and be willing to train you from top to bottom. The last thing you need is a company that takes the order, ships the machine and then files you away in a cabinet, leaving you to hope everything will work out. Bottom line, be sure you buy from a company that is dedicated and committed to giving you the training and support you need.

24” or 30”. This decision isn’t as difficult as it seems. If you are looking to do vehicle graphics, banners, storefronts, logos, decals, then a 24” vinyl cutter would be the ideal machine for you to start up your business. Keep in mind a 24” letter is fairly large and extremely visible on even the largest of trucks. Most people who choose a 30” machine are those who are cutting primarily larger decals, and thicker materials such as sandblast, reflective, or apparel materials on a more frequent basis. Most 30” machines include a stand and have drivers for programs such as Adobe Illustrator and Corel Draw. The only down side to that is that most companies do not provide technical support on Corel and Illustrator, unless they sell them.
STEP 5. CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOFTWARE PROGRAM

There are plenty of design programs out there. But, which one is the right for your business? Sometimes choosing the right company can aid in choosing the right software. Most companies provide you with a features list from which you can pick out the exact features you are looking to incorporate into your sign business. Fortunately, there are some companies that go above and beyond the call of duty and provide you with a demo or an interactive simulator. An interactive simulator is like being able to actually try out the program before buying it.

NOTE: Most vinyl cutters will include driver programs that will work with Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw. By purchasing a stand-alone design program, you cut down on production time, and companies will be able to provide you with accurate technical support. In fact, most companies will NOT provide technical support on Adobe Illustrator and Corel products.

Examples of signs created in ULTRA-Flex Vinyl Cutting Software

ULTRA-FLEX EXPRESS SOFTWARE
Most people will choose this software for one of two reasons. The first being they are extremely fluent in either Adobe Illustrator and/or Corel Draw or they are looking to get a basic sign making software for an inexpensive price. Luckily for them, Ultra-Flex Express gives them both. Ultra-Flex Express enables you to send a file from Adobe Illustrator and Corel and cut-it. You will also have the capabilities to do some basic text editing, design shapes and import ready-to-cut clipart graphics. Please keep in mind unlike the higher levels of vinyl cutting software Ultra-Flex Express does NOT include any FREE Signmaking Fonts & Graphics packages.
### Signmaking Software Specs

**FlexiSIGN-PRO**

**FlexiEXPERT**

**FlexiSIGN**

**FlexiLetter**

**FlexiSTARTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>FlexiSIGN-PRO</th>
<th>FlexiEXPERT</th>
<th>FlexiSIGN</th>
<th>FlexiLetter</th>
<th>FlexiSTARTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use True Type Fonts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import / Export Filters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapes Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting / Plotting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arc Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Borders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Effects (Distortion)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline, Inline &amp; Contour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- $399  
- $499

**ULTRA-Flex**

- $1295

**Most Popular**

**ULTRA-Flex**

- $1695

**FlexiSIGN-PRO**

- $2495  
- $4295

### Most Popular Features

- Dimensioning
- Twain Acquire
- Vectorization (Scan-to-Cut)
- Centerline Vectorization
- Bitmap Editing Tools

- Color Vectorization
- Color Trapping

- Text Functions
- Shapes Tools
- Cutting / Plotting

- Fill, Stroke & Gradient Editor
- Photo Mask
- RIP & Digital Printing

**For Vinyl Cutting**

**FlexiStarter**

- $399

**FlexiLetter**

- $499

**FlexiSIGN**

- $995

**FlexiSIGN-PRO**

- $1295

**FlexiEXPERT**

- $1695

**Sign Making Software specs**

- $2495  
- $4295
ULTRA-FLEX
Ultra-Flex is like having Ultra-Flex Express, Adobe Illustrator, and Corel Draw all rolled into one program. It’s simple and easy to follow guidebook can help transform a true beginner into an efficient sign-maker. Ultra-Flex has some of the more popular features such as inline/outline, distortion effects, shadows, 700 Fonts, 1800 Clipart Graphics, along with fine detailed scanning capabilities.

