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This cover story highlights a creative installation by Quarterhorse Solutions that marries branding with design. Featuring a fun "B" selfie mirror, the project transformed several walls of a presentation centre in British Columbia. Each piece is distinct, yet together they demonstrate how signage can create a lasting impression.

Photo courtesy Quarterhorse Solutions

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# Oh, Canada!

Hello, readers!

**A**cross Canada, the conversation around buying local has taken on a new urgency, especially with the threat of tariffs influencing the marketplace. You've probably seen it around—campaigns and signs popping up in cityscapes, encouraging people to support local businesses. Signage, by its very nature, has been right at the heart of this call to action. Even local Dollaramas have jumped on board, setting up sections that proudly say, “Hey, we’re Canadian!” It’s interesting to see how this movement has evolved, with signage helping to spark a deeper connection to the businesses and products that are part of our communities.

Speaking of all things Canadian, have you submitted your entry for the Best of Canada’s Sign Industry (BOCSI) awards yet? The BOCSI awards, presented by *Sign Media Canada* and the Sign Association of Canada (SAC), are open until July 31. Every year, we celebrate the best in Canadian signage across various categories, and it’s been great to see several innovative submissions already coming in. If you haven’t yet, there’s still lots of time to share your standout projects—don’t miss the chance!

Now, let’s dive into this issue, which is filled with features and insights showcasing incredible growth in the Canadian sign industry. On page 6, we explore how Signature Sign & Image combines creativity and technology to stay ahead of the curve. On page 10, we spotlight their work with the University of Niagara Falls Canada, where they designed and installed signage throughout the new campus. On page 12, Roland DGA’s Daniel Valade talks to Ginny Mumm about eco-solvents’ role in printing today, with the latest innovations driving quality and productivity. For insights on colour production, check out page 16, where Terence Davis of Elevated Signs shares his approach to Angstrom Fiber’s rebranding project.

Then, on page 22, Elisia Ciancio of iGotcha Media looks closer at digital signage and how it revolutionizes communication across industries. On page 25, Gabriel Carro of Ascent Equipment dives into how tools like CNC routers shape sign manufacturing, improve efficiency, and unlock new creative possibilities. Later, on page 29, Roksoliana Sydorksa of Vantage discusses how modernizing installation workflows can increase efficiency and drive growth. Finally, explore the world of laser engraving and find out why it’s the right choice for signage that stands the test of time (page 32).

There’s a real buzz in the air, and it’s hard to ignore the innovations unfolding across the Canadian sign industry. From newer, faster technologies to unique projects, the future of signage is unfolding right before our eyes. These moments are worth our attention, marking the growth of something truly exciting. We’re taking note of these trends, so if you have a project to share, we’d love to hear from you as we continue to watch this industry grow. Until next time!


Signed, sealed, delivered, ●




Marika Gabriel  
EDITOR



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Canada magazine



The sign shop credits its success to its creativity and ability to overcome challenges.  
Photos courtesy Courtney Albanese, Signature Sign & Image

# Ahead of the sign curve

## Signature Sign & Image embraces a future powered by technology and innovation

By Marika Gabriel

In 1983, Signature Sign & Image was born with a vision to redefine the signage world. Over the decades, the company has not only pushed boundaries but has also consistently delivered exceptional work. In 2024, the company won the prestigious Sign Company of the Year award from *Sign Media Canada* and the Sign Association of Canada. As they gaze into the future, excitement abounds at the prospect of embracing new technologies and innovative strategies that promise to propel their success even further.

Recently, Courtney Albanese from Signature Sign & Image shared details of the company's journey thus far and its road ahead. She highlighted its creative approach to signage and how it actively incorporates various technologies to stay ahead of the curve.

### **Sign Media Canada (SMC): What is the history of the shop?**

**Courtney Albanese (CA):** Signature Sign & Image was founded in 1983 by Jeff and Elaine Wallis in Niagara Falls, Ont. Originally named Signatures Signs, the company rebranded in 2008 to Signature Sign & Image to reflect the industry's evolution and our expansion into digital and modern branding solutions. Elaine's artistic talents in hand lettering and painting signs, flyers, murals, billboards, and vehicles influenced the original name. Her dedication to the craft and creativity likely played a pivotal role in selecting the name "Signatures Signs."

To keep our brand fresh and relevant, we have consistently updated our branding every five years, ensuring it remains trendy and professional. The business was purchased by Mark Wallis (Jeff &





To keep its brand fresh and relevant, Signature Sign & Image consistently updates its branding every five years, ensuring it remains trendy and professional.



Elaine's son) and Emily Butko (Mark's wife) in June of 2022. Since taking over, Mark and Emily have spent countless hours upgrading the manufacturing facility to improve efficiency and reduce expenses. They added more room in manufacturing, purchased a new paint booth and flatbed printer, renovated vinyl production, and improved the company's network system.

#### **SMC: What makes your company unique?**

**CA:** Our creativity and ability to overcome any challenge drive our success. Our highly creative designers and meticulous production crew are always laser-focused on ensuring the success of every project, not only during its time in our shop but also in ensuring it becomes a valuable asset for our clients.

#### **SMC: How large is the facility?**

**CA:** Our 1,858-m<sup>2</sup> (20,000-sf) facility includes the following: The first-floor office and production space are 710.7 m<sup>2</sup> (7,650 sf), and Emily's office and print studio upstairs occupy 162 m<sup>2</sup> (1,750 sf). The back shop was 575.9 m<sup>2</sup> (6,200 sf) until 2022, when we added a 408.7-m<sup>2</sup> (4,400-sf) addition.

We have 17 full-time employees. Mark and Emily are involved in sales and client communication. Jamie is our office manager and bookkeeper. Samantha is our project manager, and Jacob is the general manager. I manage the vinyl production department, creating most of our printing and vinyl graphics. I work alongside vinyl technician Megan. We've recently renovated this space to improve the environment for our new HP R1000 flatbed printer by insulating our walls and adding new flooring.

The manufacturing is done in our 929-m<sup>2</sup> (10,000-sf) shop. Here, Don operates the computer numerical control (CNC) router and Ryan paints and preps using the new paint booth. Our fabrication team, George (retiring this year), Dan, Adam, and John, turn flat stock and extrusions into finished products.

Bobby leads our service and installation team, which includes Nathan, Francis, Dmytri, and Layne. They ensure client satisfaction during final interactions.

Finally, Jeff is our "sales at large," enjoying his semi-retirement life, and Elaine assists with his sales by providing designs.

#### **SMC: What type of signage does your shop primarily install?**

**CA:** We install a lot of signs for our tourist district, which includes the casinos, hotels, Niagara Parks, Clifton Hill & Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). We also install many signs for other sign companies out of the region.

#### **SMC: What type of projects have you been working on recently?**

**CA:** In the production department, most jobs have been indoor installation or supply-only projects due to the winter weather. Installing vinyl graphics in temperatures below 10 degrees C (50F) is not recommended, as the cold prevents the vinyl from reaching full adhesion. However, we have a significant lineup of outdoor graphic installations booked for this spring!

As for manufacturing and installation, a few notable projects we've been working on with the team include modernizing a frame for a hand-carved artwork at the Niagara Region Headquarters, completing a beautiful fascia sign for Allways Antique, an old-time portraits business on Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls, and creating a stunning high-density urethane (HDU) carved sign for a local dentist's office.

#### **SMC: How much of the sign installation process is handled in-house?**

**CA:** We handle all sign installations in-house! If the project requires a larger crane or lift than what we have, we rent one. Our service and installation team is fully equipped with the proper training and certifications, such as Working at Heights, to perform their duties as installers.



The shop's service and installation team is fully equipped with the proper training and certifications, such as Working at Heights, to perform their duties as installers.

We're also often contracted by other sign companies to complete installations for them if their company lacks an installation department or the project is closer to our location. We were contracted for an awesome project last year: installing the 38.1 x 7.3-m (125 ft x 24-ft) screen at Woodbine Racetrack in Etobicoke, Ont.

**SMC: What equipment do you use to complete your projects?**

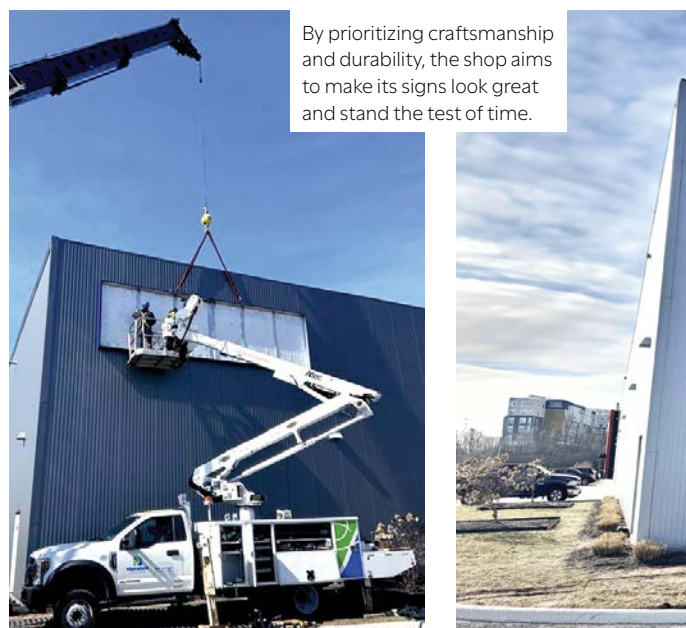
**CA:** We have too many tools and equipment to list, but here are a few highlights. The production department has a Mimaki plotter for cutting vinyl, the HP R1000 printer, a CWT worktable for application, and a pegboard full of tools and supplies. The back shop has a CNC machine, a panel saw, a channel letter bender, a paint booth, and multiple workstations for our fabrication team. Each department is also equipped with tools suited to their specific needs.

