

Instant Advertising

BY AMANDA MCGRORY



LED window displays bring big business

Amanda McGrory is a staff writer for Sign Business magazine.

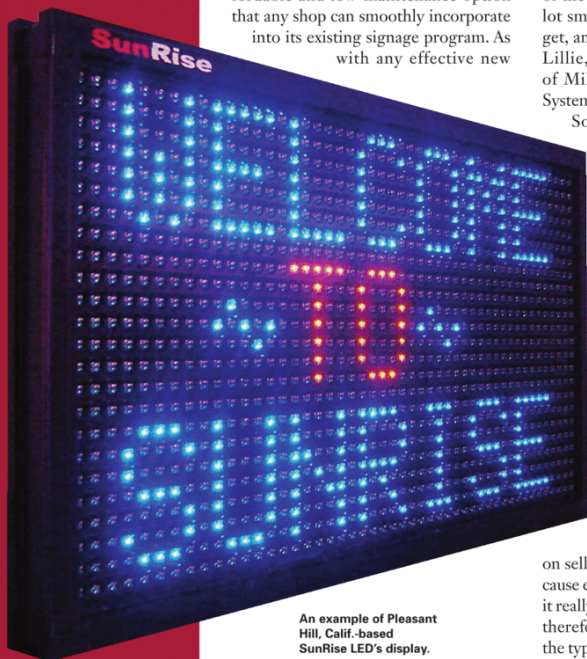
THE NEW YEAR IS FINALLY HERE. The leftovers have been devoured. It's time to start melting away those extra holiday pounds. And the soon-to-be-forgotten resolutions have been set. While you may not run those 12 marathons in 2009, this could be a good time to take a hard look at your business model and discover new market opportunities. LED window displays, for instance, are an affordable and low-maintenance option that any shop can smoothly incorporate into its existing signage program. As with any effective new

business initiative, defining your target audience is a must. With their vivid, compelling imaging, LED window displays lend themselves to a variety of industries—beauty salons, physicians' offices, dry cleaners, restaurants and retail—by carving a service market niche with its own selling points that you can easily target.

ECONOMICAL ADVERTISING

"A number of retailers typically look at this [LED window displays] as part of the sign budget, which typically is a lot smaller than their advertising budget, and that's a big mistake," said Curt Lillie, commercial product manager of Milwaukee-based Adaptive Micro Systems.

So why do LED window displays serve as a better advertising means, instead of functioning as just traditional signage? Because, as Sheldon Dreyfuss, national sales director of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.-based Finest LED Signs points out, LED window displays, with their bright, moving elements, can instantly advertise specific products or sales, and the message can be edited or completely altered in a matter of seconds. Lillie encourages sign shops to capitalize on the advertising advantage because it's the most economical way for clients to spread their promotional message. "The biggest challenge would be for sign companies to really focus on selling the benefit of advertising, because even though it's perceived as a sign, it really isn't. It's an advertising tool. And, therefore, you have to understand what the typical going rates are for advertising



An example of Pleasant Hill, Calif.-based SunRise LED's display.



This SunRise LED window display first draws attention to the sale, then changes the message to detail the discount.

in a local market, and then you can make a good comparison," Lillie explained.

When users choose to advertise using traditional media means—think television, newspaper, radio or billboard advertisements—they are purchasing an ongoing expense that must always be calculated into their budget. An LED display, however, is a one-time purchase for unlimited uses throughout the life of the display. Plus, LED displays are consistently dropping in price for an even more affordable advertising option.

According to Dreyfuss, LED window displays also allow users to precisely target their geographical customer base. For example, let's say a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based retailer buys a newspaper advertisement in *The New York Times*, which will go out not only to the New York City metropolitan area, but also nationwide. How many people who read that advertisement actually live, work or play in that business owner's neighborhood? Will they really take the trouble to go to that location? That's a lot of money spent to reach people who won't even relate to the printed advertisement.

Specifically related to the retail industry, slow-moving inventory from yesterday can sell as today's latest promotion. Jim Leone, national sales manager of Melrose Park, Ill.-based Wagner Zip-Change, explains that inventory is a huge concern of any retailer. Instead of cash in the retailer's pocket, it's stock on a shelf, sitting... and waiting. Of course,

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Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.-based Finest LED Signs bring attention to specific retail items with these displays.



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depending on the industry, most retailers want their inventory sold off the shelf no later than every 60 to 90 days. When it sits longer than that, it starts costing money. However, an LED window display can directly draw attention to that stale item and recreate some excitement. Leone has had end users with this type of success, specifically citing a liquor store

that was trying to get rid of some wine that had been sitting on the shelves for several months. Within three days of turning on the LED window display, the wine was sold and the profits flowed.

MAKING IT WORK

Even if you're new to selling LED displays, there are a few basic principles you

can teach your client, all while looking like a true expert. Encourage customers to use the power of the LED window display and keep their message fresh. Matthew Kaylani, president of Pleasant Hill, Calif.-based SunRise LED, said among all the positive benefits of LED window displays, its messaging versatility offers the premium advertising enhancement. With up to 100 pre-programmed messages, LED displays also give users the option to insert their own personalized text, graphics or logos.

Leone agrees that LED displays are great for timely, impactful messages.

"Just thinking as a consumer, when you're driving home, you're looking at signs all the time, no different than when you're walking through a store. If it's the same message every time, you're never going to look at that sign again," he said. "But, if it's something new, every time you go into the store, you're going to look at it."

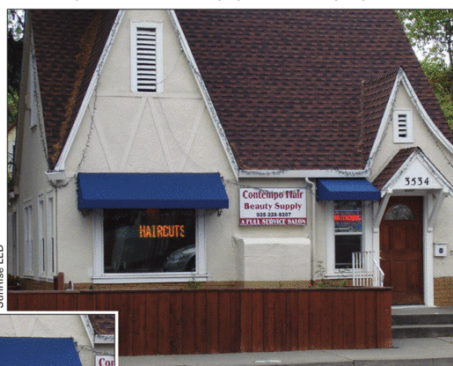
Besides a fresh message, there are certain design principles that should be applied. Keep in mind, when selling the client a certain LED display, you should know the measured distance between the display and the targeted traffic. This is because the pitch of the sign must be taken into consideration. The pitch is the distance between the pixels, so the closer the pitch, the closer the audience must be to clearly read the sign. Dreyfuss explained, "As you want to read the sign further away, you want the pitch to widen, but as you come closer, it blurs out a little bit. If someone says to me, 'Well, I want the foot traffic that's walking past my store,' I'm not going to sell them a sign that has a big pitch."

DEAL OR NO DEAL?

People are visual creatures. Certainly you can tell your potential customer with knee-slappin', jaw-droppin' enthusiasm that your LED window display is the brightest, most attention-grabbing sign on this side of the Mississippi. But you could also say the same thing about a drab piece of shriveled cardboard. Kaylani suggests always exhibiting an LED display in



Milwaukee-based Adaptive Micro Systems' LED window display shows off today's special.



SunRise LED



This beauty salon can advertise the multiple services offered in one sign.