Ultra-Flex is like having the best of all design programs combined, and allows you to create your vinyl graphics with ease. Fully equipped with a built in production manager, Ultra-Flex allows you to cut full length graphics, panel larger jobs, cut multiple layers for full color graphics, or run thousands of smaller decals for your customer. Your production manager also allows you to increase or decrease the size of the image without having to constantly readjust your graphic.

Ultra-Flex also provides you with full scanning capabilities. In comparison to lower level sign making software, Ultra-Flex Express will not include scanning capabilities and will force you to scan into another design program and edit the image there. This will only make more work for you and the whole point of using good design software is to simplify your life, not complicate it.

There is an extensive brochure that can be found in all catalog packets from Beacon Graphics and the best feature about Ultra-Flex is the fact that you can try it out before you buy it. Beacon provides an interactive simulator right on our website allowing you to try out all the popular features that this program can offer.

SUPPORT & SERVICE
Having FREE Lifetime Technical Support, Service, and Education is a value all it’s own. Beacon provides these services free of charge to all customers. One of the benefits of working with such a company is the mere fact that you aren’t just dealing with salesmen, but a team of experienced specialists who have been in the business for over 15 years.

Having an efficient and extensively trained technical support team is one of the most important features to look for when purchasing a sign system. These will be the individuals you turn to when your machine isn’t running properly or when you have questions about the software. Having vast experience in the sign making industry allows technical support staff members to also assist you with some basics such as vinyl selection and various application procedures.

Another great benefit of FREE Lifetime Technical Support is having the opportunity to be trained in Beacon’s facility absolutely FREE of charge. On the day of your training, you will receive a one-on-one training seminar allowing you the allotted time to ask questions that you may have regarding the business. And of course, if you come across some new applications for your machine and software throughout the course of your business or you are looking to fine tune some newer skills, you are always welcome back for additional training.
Along with free lifetime technical support and training, Beacon Graphics is also one of the few service centers for Roland vinyl cutters on the Northeast. Many people do not realize the importance of this, that is, until their machine is in need of repair. Let’s think about this for a minute. If your business resides on the east coast, and your machine is in desperate need of repair, without Beacon, you will need to send your machine back to California. The standard ground shipping time from East Coast to California would be 5 business days, not including holidays and weekends. On top of that you may add another 5 business days for the machine to be returned to you, this of course does not include the repair itself. If the repair is something covered under your warranty, then you can sometimes liken your manufacturer to an auto mechanic, and when something is being repaired on their dime, they usually do not rush to get it out the door.

By dealing with Beacon for support, you can usually have the machine serviced and back to you within 48 hours of receipt. That would be about 3 business days as compared to being out of commission for about 10 business days, which we all know can add up to a lot of money in lost business.

SIGNMAKING ACADEMY

The Sign Making Academy was designed exclusively by Beacon Graphics Systems, and gives an extensive breakdown, in university type fashion, to prepare you for your future of your sign business. Below I have listed the different options and features that can be explored online at www.signmaking.com

- **Getting Started**-Emphasizing on the “History of Vinyl Graphics”, “Progress In the Signmaking Industry”, and “Marketing & Applications for Vinyl Graphics”, this is the ideal place to learn the ins and outs of the industry, and acquire a small taste for just how this industry has evolved.
- **Sign Layout**-Sure anyone can add text to a vehicle with a few easy steps, but what this step does is provide you with a quick visualization on how adding simple details and making minor changes to your graphic, can make it stand out from all the rest.
- **Apparel Imprinting**-Another great benefit in purchasing a vinyl cutter would be the ability to cut fabric transfer material for t-shirts. T-shirts are not just a great way to expand your business services, it also can be an instant marketing tool!
- **Setting Up Shop**-One thing you want to be assure to avoid in this business is clutter. There are many different types of tools, supplies, substrates, and equipment. This feature provides you with excellent ideas and sample layouts as to how you may set up your sign shop
- **Application Tips**-Some say apply graphics horizontally, while others believe vertically is the way to go. Which one is a better way to apply a sign? Check out the step by step procedure and you’ll get a great idea of what will work best for you.
- **Sign Business**-In here you’ll find some examples on just how much the average sign sells for these days, and a few finished product pieces in the gallery. You’ll also get to read up on some individual’s success stories with their sign business.
- **Graphics & Fonts**-There are some good fonts to use in the sign business, and there are some really inappropriate fonts to use in the sign business. Which ones work and which don’t? Read up and find out! You will also be given some insight on copyright laws and trademarks regarding corporate logos.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT VINYL