**SMC: What does your planning process involve?**

**CA:** Every Monday, Mark and Emily hold a meeting in the boardroom with all department heads and our project manager to review new and ongoing projects. We discuss material orders, the workflow of each sign through departments, and any important details that may impact the build, such as lighting placements or mounting methods. These meetings also include planning installation dates and addressing any questions or concerns.

**SMC: How is technology changing your business?**

**CA:** Advancements in technology have impacted our business significantly over the years. We've introduced new tools and machines that improve safety and increase productivity.



By prioritizing craftsmanship and durability, the shop aims to make its signs look great and stand the test of time.

Lighting and digital screens have been significant changes for us as well. We've replaced much of the original neon lighting with LED rope lighting. We have also upgraded many digital screens in the past few years. These screens are now brighter, more cost-effective, and capable of displaying dynamic content, allowing clients to show videos, live updates, customized colours, and much more.

A key addition to the technological advancements at our shop is the HP R1000 printer, which we purchased last summer. It enables us to print directly to substrates, reducing production time and material costs. As with any new technology, there was a learning curve, but this printer has enabled us to create previously impossible signage. A significant advantage is its ability to print white ink, which expands our capabilities beyond what our solvent printer could handle.

That said, we still receive many requests for traditional signs. We continue to install real neon signs and use classic methods, but we apply modern techniques to ensure safety and efficiency.

**SMC: What is the key to staying successful in this industry?**

**CA:** Success in the signage business requires adaptability, creativity, and a strong commitment to quality. Our company has maintained its industry leadership by doing the following:

**Embracing innovation:** We continuously explore new technologies and materials to improve our products and services.

**A customer-centric approach:** Understanding our clients' needs and delivering tailored solutions has been central to our longevity.

**Commitment to quality:** We prioritize craftsmanship and durability, ensuring our signs look great and stand the test of time.

**Collaboration:** We work closely with local governments and community organizations to streamline application processes for permitting and engineering. By advocating for clearer and





The shop's creative designers and meticulous production team focus on ensuring the success of every project, both during its time in the shop and in guaranteeing it becomes a valuable asset for clients.

more efficient approval procedures, we help businesses navigate regulatory requirements more easily, reducing delays and ensuring projects are completed on time.

We have sustained growth and built long-lasting relationships with our clients by focusing on these core principles.

#### SMC: What are the future plans for your business?

CA: Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our capabilities and offerings to meet the industry's evolving demands.

Some of our key plans include:

**Investing in smart signage:** We aim to incorporate more interactive and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven digital signage solutions to enhance engagement and functionality.

**Sustainability initiatives:** As environmental concerns grow, we are exploring eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient lighting to create more sustainable signage solutions.

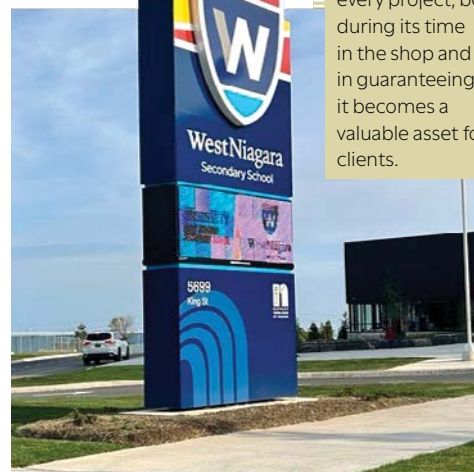
**Expanding our reach:** We plan to broaden our service areas and target new markets to grow our customer base.

**Enhancing customization:** With advances in 3D printing and digital design, we aim to offer more personalized signage solutions tailored to specific brand identities.

**Quarterly inspections:** We plan to introduce routine inspections for our commercial and industrial customers to ensure their signage properly functions at night. This proactive approach will help maintain visibility, safety, and brand consistency.

**Tourism district expansion:** We are committed to enriching our local tourism district by developing new and exciting signage solutions that enhance the area's visual appeal. Additionally, we will continue growing our animation capabilities to create dynamic and engaging sign experiences.

**On-site training:** We will collaborate with lighting suppliers to develop on-site training programs for Digital Multiplex (DMX) and Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI) LED



applications. This initiative will provide other companies with the knowledge and tools needed to implement advanced lighting animations, helping to revitalize neighbourhoods and commercial areas with captivating signage solutions.

By staying ahead of industry trends and prioritizing innovation, Signature Sign & Image is poised for continued success in the years to come. We look forward to embracing new opportunities and pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the signage world. ●





# Signs of distinction

By Courtney Albanese

**S**ignature Sign & Image was hired by the University of Niagara Falls Canada (UNF) to manufacture and install a wide range of signage for their new campus. As a new organization in Niagara Falls, Ont., UNF sought to partner with a full-service local sign company with a strong reputation and the capability to manage complex signage projects. With referrals from local businesses and the City of Niagara Falls, UNF chose us due to our long-standing presence in the community. Our ability to handle various tasks, from the complexities of municipal permits to engineering and landlord approvals, was also appreciated.

Our relationship with UNF, and the first project with them, began in January 2024 with the sale of their building signage. Permits for this job were approved in early February, and we began manufacturing shortly afterward. By early March 2024, their signs were ready for installation. They purchased two 1,651 x 3,048-mm (65 x 120-in.) channel letter

signs—one on the north side with the university emblem and individual “UNF” letters, and another on the west side reading “University of Niagara Falls Canada.” Both signs are backlit with white LEDs, with acrylic trim cap faces and first-surface vinyl graphics. The trim and returns are painted, and a remote-mounted power supply powers the LED illumination.

These signs were installed about 30.4 m (100 ft) off the ground and required a custom aluminum saddle bracket for mounting, which we fabricated and powder-coated to match the building. The installation also involved renting a 20-ton boom truck, a 38.1-m (125-ft) articulating boom, traffic control, a flag person, and sidewalk closures.

Projects of this scale can bring many challenges. A lot goes into co-ordinating logistics, such as renting cranes, arranging electricians, and ensuring worker safety. However, the most complex challenge was the aluminum





saddle bracket. The installers could not see the front of the sign while mounting it from the back. Through careful planning and radio communication, the sign was successfully mounted and aligned.

Our team prepared each sign the day before installation and arrived early the next day to meet the crane crew and traffic controllers on site. Two installers received the signs on the roof, while two others rigged them from the crane. The installers drilled into the concrete, securing the bracket with lag bolts and lead expansion anchors. We returned to connect our wiring to the electrical setup the following day.

Once the building signage was complete, we moved on to interior and exterior projects for UNF. These included wayfinding signs, Accessible Canada Act (ACA)-compliant signage, room identification signs, privacy film for office windows, vinyl wrapping for the digital information kiosk, pole banners, a faux neon sign for the communal space, and

most recently, beautiful archway graphics over the road leading to the campus.

We collaborated with UNF's graphic designer, Ashley Kowal, to ensure consistency with the university's brand guidelines for each project. Kowal provided the designs while our team handled the minimal pre-press work. Throughout the process, we worked closely with her to maintain the brand's visual integrity across all signage.

Ashley Kowal said supporting local businesses is a priority at the university. "Signature Signs has consistently impressed us with their ability to tackle any challenge we've thrown their way. From impactful exterior signage to innovative, custom-built illuminated centrepieces, they have demonstrated remarkable problem-solving and creative execution. Their commitment to delivering high-quality products and services is commendable and much appreciated," she added. ●

*Courtney Albanese runs the vinyl production department at Signature Sign & Image.*



# Eco-solvents defy the odds

Innovations in eco-solvent printers, inks, and software continue to drive demand

By Ginny Mumm

**D**espite industry predictions several years ago that eco-solvent technology would yield market share to other printing technologies like UV or latex, eco-solvent printer demand has remained robust amid an overall expanding digital print market.

According to *Transparency Market Research*, the global digital printing market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.1 per cent from 2024-2034, reaching a size of more than \$54 billion in 2034.<sup>1</sup> The ongoing demand for eco-solvent technology has led manufacturers to continue to innovate their eco-solvent printer lineup, with exciting results.

Daniel Valade, Roland DGA product manager of digital print, talks with us about what's trending lately in printer, ink, and software innovations for the eco-solvent segment and how these advances are leading to faster production speeds and outstanding print quality.

**Ginny Mumm (GM):** Has the market for printers been changing over the past few years? How would you describe it today?

**Daniel Valade (DV):** Over the past five years, the industry predicted a downturn in eco-solvent technology sales as users transitioned to other printing technologies, like latex





or UV. However, the data shows there is still a strong demand for eco-solvent roll-to-roll printing technology today, due to its outstanding versatility and the fact that so many print professionals are familiar with eco-solvent printers.

As technology for all print devices advances, users are now looking for wide-gamut eco-solvent output devices that also provide strong production speeds to meet the challenging demands of today's print customers.

