

What's Your Sign?

by Stephanie Bond

To be more precise, what's your external store signage? A publicist will tell you that it's not enough to simply put the name of your business on your sign—to optimize your exposure and increase your chances of drawing in more customers, it's always a good idea to **describe what's unique about your inventory or your location, give customers a directive, or describe the feeling you want your customers to take away.**

For example, Bert Smith decides to open a bookstore in Wannabook, Wyoming. Bert could put up a sign advertising “Bert's Books” and probably grab some attention, but he would likely get more business if the sign read, “Smith's Family Bookstore,” which describes his inventory, or “Wannabook's Discount Bookstore,” which describes his location *and* inventory. Or below the name he might add a directive such as, “Take a good book home today,” or suggest an emotional response to reading such as, “A good book is like a good friend.”

And consider adding a graphic to your sign—a stack of books, a silhouette of a reader, or a cartoon character (bookworm?). Also, **think about adding color to your sign**—color is eye-catching, inviting and energizing. A trio of colors against a solid, light background is the most attractive to the human eye.

If you specialize in commercial fiction or romance, it's worth putting something about romance on your sign to appeal to high-volume romance customers. Remember, romance customers will buy books from all areas of your store for members of their family, and are more likely to give books as gifts. **If you have a marquee, you can change your message** often to appeal to all types of readers. Don't know what to put on your sign? Think of book or reading quotes on T-shirts, mugs, etc. Or consult a volume on quotations for lots of terrific quotes by the great writers, thinkers, and humorists of our time.

Owners and employees are so consumed with the inner workings of the bookstore, it's easy to forget about the first impression that a potential customer has when they walk or drive by. Take a good look at your signage and what it says about your business. Does it need to be repaired? Cleaned? Repainted? Updated? Enlarged? Elevated? Giving your sign a fresh new look might be the ticket to energizing your sales! ~**SBond**