Vinyl film can be manufactured in two different ways, calendered or casting. The calendering process uses heat to melt a ‘monomeric’ vinyl resin. The molten resin is then squeezed between rollers to finally produce a monomeric calendered vinyl film, generally 100 microns thick. Calendered vinyls are highly versatile and can be specified for virtually any interior application. Although prone to shrinkage when used outdoors, they can fulfill many ‘short term’ exterior requirements. However, the shrinkage of calendered vinyls can be reduced by using a polymeric vinyl resin. Polymeric calendered vinyls offer extended exterior durability, but even with a reduced face film thickness (generally 80 microns), polymeric calendered vinyls tend not to lend themselves to uneven surfaces such as corrugations, rivets, etc. Below I have provided a detailed description between the two styles.

The casting process uses chemical solvents to liquefy a vinyl resin, which is then floated onto a highly polished substrate. The resultant films (generally 60 microns thick) are extremely stable and highly resilient and can therefore be used for many diverse, ‘long term’ exterior applications.

There are two types of adhesives commonly used, rubber based and acrylic based. Rubber based adhesives are affected by ultra-violet light and cannot be recommended for use in certain applications. Consequently, acrylic based adhesives are more widely used, and furthermore, will adhere to a wider variety of surfaces. Adhesives can be formulated to offer varying degrees of life expectancy but are generally formulated to be compatible with the life expectancy.

The expected life of vinyl cannot be judged solely on the construction of the vinyl face film and adhesive alone. A further consideration is color fastness. Some color pigments, because of their chemical formulation, are more prone to fading than others. Hence, within certain manufacturer’s ranges, there may be a life expectancy spread specified for each type of vinyl: the shorter life figure relating to colored vinyls, the longer life figure relating to black and white vinyls. It should be stressed, however, that these figures represent minimum guaranteed outdoor life expectancy, and in many applications outdoor life will greatly exceed that which is specified.

Vinyls have varying working temperatures which are categorized as follows: minimum application temperature, the minimum temperature at which the vinyl can be applied to a surface; intermittent service temperature, the minimum/maximum temperatures that vinyl can withstand for short periods and constant service temperature, the minimum/maximum temperature that the vinyl can withstand on a constant basis throughout its life’s duration.

Monomeric calendered vinyls offer an extremely economical solution to many interior lettering applications. POS and interior signing programs are just some of the applications where this range can be used. Outdoor life is normally restricted to three years for black, white, and colors, and therefore monomeric calendered vinyls should only be considered for short-term, temporary, outdoor use on smooth surfaces.

As with monomeric calendered vinyls, these films have virtually unlimited life when used indoors. Offering an exterior life of five years for black, white, and colors, polymeric calendered vinyls satisfy a large number of outdoor requirements when applied to smooth surfaces. For example, polymeric calendered vinyl are not recommended for the marking of vehicles with riveted panels.

Because of their method of manufacture, cast vinyls are extremely durable and will withstand considerable variations in temperature and humidity. Their dimensional stability makes them particularly suited for application to compound curved and uneven surfaces, e.g. corrugations, rivets, etc. Cast vinyls have a guaranteed minimum outdoor life of seven years for black and white, and five years for colors. They are therefore ideal for virtually all long term applications including vehicle liveries and striping, military, aviation, marine, and industrial markings, and many types of exterior signing. Indoor applications include reverse window graphics where extremes of temperature and humidity require utmost stability.
SELECTING YOUR SYSTEM

Now that you have been given a breakdown of equipment, software and supplies, the next step would be to put it all together and select a sign making system that is suitable to your needs. Generally, the best way to get going is to make sure you have all bases covered. Below, some of the most popular packages have been listed, but of course, there is always the option to customize your package as well.

24” STARTUP KIT - This Startup kit comes bundled with each of the packages listed below. Customers can add or remove vinyl from the kit according to the colors that best suit their needs. Each startup kit consists of 15 rolls of Intermediate calendered vinyl. Each roll is 24” wide by 10yds (30 feet), and is a good vinyl to use for vehicles, banners, magnets, and various substrates. It is an ideal, easy to use material, for beginners as well as the most experience signmaker.