**GM: Overall, how are printer manufacturers responding to these changes?**

**DV:** We see manufacturers creating new eco-solvent output devices with wide-gamut ink sets, improved operating efficiency, and faster production speeds. Roland DG, for example, just released its TrueVIS XP-640 with dual staggered printheads that enable precise production while reaching speeds of up to 76 m<sup>2</sup> (819 sf) per hour.

Roll-to-roll eco-solvent printing has very low running costs, making larger projects like wall coverings even more profitable for shop owners.

Photos courtesy Roland DGA

Manufacturers also offer more variety in their ink sets, allowing users to choose the configuration that best suits their needs. For some shops, the production speed of dual cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (CMYK) outweighs the benefits of a wide-gamut ink set, while others prefer the expanded range of colours they can achieve with an eight-colour ink set.

And finally, manufacturers are building in the extras that make print workflows easier, like an automatic media gap feature and plenty of presets to make colour matching simpler. All these elements increase the precision, speed, and overall productivity of today's eco-solvent printers.



New wide-format eco-solvent printers provide excellent print speeds and quality. Manufacturers are also building in additional features, such as automatic media take-up systems, which enable unattended printing.

Expanded ink sets that include colours such as orange, green, and red allow users to closely replicate specific brand colours.

#### **GM: Are there changes to software in this market?**

**DV:** In recent years, Raster Image Processor (RIP) companies have been striving to make complex workflows as simple as possible. Several companies have created a simple front-end design that integrates with their RIP software, automating project workflows. Some RIP products, like Roland DG's VersaWorks, offer advanced features such as True Rich Colour settings that, combined with its TH ink sets, make colour management easier than ever before.

The other area where software is having an impact is in the user-friendliness of these advanced eco-solvent devices. The XP 640, for example, offers a 177.8 mm (7 in.) control panel with an intuitive interface that facilitates an easy set-up process for nearly any application.

#### **GM: What about media for these printers?**

**DV:** One great feature of eco-solvent printers is their wide range of media compatibility, which makes them an incredibly versatile tool for print shop owners. There are thousands of different media designed for specific applications that can be used with an eco-solvent printer. Everything from decals, banners, signage, and vehicle wraps to window clings and even perforated printable window materials can be printed quickly and easily using eco-solvent inks.

Manufacturers are also assisting shop owners with media management. Some models include an automatic media take-up system that makes unattended printing available for today's busy shop owners.

#### **GM: Are there any innovations in inks?**

**DV:** We consistently find that users are looking for more than just traditional CMYK printing and like having access to spot colours such as orange, green, red, and white. With an expanded colour gamut, they can hit previously unattainable hues and more closely replicate specific brand colours.

*Ginny Mumm is a freelance consultant for digital inkjet printer/cutter provider Roland DGA. For more information, visit [www.rolanddga.com](http://www.rolanddga.com).*





The latest RIP software programs ensure consistent printing on different media. Additionally, newer quick-drying inks and increased production speeds enhance workflows.



Customers are also looking for quick turnaround times and appreciate the newer, fast-drying eco-solvent inks that allow for same-day lamination or installation.

Manufacturers are responding with wider varieties of ink options that provide multiple benefits. As with most roll-to-roll eco-solvent devices, Roland DG's XP-640 has very low running costs, averaging less than US\$0.20 per 0.09 m<sup>2</sup> (1 sf) and running as low as US\$0.10 per 0.09 m<sup>2</sup> (1 sf).

#### GM: What do you see ahead for the eco-solvent print market?

**DV:** The market share for eco-solvent has been large for quite some time and seems to be holding steady. As technology progresses and output devices get faster, there will continue to be opportunities for people to grow their businesses using their eco-solvent devices for years to come.

The available size range of eco-solvent devices is also evolving. Roland DG, for example, offers a suite of eco-solvent devices designed for entry-level to professional-level end users. These devices come in desktop to wide-format sizes, allowing users to choose which device works best for their production needs.

That said, other printing technologies are growing their market size. Options like latex and UV print appeal to customers with their ability to have instant lamination and same-day shipping or installation. Manufacturers recognize that eco-solvent production will need to continue innovating to maintain its market share. ●

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Learn more about the *Transparency Market Research* report here: <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2024/08/22/2934453/32656/en/Digital-Printing-Market-Size-is-Anticipated-to-Achieve-a-Valuation-of-USD-54-4-Billion-by-2034-Exhibiting-a-CAGR-of-6-1-States-Transparency-Market-Research-Inc.html>

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# Mastering colour prod

By Terence Davis

**R**ebranding a business is more than just changing the name; it's about creating a strong visual identity that reflects the company's future while maintaining a link with its past. When Angstrom Fiber Brantford Inc. transitioned from Hematite to its new branding, it sought a signage company that could execute this vision with precision. Given the importance of its corporate identity and visibility, the company reached

out to multiple vendors to gather pricing and proposals for the project.

## Setting the stage

Our company, Elevated Signs, stood out for competitive pricing and our exceptional communication and client-focused approach. From the beginning, we prioritized keeping Angstrom Fiber informed at every stage—discussing





Given the prominence of these signs on the building's exterior, it was crucial to ensure that they accurately reflected Angstrom Fiber's identity.

Photos courtesy Terence Davis, Elevated Signs



This project was a valuable learning experience, particularly when educating clients about the realities of colour production.

# uction with precision

materials, project timelines, design revisions, and colour samples. Rebranding a business comes with unique challenges, and we wanted to ensure every detail aligned with their expectations. Our ability to address their concerns proactively, present solutions, and maintain clear and open communication ultimately secured us the contract.

The project officially began at the end of November 2024 and was completed by January 2025. Despite winter

conditions, we managed to keep it on track, ensuring a smooth branding transition from Hematite to Angstrom Fiber. The scope of work included a complete signage replacement consisting of one large fascia sign, one medium fascia sign, one directional ground sign, and one replacement face. Given the prominence of these signs on the building's exterior, it was crucial to ensure that they accurately reflected Angstrom Fiber's identity.



The fabrication process involved using high-quality materials such as aluminum, plastic, and steel for durability and LED lighting and power supplies to provide high visibility.

### Planning and production

To get the best results, all work was completed in-house. Our team made multiple site visits to assess the existing signage, confirm structural requirements, and validate dimensions. During these visits, we identified necessary revisions and potential installation challenges, which helped us develop a strategic plan before moving into production. These extra steps were essential in avoiding costly delays and ensuring the new signage fit seamlessly into place.

The fabrication process involved using high-quality materials such as aluminum, plastic, and steel for durability and LED lighting and power

supplies to provide high visibility, no matter the time of day. The signage faces were crafted using computer numerical control (CNC) machining, allowing us to create a mix of push-through and raised 3D face-lit lettering. These techniques ensured the signage looked modern and professional and provided long-term functionality.

Given the scale of the project, precision was key. The most prominent fascia sign measured 8.07 x 1.8 m (26.5 x 6 ft), while the other signs measured 1.21 x 1.21 m (4 x 4 ft), 1.21 x 2.4 m (4 x 8 ft), and 4.5 m (15 ft) in height. Each sign was designed to fit perfectly within the existing structures while maintaining high visibility for customers and visitors.

### Navigating colour

One significant challenge we faced was colour matching. Angstrom Fiber provided their logo files with specific cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (CMYK) colour values, expecting the signage to match those colours exactly. However, CMYK values do not always translate precisely when printed on vinyl, especially under different lighting conditions. We advised the client early on that digitally printed vinyl cannot always replicate on-screen colours perfectly and that a Pantone-matched translucent vinyl film would be the best option for consistency.

Despite this explanation, the client was not completely satisfied with how the colours appeared in real-world conditions after the signage was fabricated and installed. Rather than leave them with an unsatisfactory result, we took action. We sourced and tested alternative translucent film swatches, selecting a hue that more accurately reflected their brand colours. The signage was brought back to our shop for revision and reinstalled with the updated colour—to the client's satisfaction.

### Facing challenges

Another obstacle was the weather. Given the time of year, we could not apply the revised vinyl on-site, as the cold and moisture affect adhesion. Instead, we had to remove the signage, complete the adjustments indoors at our facility, and reinstall it. Fortunately, because Angstrom Fiber is located close to our shop, this process was efficient and did not cause significant delays.

Given the handling of large-scale signage, the installation required specialized equipment. We utilized a bucket truck for elevated placement and a crane truck to manoeuvre the large fascia signage over the entrance. Given the height and





positioning requirements, careful planning and co-ordination were essential. Our team ensured all signs were installed securely and aligned correctly, preventing any need for post-installation adjustments. Despite the complexity of the

process, our skilled team executed the installation seamlessly, reinforcing our reputation for quality craftsmanship.

This project was a valuable learning experience, particularly when educating clients about the realities of

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*Terence Davis founded and owns Elevated Signs Inc., established in March 2021. With more than a decade in the signage industry, he offers high-quality, budget-conscious solutions for businesses across Canada. His expertise in marketing and design and his strong relationships with local manufacturers streamline the signage process. A licensed electrician, Davis brings technical precision to his work, ensuring visually striking and durable signage.*

colour production. While CMYK values offer a digital reference, they do not always translate exactly to real-world materials, especially when working with translucent vinyl and illuminated signage. Moving forward, we plan to introduce physical colour swatches in the design phase, so clients can make more informed decisions before fabrication begins. We are confident that this proactive approach will prevent such discrepancies in future projects and ensure clients have a clearer expectation of the final product.

### **Serving the community**

Beyond the technical aspects, the opportunity to work with a long-standing local business made this project particularly rewarding. Seeing our

work displayed prominently in our own community reinforces the pride we take in doing what we do. Signage plays a crucial role in shaping a business's identity, and being entrusted with that responsibility is something Elevated Signs never takes for granted. There's a unique sense of accomplishment in driving past a finished project and knowing that our craftsmanship contributes to the visual landscape of our town.

From start to finish, this project was a testament to our commitment to quality, attention to detail, and ability to adapt to challenges. Through open communication, expert technique, and a dedication to client satisfaction, we delivered a signage solution that successfully represents Angstrom Fiber's new brand identity.

Rebranding projects like these comes with its share of obstacles, and overcoming them sets professionals apart in the signage industry. We take pride in knowing that we provided a solution that didn't just meet but exceeded the client's expectations.

As we move forward, we will continue to refine our processes, strengthen client education, and maintain our high standards of excellence in every project we undertake. This experience reinforced the importance of flexibility, problem-solving, and delivering a finished product that businesses can proudly display—a philosophy that remains at the heart of everything Elevated Signs does. ●





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As technology evolves, we see more innovative features transforming how we communicate and interact with information.

Photos courtesy  
iGotcha Media

# The future of digital signage is here

By Elisia Ciano

In today's fast-paced world, digital signage is everywhere—hospitals, schools, shopping malls, and corporate offices. Because of its dynamic nature and engaging audience communication capabilities, it is quickly becoming essential for businesses across various industries. From digital billboards in bustling cities to interactive touchscreens in retail stores, digital signage offers several avenues for businesses to reach new audiences.

This article will explore the different kinds of digital signage offerings available for businesses, why this medium is the way forward for marketers, and the future trends we can expect.

## What is it?

Digital signage is any electronic display showing information, advertisements, or interactive content. It can range from a single screen in a store window to a network of screens across an entire city or region. The content displayed can vary widely, from static images and videos to complex multimedia elements like animations and live feeds. Information may also be presented interactively using touchscreens.

As technology evolves, we see more innovative features transforming how we communicate and interact with information. Digital signage has moved far beyond static

ads; it is an integral part of our daily experiences, engaging us in creative and meaningful ways.

## Why is it growing?

It has become clear that digital signage isn't just another passing trend—it's a rapidly growing solution for businesses everywhere. Here's why:

- **Cutting-edge technology:** Today's digital signage solutions feature high-resolution LED screens, interactive touchpoints, AI-driven personalization, gesture-controlled displays, and even holograms. These technologies make digital signage more engaging than ever before.
- **Cloud-based content management:** A modern Content Management System (CMS) makes it easier than ever for businesses to manage and update digital signage content. Cloud-based CMS platforms allow businesses to update content in real-time across multiple locations, ensuring messaging remains fresh and relevant no matter where it is displayed.
- **Versatility and engagement:** Digital signage supports various content types, from promotional videos and live social media feeds to real-time news updates and interactive wayfinding solutions. This versatility makes it the perfect tool for capturing attention and keeping audiences engaged, whether walking through a mall, waiting at an airport, or attending an event.



## Key technologies

Yet, with so many technologies available, how can you zero in on the one that fits your needs? Several prominent digital signage technologies are shaping the future of communication and engagement. Here, we break down some of the top technologies driving this evolution:

### LED screens

Digital displays that use light-emitting diodes (LEDs) to produce bright, high-resolution visuals.

**Why they are great:** LED screens are energy-efficient, long-lasting, and scalable for indoor and outdoor applications. They can produce stunning visual clarity, even in direct sunlight.

**Use cases:** LED screens are commonly used in billboards, sports arenas, retail stores, and corporate events.

### Transparent LED screens

LED displays that maintain transparency while still displaying high-quality content.

**Why they are great:** Transparent LED screens provide a modern, futuristic look and blend seamlessly into their surroundings, allowing light to pass through while still showcasing dynamic content.

**Use cases:** Storefronts, museums, corporate offices, and airports.

### Donor walls

Digital displays that recognize and showcase donor names and contributions in a dynamic and engaging way.

**Why they are great:** Donor walls can be easily updated, allowing organizations to acknowledge ongoing support in real time and encourage continued contributions.

**Use cases:** Hospitals, universities, nonprofits, and museums.

### Gratitude kiosks

Interactive stations where users can express appreciation or leave feedback in real time.

**Why they are great:** Gratitude kiosks foster a positive atmosphere, boost morale, and strengthen relationships by giving people a platform to show appreciation.

**Use cases:** Employee recognition programs, nonprofit organizations, and public spaces.

### Digital wayfinding solutions

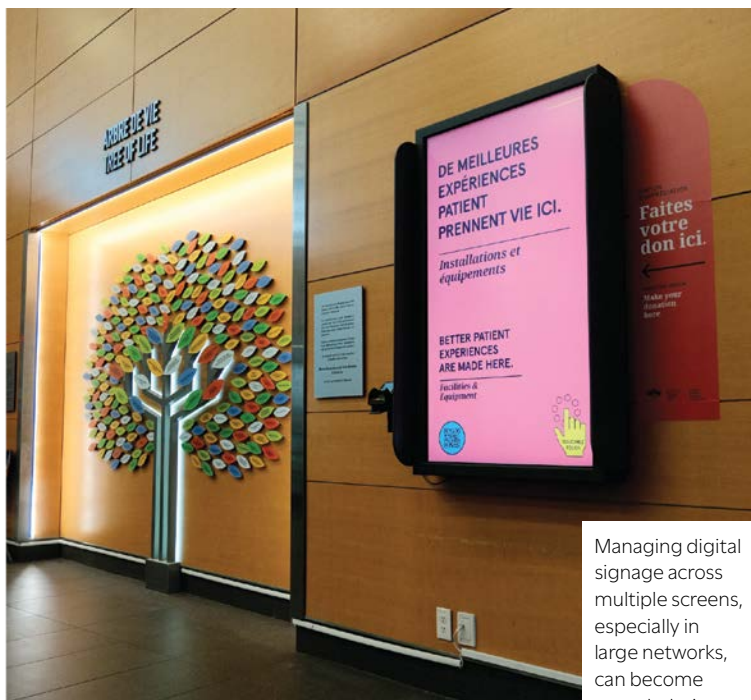
Interactive digital maps and wayfinding solutions to help users navigate large or complex spaces.

**Why they are great:** Digital wayfinding eliminates confusion by providing real-time directions and making it easy for visitors to find their way around unfamiliar places.

**Use cases:** Airports, malls, hospitals, and universities.

### Interactive kiosks

Self-service stations with touchscreens that allow users to interact with content.



Managing digital signage across multiple screens, especially in large networks, can become overwhelming without the right tools. This is where a powerful CMS comes into play.

**Why they are great:** Interactive kiosks reduce wait times, streamline services, and increase customer engagement by allowing users to access information or complete transactions at their own pace.

**Use cases:** Self-checkout systems, ticketing, hotel check-ins, retail navigation, and visitor management.

### AI-powered digital signage

Digital signage systems that use AI to adapt content based on real-time data, such as demographics, weather, or time of day.

**Why it is great:** AI-powered digital signage delivers personalized and dynamic content, providing targeted messaging that increases engagement by reaching the right audience with the right message at the right time.

**Use cases:** Retail ads, dynamic menu boards, interactive wayfinding, and personalized marketing campaigns.

### ePoster displays

Digital displays showcase multimedia content such as images, videos, and information. Similar to e-readers, they offer high contrast and minimal power consumption.

**Why they are great:** These displays are eco-friendly, cost-effective, and easy to update, making them ideal for environments that require frequent content changes.

**Use cases:** Retail promotions, healthcare settings, academic environments, and office signage.

### Holographic displays

Displays that project 3D images or videos, creating a hologram-like effect mid-air.

**Why they are great:** Holographic displays offer a captivating, immersive experience that grabs attention and enhances brand storytelling.

**Use cases:** High-end retail, trade shows, museum exhibits, and live events.



Digital signage has moved far beyond static ads; it is an integral part of our daily experiences, engaging us in creative and meaningful ways.

#### *Gesture-controlled displays*

Interactive screens allow users to interact with content through hand gestures, eliminating the need for physical touch.

**Why they are great:** They are sanitary, create an engaging, interactive experience, and are ideal for environments where touchless interaction is preferred.

**Use cases:** Museums, trade shows, public kiosks, and retail browsing.

#### *Projection mapping*

A technique that projects digital images or videos onto irregularly shaped surfaces, creating stunning 3D visuals.

**Why it is great:** Projection mapping can transform physical spaces into immersive visual experiences, creating a sense of awe and engagement.

**Use cases:** Concerts, theme parks, public art installations, and architectural projects.

#### *Smart mirrors*

Mirrors incorporating digital displays and interactive features, often using augmented reality (AR) to provide personalized content.

**Why they are great:** Smart mirrors offer sleek design and real-time interaction, perfect for delivering personalized experiences in varied settings.

**Use cases:** Virtual try-ons in retail, smart hotel bathrooms, fitness centres, and corporate offices.

### **The role of a powerful CMS**

Managing digital signage across multiple screens, especially in large networks, can become overwhelming without the right tools. This is where a powerful CMS comes into play.