Beacon Ultra 24 Startup Kit
15 Rolls of 24” x 10 yd Intermediate Vinyl-Black, White, Sapphire Blue, Wild Cardinal Red, Dark Green, Burgundy, Primrose Yellow, Beige, Olympic Blue, Magenta, Kelly Green, Teal, Gold, Silver, and Plum

Transferrite Application Tape-Sizes 3”, 6”, 8”, 12”. Each roll is 100 yards in length

Splash Application Solution, 45 degree cutting blade, tweezers, pricing guide & plotter pens

EXPRESS 24 System
- Roland GX-24 CAMM 1 Vinyl Cutter
- Ultra-Flex Express Software
- 24” Startup Kit
- FREE Ultrasignart Graphics CD
- FREE Bergen Interactive Sign Layouts
- 3 Year Warranty
- FREE Lifetime Technical Support
- FREE Training

LETTER SIGNER SYSTEM
- Roland GX-24 CAMM 1 Vinyl Cutter
- FlexiLetter Software.
- 24” Startup Kit
- FREE Ultrasignart Graphics CD
- FREE Bergen Interactive Sign Layouts
- 3 Year Warranty
- FREE Lifetime Technical Support
- FREE Training
The main differences with these packages is in the different software levels. With the information described in the guidebook about the software programs featured in these packages, it should be easy for you to select the appropriate package for your business. However, if you still are undecided about which system you will need to get you going, check out the EQUIPMENT SELECTION GUIDE on Beacons website or call Beacon Graphics. The EQUIPMENT SELECTION GUIDE allows you to select your equipment based on application and not just pricing and software specifications.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES

As with any business, there is a plethora of supplies available to you, but what works with what? Which material is good with certain substrates? There are many different types of applications in the sign making industry, below you will find a brief description of the supplies, tools, and substrates and how it can benefit it your business.

The Vinyl Application Tool Kit is definitely something I would invest in. The kit provides you with all the necessary tools for the job, and with the carrying case, it even keeps them orderly and right at your fingertips. Some people choose to just use a tool bucket, but personally I would find those to be a bit disorganized. For example, you’re applying a larger graphic to a storefront window, you peel back the one side of application tape and realize you need your knife. Now would you want to be fumbling around a took bucket where you can’t see the knife or would you rather have the convenience of having the knife right in front you in the carrying case.

HANG-UPS FOR BANNERS is a far superior method of construction, even to D Rings. Using this system eliminates the pressure that conventional banners experience at the points of attachment (on each corner). The Hang-ups system distributes the pressure evenly over the entire banner not just at the points of attachment. Other major advantages are: the system will accept any banner material and the hardware is reusable.

ULTRA SIGNER SYSTEM

- Roland GX-24 CAMM 1 Vinyl Cutter
- Ultra-Flex Software
- 24” Startup Kit
- FREE Ultrasignart Graphics CD
- FREE Bergen Interactive Sign Layouts
- 3 Year Warranty
- FREE Lifetime Technical Support
- FREE Training
BANNER MATERIAL

You can read up on the different types of banners available on Beacons website. The information listed below is some basics on banner installation and usage.

TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR BANNERS:

The most common complaint in the industry is: “The banner I put up was only up for ..... and it fell down”. It is very important to realize that a banner hung outside can be subjected to numerous forces, some natural, some unnatural. The main reason a banner fails unfortunately is due to substandard installation. It is VERY important to select the right type of banner for the conditions.

The type of construction and the TEAR STRENGTH of the banner material used are both major considerations when making your selection. It has been our experience that banners using grommets as the primary point of attachment is the weakest form of construction, NO matter WHAT type of material is used. For this reason, we have elected to use two SUPERIOR methods of banner construction. With our conventional banner construction we use D RINGS encompassed by nylon webbing which we box-stitched into/onto the banner. (Number of D Rings and construction varies with size of banner). Tests have proven that this method of construction increases the burst strength by up to 500% over the same banner using grommets.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ARE:

- Use strong ropes, bungee, snap hooks, cables, etc.
- Attach and pull the ropes horizontally, not diagonally (see diagrams).
- Keep tension in all 4 corners with whatever you use to tie your banner.
- If a rope becomes slack go back and tighten it.
- Excess flapping of a banner results in tears, cracking & de-lamination.