A CMS is essential for businesses looking to maintain an efficient digital signage network. It allows businesses to:

- **Manage and schedule content:** Businesses can schedule content to play simultaneously across multiple displays, ensuring that messaging is timely and relevant.
- **Personalize content:** Using real-time data, a CMS can help businesses tailor content to different customer segments based on location, time of day, or demographics.

- **Integrate with other technologies:** A robust CMS can integrate with other digital signage technologies, such as AI, sensors, and interactive features, creating a seamless experience for the business and the customer.

- **Monitor and optimize performance:** A CMS allows businesses to monitor performance, providing insights into content performance. It can help identify and address issues before they become problems, ensuring a smooth operation.

A powerful CMS ensures that digital signage networks run efficiently, and that content is always fresh, engaging, and relevant, regardless of location or time.

### **What the future holds**

As digital signage continues to evolve, the future is looking bright. Here are some key trends to watch for in the coming years:

- **AI and machine learning (ML):** AI will allow digital signage to adapt content in real time based on customer behaviour, location, and other data. This will lead to even more personalized and relevant experiences for audiences.
- **5G connectivity:** With the rollout of 5G networks, digital signage will deliver faster, more reliable content, allowing for even higher-quality and more interactive displays.
- **AR and VR:** AR and virtual reality (VR) technologies will change how people interact with digital signage, creating more immersive and interactive experiences.
- **Sustainability:** The industry will continue to focus on energy-efficient solutions like low-power displays and eco-friendly materials.
- **Internet of Things (IoT) integration:** As more devices become connected, digital signage will respond dynamically to customer behaviour, creating smarter, more personalized experiences.
- **More immersive experiences:** Technologies like holograms and 3D displays will continue to evolve, providing businesses with new ways to create memorable customer experiences.

### **Final thoughts**

Digital signage is transforming the way businesses communicate with their audiences. However, technology alone isn't enough. A strong CMS is essential for businesses to streamline operations, manage multiple displays, and deliver personalized, real-time content. By using an effective CMS, companies can optimize their digital signage investments, craft engaging customer experiences, and stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing digital landscape. The future of digital signage is here. ●

*Elisia Ciano is the marketing communications manager at iGotcha Media, an award-winning multidisciplinary digital experience agency based in Montreal and Toronto. With a strong foundation in communication strategy, she specializes in developing and implementing effective marketing plans. Ciano brings hands-on experience in content creation, media relations, event planning, social media management, and overseeing the design and production of marketing collateral. Her collaborative approach and attention to detail make her a key player in delivering impactful campaigns across multiple platforms. For more information, visit <https://www.igotchamedia.com/solutions/digital-signage>.*





CNC machines involve various technical aspects, and technological advancements have integrated new features that can significantly enhance production.

Photos courtesy  
Gabriel Carro

# Teaming up with tech

## The future of sign making relies on adopting computerized manufacturing

By Gabriel Carro

**F**or decades, we have dreamed of a future where machines do all the hard work for us. In the sign industry, that future is here. Computerized machines make sign manufacturing easier and more efficient.

At the heart of this revolution is the computer numerical control (CNC) router, an essential tool in any sign shop. Whether cutting, engraving, or shaping intricate designs, CNC routers complete tasks in minutes that once took hours of manual labour. Their impact is so significant that we will explore their role and capabilities in detail.

But CNC routers aren't the only game changers. Other computerized machines such as 3D printers, channel benders, and laser cutters are transforming production workflows. These tools enhance efficiency, consistency, and creative possibilities. Successfully integrating them

into the manufacturing process is crucial. Without proper adoption, shops risk falling behind in efficiency, productivity, and profitability.

### A cornerstone

For most projects, production starts with the CNC router. From cutting letters and logos to shaping designs, these machines are the workhorses of the shop.

Understanding the return on investment (ROI) of a CNC router requires evaluating multiple factors. While precise calculations vary based on shop size, project complexity, and labour costs, key benefits include:

- **Labour savings:** CNC routers significantly reduce manual labour. While an operator is still required, they can focus on other tasks once the cutting cycle begins, improving overall shop efficiency.



Integrating computerized machinery into the manufacturing process is essential. Without proper adoption, businesses risk losing efficiency, productivity, and profitability.

- **Precision and material optimization:** These machines minimize human error, reducing costly mistakes. Advanced nesting software allows more parts to fit on a single material sheet, reducing waste.
- **Expanding capabilities and new revenue streams:** Beyond cutting, CNC routers can engrave, carve at different depths, and create intricate designs, opening doors to complex and high-value projects.

### Key considerations

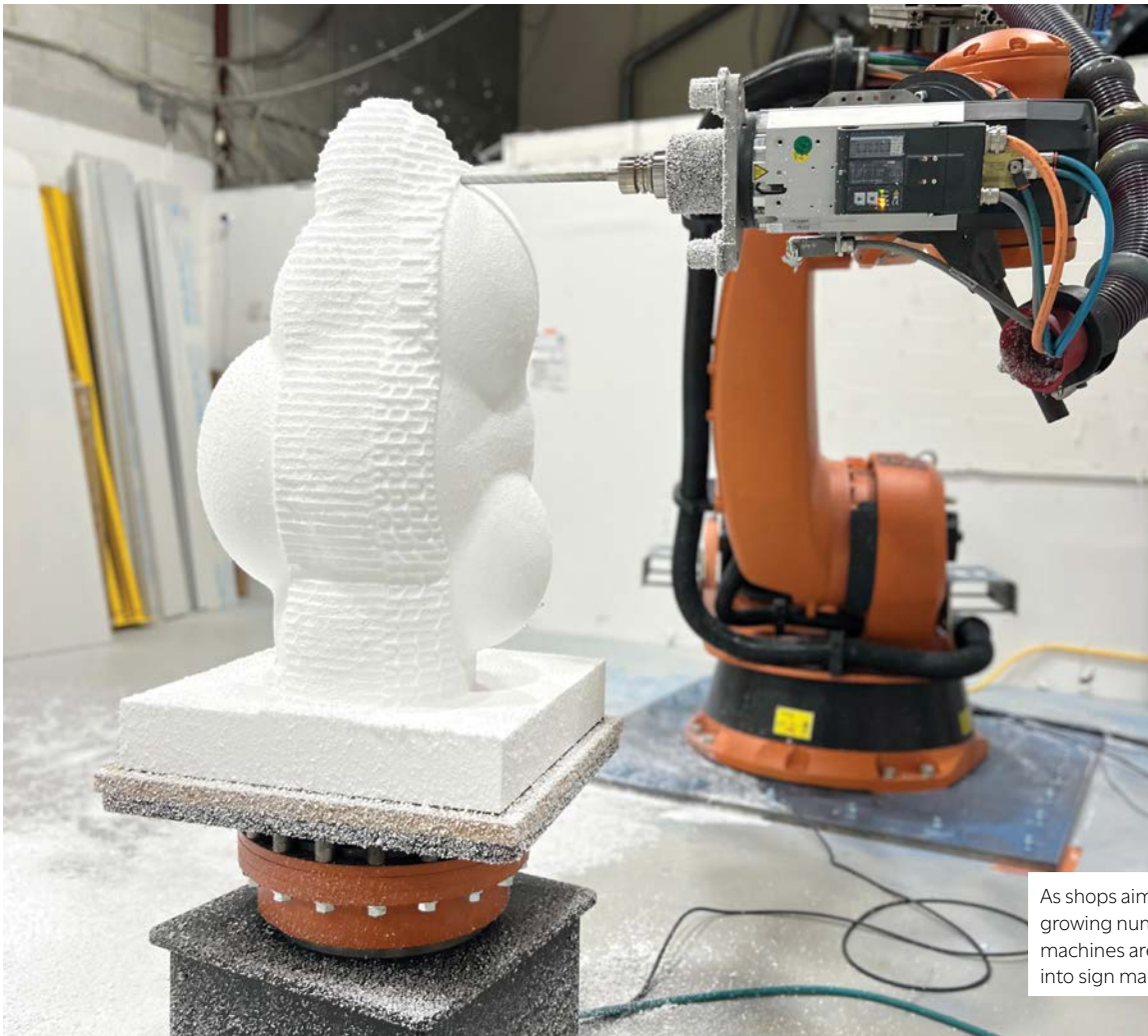
Now, not all CNC routers are the same. A shop specializing in indoor signs may not need a large cutting area, while fabricators of large signage will benefit from a bigger machine. The main aspects to consider for a CNC router are:

- **Cutting area size:** Ensure the CNC router can handle at least 90 per cent of the shop's projects. Consider the largest material size that will be cut and standard sheet sizes, typically 4 x 8 in. (101.6 x 203.2 mm).
- **Spindle power and machine rigidity:** Cutting power depends on the spindle and the machine's structural rigidity. Most machines can handle the materials used in sign manufacturing, but stronger machines ensure smoother operation and better results, especially for aluminum and harder materials.

- **Human Machine Interface (HMI):** Machines may be controlled via programmable computers (PCs), control panels, or remote handheld devices. The HMI system facilitates communication and control between a human operator and an automated machine or system. PCs are easier to replace but more sensitive to shop conditions.
- **Software compatibility:** CNC routers operate on G-code (a programming language) generated by various software. Some allow real-time control and automatic G-code transfer. A simple interface improves usability, while advanced software is necessary for 3D carving.
- **Material hold-down methods:** Several methods are used to hold down materials during use. These include pressure rollers, clamps, or vacuum tables. Vacuum tables are common but may struggle with small parts due to limited suction surface.
- **Debris collection system:** CNC routers produce substantial dust and debris, making an efficient dust collector essential.