RECOMMENDED BANNER INSTALLATION for Conventional Banners:

WHAT TO PUT ON YOUR BANNERS:

VINYL GRAPHICS: Because banners are designed to be flexible, our recommendation is to use a good 2 mil high performance pressure sensitive vinyl on all banners. Good 2 mil vinlys have better adhesive properties & are more flexible than other vinlys.

ENAMELS (Solvent): Major manufacturers in the industry, produce enamels that work with our Polly, Super Polly, Vinyl & Original banners.

ENAMELS (Water): Water beads enamels formulated for the sign industry will work on our Vinyl & Original banners (not our Polly & Super Polly)

SCREEN INKS: Inks are specifically formulated for different types of banner materials. You should always consult your supplier for the correct ink for the substrate you are screening on.
MAGNETICS

Magnetic sheeting comes in a variety of colors and is perfect for vehicle graphics. They come in handy to the customer who does not need lettering applied directly to their vehicle or for customers who work with rental vehicles as well. Magnetic material is available in either rolls or pre cut sheets of 12” x 24” sizes.

TIPS FOR USING MAGNETS

- Magnetic material can be cut very easily with Rolling Scissors or regular scissors.
- It is always best to round the corners of the magnetic material. This will allow the corners to lay flat and keep from peeling up.
- Magnetic signs should be removed and cleaned periodically. Leaving magnetic signs on your vehicle when it is being cleaned is NOT recommended.

COROPLAST

The name Coroplast applies to a wide range of extruded twinwall plastic sheet products based on a high impact polypropylene copolymer. Coroplast is a high-quality polypropylene twinwall profile sheet formulated specifically for use in the screen printing, display and packaging markets. Coroplast uses a copolymer resin in order to increase impact and low temperature performance. Copolymer resins are also used because they retain the ability to be flexed an unlimited number of times without breaking. We call this unique ability “a living hinge.”

GRAPHICS

It is very important to have a good collection of vector graphics that can be cut accurately and cleanly without any intersecting lines or open paths. There are a variety of CD’s available in many categories such as vehicle graphics, clipart, racing, corporate logos and design layouts. One CD contains a collection of vehicle outlines which will allow you to produce a design to scale so that the customer can visualize exactly what the finished job will look like.
In this guidebook we’ve tried to cover the most common questions that beginners encounter when they start up a sign making business. The most important tool to have in this business is your mind. Of all the tips that have been listed in this publication, the ones listed below may turn out to be the most valuable.

- Never be afraid to present your own ideas to the customer. It’s your expertise that they are paying you for. The vinyl sells itself.

- Always do your work when you have the dedicated time to do so. Rushing through can result in errors that will have you spending more time on some of the easiest jobs in the long run.

- Be sure to have the customer sign off on the production specifications sheet prior to ANY cutting. This will help avoid redoing any unnecessary work.

- If there is a need to order certain job materials that you do not normally stock, be sure to make the customer aware of this so that they are not left in the dark as to when their sign will be ready.

- If you require technical assistance be sure to be in front of your machine or computer when you call so the technician can answer your questions without delay.

- Never take on any job without doing all the necessary research. Biting off more than you can chew can result in you doing more work than what you are being paid for.

- Always carry your color chart and pricing guide on you in order to provide your customer with the colors available to them and be able to give them a rough estimate of what the job will cost.

- Never store your machine or material in an extremely warm, cold or damp environments. The vinyl is best when kept at room temperature.

Above all else, have fun. This is an enjoyable business to be in and a business that is forever changing, with new design concepts being created each and every day. It’s very rare in this day and age that you can make a good living in doing something that you enjoy. There’s always going to be a need for a sign somewhere in this world, it’s your job to make it look good.

Dan Ramm
Signmaking Product Specialist
Beacon Graphics
Branchburg, NJ
800 762 9205 x217
dan@signmaking.com
Beacon Graphics
189 Meister Avenue
Branchburg, NJ 08876
800 762-9205