On top of these key aspects, there are many other technical aspects involved in a CNC machine, and the advancement in technology has enabled the integration of new features that can significantly benefit production, such as:





As shops aim to stay ahead, a growing number of automated machines are making their way into sign manufacturing.

- **Automatic Tool Changer (ATC):** This is useful for engraving and multi-tool processes but may be unnecessary for sign shops using one or two tools per job.
- **Tool calibration touch probes:** Usually included with ATC systems, these probes accurately measure tool depth.
- **Cutting tools:** Routers now handle drag knives and specialized bits, such as V-bits for engraving or aluminum composite material (ACM) scoring bits for faux neon effects.
- **Vision systems:** Cameras can align with register marks and material edges for easier, more accurate setup.
- **Stud welding:** An emerging innovation—as seen in XYZ PANELBuilder—enables precise stud welding on aluminum panels.<sup>1</sup>

## Additional equipment

While CNC routers are at the core of most sign shops, they are just one piece of the computerized manufacturing puzzle. Other advanced machines, such as channel benders, laser cutters, and 3D printers, enhance efficiency, expand fabrication methods, and unlock new creative possibilities.

### *Channel benders*

Before automation, fabricating channel letters required extensive manual bending and assembly. Channel benders

have revolutionized this process by automatically shaping the returns into precise letter profiles, significantly reducing manufacturing time.

More importantly, they have enabled sign shops to adopt new assembly systems, such as glue-based or snap-fit connections. These methods eliminate the need for welding or mechanical fasteners, simplifying the installation and fabrication processes while maintaining durability.

Beyond bending precision, modern channel benders offer new features that further improve efficiency. Some now include automatic output cutters for continuous letter production and integrated punches for drain holes, reducing manual work. Newer models also support a wider range of materials, with increased width and thickness options and a plastic and aluminum trim cap, expanding fabrication possibilities.

### *Laser cutters*

Laser cutters offer unmatched speed and a flawless finish, making them essential for modern sign production. Carbon dioxide (CO2) lasers are used for cutting acrylic, wood, and other nonmetals, while fibre lasers are used for cutting metals like aluminum, steel, and stainless steel.

Beyond cutting, lasers can engrave with high precision. While they have some 3D capabilities, their depth control is



*With a career in the sign industry since 2018, Gabriel Carro brings technical expertise, hands-on experience, and a deep understanding of computerized equipment in sign manufacturing. As an after-sales and service manager for Ascent Equipment, he specializes in the technical aspects of sign production, providing training and support to industry professionals. He is one of the Canadians recently selected for the 2025 ISA Elite program, recognizing his leadership and contributions to the industry. To learn more about CNC routers offered by Ascent Equipment, visit <https://www.ascentequipment.com/cnc-routers>.*

limited, making them unsuitable for cutting at various depths.

Advancements in technology have increased laser power, enabling faster cutting speeds and the ability to process thicker materials. Additionally, new hybrid laser cutters integrate CO2 and fibre lasers in a single machine, allowing shops to cut a wide range of materials without switching equipment, maximizing efficiency and versatility.

### 3D printers

3D printing is becoming an exciting addition to sign shops, particularly for channel letters, offering lightweight materials, minimal waste, and lower production costs while allowing for unique design customization.

However, material limitations remain a challenge, especially in weather-resistant and flame-retardant options for long-term outdoor use.

Manufacturers are developing larger industrial 3D printers specifically for channel letter production to support this growing trend. Additionally, new channel letter-specific software can automatically generate 3D profiles from 2D vector artwork, streamlining the design to the production process and making 3D printing a more viable option for smaller sign shops.

## Automated signage

A growing number of automated machines are making their way into sign manufacturing, enhancing efficiency and reducing manual labour. Among them are material sheet loading systems, which streamline material handling, and automatic laser welders, offering precise and consistent welds. Even multi-axis robotic arm cutters are used in sign companies, such as Custom Engineered Arts' KUKA 7-axis robotic CNC.

## Integrating tech

When properly integrated, multiple automated machines work together to create a seamless and

highly efficient production process. Shops that adopt these technologies and stay ahead in a competitive market. Those who fail to embrace automation risk falling behind, struggling with slower production, higher costs, and limited manufacturing capabilities.

However, integration is not always easy. Automated machines operate differently, and adjusting production workflows takes time. Once processes are refined, the benefits become apparent, with faster turnarounds, reduced errors, and optimized material use.

Co-ordination between these machines is essential to ensure each sign component fits together correctly. Poorly integrated workflows can lead to mismatched components, rework, and inefficiencies. For example, trimmed faces may not fit properly into the cans when manufacturing channel letters, causing delays and material waste.

Software compatibility also plays a key role. Ensuring machines use compatible file formats can save much time in production.

To ensure success, careful planning, precise machine calibration, and structured production design are essential. Shops that focus on these elements can maximize the efficiency of their equipment, minimize downtime, and improve overall quality. As technology advances, those who embrace a well-co-ordinated, automated workflow will be best positioned for success.

## Embracing automation

The sign industry is shifting from a manual craft to advanced, technology-driven manufacturing, with automated equipment transforming production. However, adding new equipment alone is not enough. Successful integration requires planning, calibration, and workflow adjustments. Machines must work in sync to avoid costly errors, like mismatched components or inefficiencies.

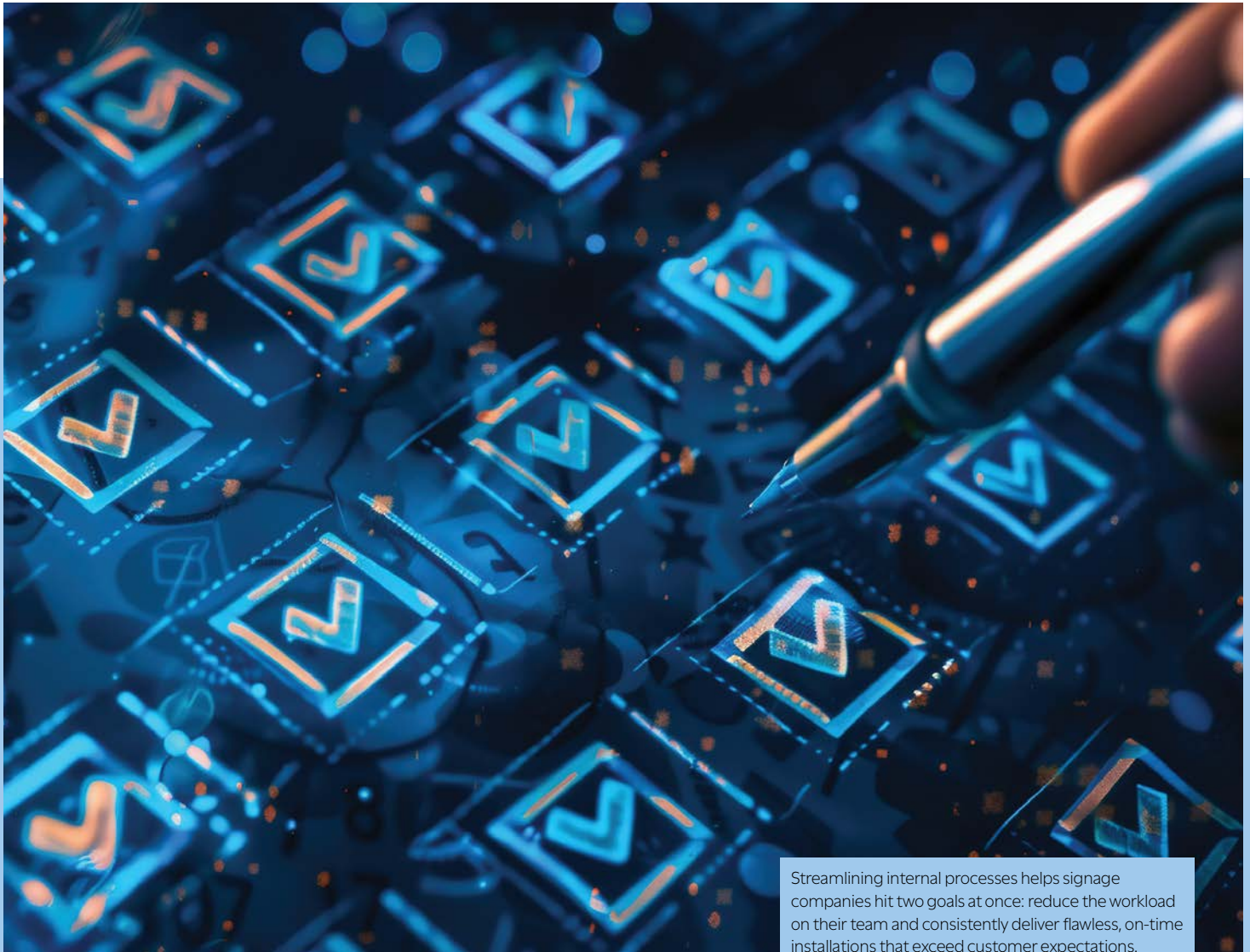
Whether adopting your first CNC router or managing multiple machines, analyzing your manufacturing process is key. Understanding your needs helps maximize equipment capabilities and guides smarter investments.

As technology advances, embracing automation is no longer optional; it's the future of sign manufacturing. Shops that adapt will thrive, while those slow to evolve risk falling behind. ●

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Read more about the XYZ Stud Welder System here: <https://www.axyz.com/blog/the-axyz-stud-welder-system-precision-welding-for-aluminum-cladding/>





Streamlining internal processes helps signage companies hit two goals at once: reduce the workload on their team and consistently deliver flawless, on-time installations that exceed customer expectations.

Photo © Volodymyr Scherbak | Dreamstime.com

# A setup for success

## The secrets and strategies for seamless sign installations

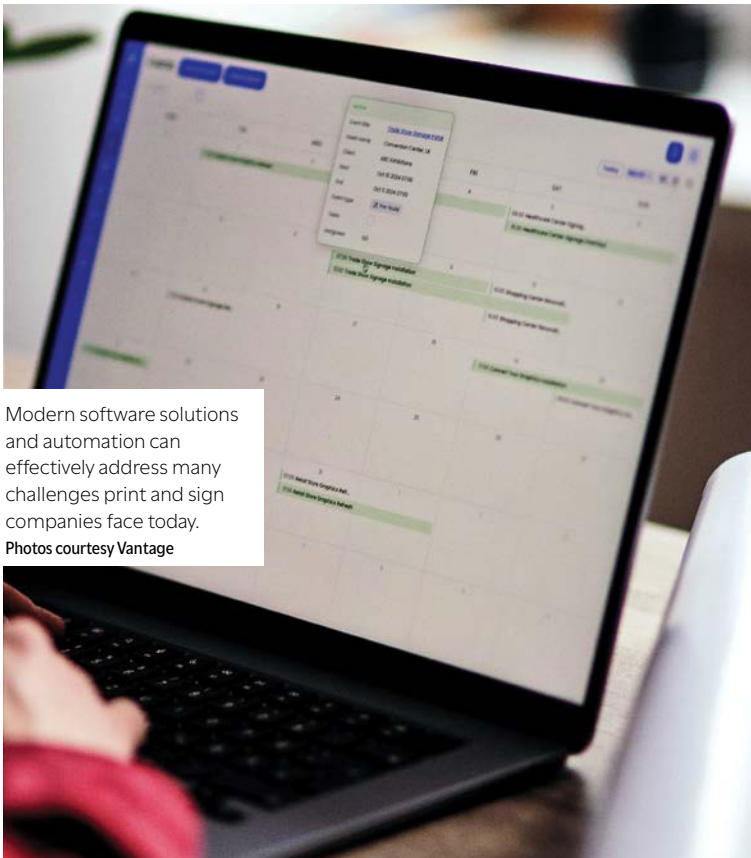
By Roksoliana Sydorksa

**T**he signage industry entered 2025 stronger than ever. Over the past two years, more than half of signage businesses have seen steady growth in both sales and profits.

According to a *Research and Markets* 2024 report, the North American printed Signage Market is steadily growing. Projections show an increase from US\$ 12.68 billion in 2023 to US\$ 15.93 billion by 2029, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.72 per cent.

Many signage companies are now looking for ways to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and maximize existing resources through automation to keep up with growing demand. For many, the manufacturing process has always been the priority—the part where raw materials are turned into high-quality signs.

While many businesses prioritize cutting-edge technology in manufacturing, ensuring it is always the fastest and highest quality, their installation processes can



Modern software solutions and automation can effectively address many challenges print and sign companies face today.  
Photos courtesy Vantage

sometimes remain low-tech. This strategy costs companies valuable revenue opportunities and growth potential, so it may be time to reconsider. How can this be achieved?

### A win-win

Signage installation isn't just another step in the workflow—it is where all the effort poured into planning, design, and manufacturing comes to life and when the customer sees the final result.

To maximize the impact of this crucial step, signage companies need to step away from the mindset of "If it's working, why fix it?" or "This is how we've always done it." They should recognize the potential to automate traditional workflows and embrace more streamlined installations.

With this approach, sign installation companies can provide top-notch installations and thus drive revenue growth while making work easier for the entire team.

For example, for project managers, streamlining installations means instant access to project updates, status reports, and installers' feedback. They can provide customers with timely, accurate updates without the need to chase for information from installation managers or wait for photos from installers. Instead, they can resolve potential problems before they escalate and spend the time saved on revenue-generating tasks, such as managing additional projects or supporting existing clients.

Streamlined workflows also allow installation managers to shift their focus from time-consuming administrative tasks to what brings value to customers—solving on-site challenges and ensuring projects are set up to run smoothly. With fewer

costly revisits, they have the time to match the right vendors with the right jobs based on skills, location, and schedule.

Whether in-house or external, installation vendors reap the benefits of more streamlined installations, allowing for clear visibility into ongoing and upcoming jobs, helping them minimize delays, and avoiding scheduling confusion.

Overall, streamlining internal processes helps signage companies hit two goals at once: reduce the workload on their team and consistently deliver flawless, on-time installations that exceed customer expectations. Along the way, companies build a stronger brand reputation, strengthen customer trust, and create new growth opportunities—all without having to take on extra resources or new staff.

### Real-world examples

Let's go beyond the theory and look at real-world scenarios that sign and printing companies face when managing their installations and what practical benefits they gain from a more streamlined approach.

Two excellent examples are Composition Systems Inc (CSI) in Alexandria, Va., and Category 5 Imaging in Burlington, Ont. Both provide signage, graphics, and visual displays across North America. Despite a wealth of expertise, their teams found that sticking to the old way of managing installations made it harder to scale and meet the increasing demands of their customers.

CSI recognized that the installation process can be a maze of time-consuming tasks that had to be managed through a combination of several different software systems, taking up valuable time and resources.

While the team used Durst's Lift ERP system to handle printing, quoting, and invoicing, the installation side of their operations remained disconnected. Installation jobs had to be manually copied from Lift, with team members manually co-ordinating schedules, preparing physical guides, and updating clients on the progress. This workflow led to daily obstacles for the team.

Category 5 faced a different set of challenges and consequences. Their team used a mix of emails, phone calls, text messages, and spreadsheets to manage installations. They primarily worked with external installation service providers, so ensuring smooth coordination was their top priority.

With dozens of installation projects to complete each week, the lack of a centralized system made it difficult to track progress, resolve issues quickly, and maintain high-quality results. Information scattered across multiple communication channels even led to unwanted delays, impacting customer satisfaction. At one point, the Category 5 team even considered building their own tool to optimize the installation process.

### Industry-specific solutions

To improve installation workflows, addressing two critical needs is essential for overcoming the challenges faced by



CSI and Category 5: eliminating manual data duplication and replacing multiple communication channels with one central space for teams to collaborate.

One solution is utilizing an installation management software tool. By automating repetitive tasks and bringing together disconnected teams, installation management software can help teams like CSI and Category 5 handle installations more efficiently.

For example, installation management software Vantage (explicitly created for the wide-format printing and signage industry) integrated with Lift ERP, connects production and installation for CSI, reducing paperwork and the possibility of human error. Installation campaigns are automatically imported from Lift, and progress is synced across both systems in near real-time. This saves the CSI team more than 10 hours each week on scheduling alone and helps them easily manage five to 15 installations daily and even more in peak periods.

For Category 5, Vantage organizes all installation details in one place. This allows project managers to quickly check installers' availability, track ongoing jobs, and schedule work more efficiently. This cuts down admin phone calls and manual follow-ups, saving the team more than 40 hours a week—time they now dedicate to working on other projects.

## The journey to installation efficiency

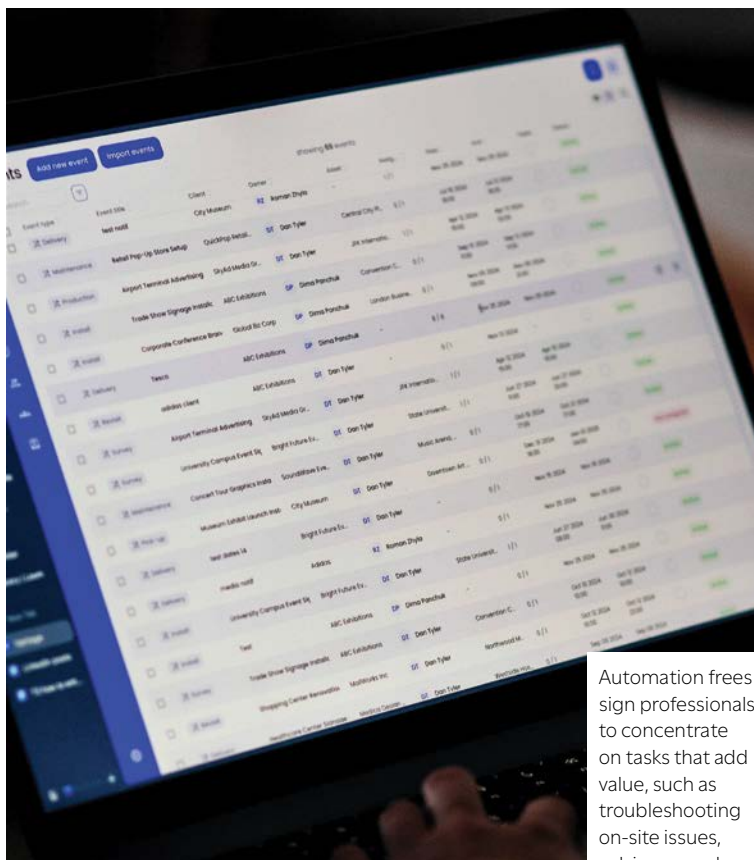
The CSI and Category 5 cases illustrate that signage companies are often aware of issues with their installations but may not fully understand the potential savings that could be achieved by streamlining their installation processes.

If this resonates with your business and you're uncertain about how to improve workflow without overwhelming your team, now is an excellent time to set goals for streamlining installations. Take a moment to reflect on what you aim to achieve and establish realistic objectives for these improvements.

Is streamlining installation a priority for you? To find out, follow these steps:

**First**, discuss with your team and any third-party installers you work with to identify gaps in your current installation workflow. This exercise will reveal areas where time is wasted on repetitive tasks, money is lost due to simple mistakes, and productivity is affected by unplanned downtime and inefficient processes. While some issues may be obvious, you might also uncover surprising insights that could lead to quick fixes or opportunities to add value for your customers. The areas you identify will represent growth opportunities for your company, and the good news is that modern software solutions and automation can effectively address many of these challenges.

**Second**, automate everything that can be automated. When changes occur in the system, project managers



Automation frees sign professionals to concentrate on tasks that add value, such as troubleshooting on-site issues, solving complex installation challenges, or collaborating with project managers and customers.

shouldn't need to make multiple phone calls or send numerous emails to inform everyone involved. Ideally, your system should automatically notify the right people that something has changed, allowing them to reach out for any issues. This automation frees you to concentrate on tasks that add value, such as troubleshooting on-site issues, solving complex installation challenges, or collaborating with project managers and customers to find the best solutions for upcoming jobs.

**Third**, when seeking solutions to streamline your installations, avoid one-size-fits-all tools that attempt to serve every industry. Instead, choose software specifically designed for print and signage companies. Industry-specific tools are tailored to address your business's unique challenges and can seamlessly integrate with other systems. In contrast, generalist software tries to cater to everyone, often falling short in features that can save you time in your industry.

**Finally**, having a clear understanding of your end goals is crucial. With a thorough knowledge of your current installation workflow management processes, take some time to evaluate best practices within the industry and even globally. Use this information to define what success looks like for your business. Is it about achieving greater efficiencies, enhancing customer relationships, or simply making work more enjoyable for your team?

Installation is the step that transforms all your work into tangible results. Don't let it be an afterthought. ●

*Roksoliana Sydorksa is product and operations lead at Vantage, an installation management software built for signage and print companies. Learn more at [www.vantage.software](http://www.vantage.software).*

# Engraved to last

How laser engraving can improve your product quality and appeal

By Boyan Vojimirovic

**L**aser engraving has emerged as a revolutionary technology in the fast-paced signage industry, offering exceptional precision, durability, and customization options. This innovative method enhances the product range for signage solutions, allowing for tailored designs that meet the specific needs of condominiums and commercial properties across Canada.

## Precision

One of the most significant advantages of laser engraving is its precision. Whether etching intricate details on small nameplates or large-scale lobby directories, laser technology ensures consistency in every piece. This level of accuracy is essential for preserving brand identity, particularly for property managers and developers who need consistent signage across various locations. For example, a property management company overseeing multiple apartment complexes must ensure that all signage—leasing office signs, directionals, and community information boards—features the same colours, fonts, and logos to create a cohesive and recognizable brand presence.

## Durability

Signage in high-traffic areas must withstand daily wear—from human tampering to environmental factors such as ultraviolet (UV) exposure and harsh weather conditions like wind and rain. Laser engraving on the right substrate creates permanent markings that do not fade, peel, or deteriorate over time. Utilizing high-quality materials such as acrylic, stainless steel, and anodized aluminum ensures that engraved signs remain clear and vibrant for many years.

For example, a stainless-steel directional sign in an outdoor park can resist the elements while providing clear guidance to visitors for years without losing its legibility or esthetic appeal.

## Versatility

Laser engraving is a versatile process not limited to a single material; it can be applied to a wide range of substrates, including wood, metal, glass, plastics, and even paper. This flexibility allows the creation of custom solutions catering to diverse esthetic and functional requirements. For instance, detailed suite numbers can be expertly engraved

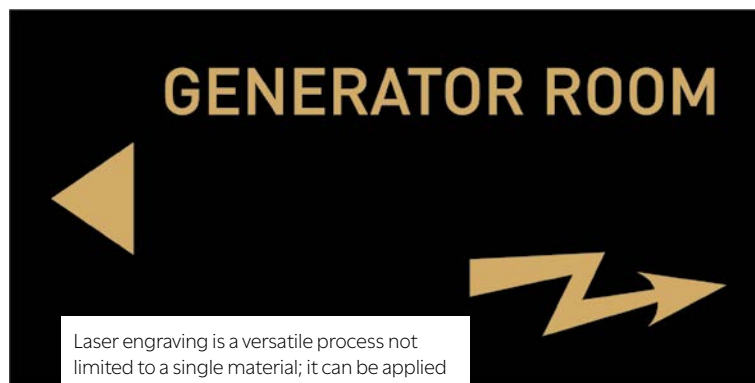




Laser engraving eliminates the need for inks and chemicals, reduces material waste, and operates with high energy efficiency. Photos courtesy Condo Signs



As laser technology advances, the signage industry is seeing exciting new possibilities. Photo by © Justlight | Dreamstime.com



Laser engraving is a versatile process not limited to a single material; it can be applied to a wide range of substrates, including wood, metal, glass, plastics, and even paper.

on metal plaques, personalized wayfinding signs can be crafted from acrylic, and high-end lobby signs can be produced using wood and glass.

## Compliance

In the condominium sector, adherence to building codes and safety regulations is vital for ensuring the safety and well-being of residents. One effective measure for promoting safety is using laser-engraved fire safety signs, emergency evacuation maps, and accessibility signage. These tools not only enhance clarity but also ensure compliance with legal standards.

Unlike printed or vinyl alternatives, laser engraved signs are often tamper-resistant and provide a permanent solution, making them particularly crucial for safety applications.

## Customization

Laser engraving fulfills functional needs and adds a touch of elegance to signage. In the condominium sector, property managers and designers find great value in creating customized elements, including logos, intricate patterns, and personalized messages.

## Sustainability

With sustainability at the forefront, laser engraving offers an eco-friendly alternative to traditional printing methods. It eliminates the need for inks and chemicals, reduces material waste, and operates with high energy efficiency.

## Looking ahead

As laser technology advances, the signage industry is seeing exciting new possibilities. One trend is the rise of smart signage incorporating QR codes, allowing for interactive experiences. This gives consumers a way to engage directly with the information being presented. Another fascinating development is artistic engravings with a dual purpose—eye-catching décor and effective signage.

Companies like Condo Signs are leading the charge in adopting these innovative approaches, consistently providing solutions that meet the evolving needs of their clients. Investing in laser engraving technology can significantly enhance your product quality and appeal. In a landscape where standing out is crucial, it is clear that engraving your way to success is a choice that pays off. ●

*Boyan Vojimirovic is the director of operations at Condo Signs. In this role, he brings extensive experience and a strategic mindset. Vojimirovic excels at developing partnerships and enhancing productivity throughout the company. His exceptional leadership skills and keen attention to detail make him a valuable asset in streamlining operations and achieving excellence in operations.*

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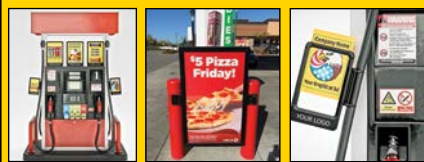
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# Mirror, mirror on the wall



At Grosvenor's luxury presentation centre in Burnaby, B.C., every signage element is meticulously designed to engage visitors and create a memorable experience. Quarterhorse Solutions and Free Agency Creative brought this vision to life, ensuring every visitor left with a deeper understanding of the centre.

Take, for one, the selfie mirror. It features a striking frame of layered medium-density fibreboard (MDF) and sleek lacquer, complemented by intertwining moss and greenery. LED lights create a warm glow, and the bronze reflective acrylic mirror, enhanced with dimensional text, invites guests to capture the moment. Then, there's the illuminated world map. It showcases Grosvenor's global reach with LED-lit acrylic landmasses and backlit plaques within a deep MDF wall.

Connecting cables form a network, while non-glare acrylic lifestyle images in custom frames and SEG fabric lightboxes create an engaging experience for visitors. Signs abound—each with a story to tell. With the nominations for the 2025 Best of Canada's Sign Industry (BOCSI) awards open, it is fitting to highlight this 2024 BOCSI award winner for sign systems in all its glory. ●

~ Marika Gabriel

Photos courtesy Quarterhorse Solutions



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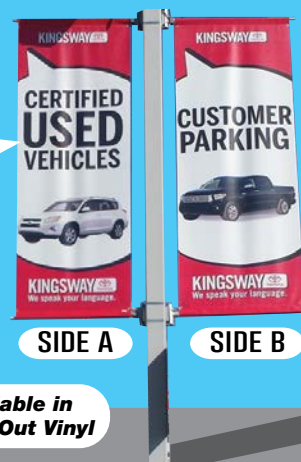
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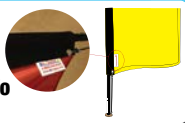
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