

SIGNS THAT SELL

Tips for getting the best out of your signage

Issue Two



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GREATER'S IMAGE A MATTER OF TRUST

EM Signs Behind Seinfeld

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KFC Krush Bars kidproof by design

National Rollout A Snap

Kid proofing anything is one of the greatest challenges a designer can face. When you're a sign specialist called on to create an area specifically targeted at children you really need to be on your game.

What is the answer? "Signs That Sell" took a close look at KFC's latest retail innovation, The Krush Bar.

Like any food business, KFC has rush hours and quiet periods. To develop business, particularly around 3pm when the streets are filled with mums and kids, KFC developed the Krush Bar concept where the ankle biters tempt their sweet teeth.

At the risk of stealing someone else's name, a Krusher is like a Slurpy only crunchy.

With favourite ice cream flavours such as Golden Gaytime, Chocolate Cornetto and Kookies 'n Kreme, backed by Strawberry, Mixed Berry and Mango smoothies as well as Mango Berry and Mixed Berry fruit alternatives there's pretty much something for all tastes.

Although not in all of KFC's 600 stores, Krush Bars are springing up rapidly throughout Australia, a rollout that required some particular expertise.

As has been the case with KFC innovations and signage requirements for 14 years, the task fell to Newcastle-based EM Signs.

KFC's dedicated account manager at EM, Ian York, has worked on the account for all of the 14 years and is particularly proud that the contract, which is put up for renewal every three to four years, has been won and re-won on price, capability and service.

"The Krush concept was right up our street as we are one of the few signage specialists with the capability to design, develop and manufacture to a high standard and then do an Australia-wide rollout using our own specialist staff," Ian said.

One of the basics of the Krush Bar concept, apart from attracting new business, is that the bar itself is apart from the normal counter, thus helping to reduce counter congestion during busy periods.

"It had to be bright, attractive and appealing to children yet kid proof," Ian said.

"For us the choice of material was easy. We have a dedicated R&D team to recommend on such things and they came back with the very latest version of a polycarbonate that has a 10 year warranty and is 40 times tougher than acrylic.

"We have been an advocate of polycarbonate for the same period as we have looked after KFC. It is superior to even high impact acrylic.

"It resists breakage and is so structurally strong that we even use it on large pylons where it illuminates particularly well."

Ian said that although the success of the Krush Bars is very much the province of KFC marketing he is delighted with EM Signs' efforts every time he walks into a KFC outlet.



Asked if the rollout presented problems Ian was almost surprised by the question:

"That's what we do," he said. "Being able to do a national rollout on our ear is our strength; that and the fact we use our own dedicated people to do the installations and will not rely on sub-contractors who at the end of the day tend to walk away from damage and site mess with no pangs of conscience."

Ian started to cite the number of national rollouts EM Signs has completed but our Signs That Sell editorial team could not wait until the end of the list ... there was Xmas shopping to do and Easter to prepare for.

Self cleaning, graffiti-proof signs pioneered by major manufacturer

Nano technology is revolutionising the signage industry when applied to ACM architectural aluminium composite panels that not only come with a 15 year guarantee but are almost graffiti proof and self-cleaning.

Used increasingly throughout the world on public facilities and landmark buildings, the base panels comprise a low density polyethylene core between two sheets of high strength aluminium alloy with a protective film and PVDF coating.

The PVDF coating system was tested by the American Coil Coating Association for colour

change and gloss retention, outperforming traditional polyester, vinyl and acrylic substrates. It is resistant to acids and alkalis.

EM Signs, though, specifies the next level panel that also features a Nanometer PVDF clear coat. The nanometer element not only protects the panel from pollution, but is self-cleaning.

ACM material has been pioneered in the signage industry by EM Signs. The company has used I-BOND panels on the Greater Building Society's signage.

I-BOND's advantages for signage are its strength to weight ratio and the fact it is flexible. A 4mm

thick section of I-BOND weighing just 5.5kg has the same rigidity as a 24mm piece of steel weighing 18.7kg.

These advantages not only make installation easy, but give excellent wind pressure resistance, a vital element of signage.

The material can be glued, sawn, drilled, bent, slotted and punched. It is ideal for silk screening and digital printing.



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20 years with one signage specialist



For the Greater Building Society, image is everything as they embark on a new signage rollout through 66 branches and a second series of ads in their Jerry Seinfeld campaign. Which signage company did they entrust with these two projects?

The Greater's Retail Property Manager, Debbie Berry, revealed that Newcastle based national signage company EM Signs was integral to both projects, creating a modular Greater façade for the Seinfeld ads in just three weeks and playing an R&D role with the signage.

EM has been a Greater preferred contractor for more than 20 years and is far more than a manufacturer as was evidenced by its role in the development of the new signage.

"EM Signs played a vital role in the detailed investigations that went into the products and options for the design and manufacture of the signage," Debbie said, adding that the company's intimate knowledge of the Greater will also be vital with the actual signage rollout which is scheduled to be completed by 2015.

The Greater's branch signage has been completely remodelled with new graphic art and a revitalised corporate logo. It has been given a third dimension and is designed to fit in with the Greater's objective of ensuring that people can see right into each of its branches to see the open and friendly service.

The new signage is part of a major "branches of the future" concept, the first major change since the Greater triangle logo was introduced in the early 1990's.

EM has worked closely with Sutera Architects throughout the project that involves new sit-down counter service areas, a casual meeting area for staff and customers and the introduction of LCD displays.

"We have had great business relationships with both companies over an extended period of time," Debbie said.

"Both companies deliver outstanding value because of the quality of their work. Their people take the time to understand the Greater's

business objectives and the way it operates."

The new logo and livery are featured in the latest Jerry Seinfeld ads which went to air in NSW and QLD in October.

EM has very much lived the Seinfeld story since the Greater's coup in becoming only the third business entity for which the US comedian has acted.

When Seinfeld surprised even the Greater by accepting to be involved in the project, there was only a small window of availability in his schedule for filming the first series of commercials in New York.

These commercials all featured Seinfeld in front of a Greater branch and EM was charged with the design and manufacture of a modular shopfront suitable for transport to the US and re-erection.

"The time frame was extremely tight for design and manufacture," Debbie recalled.

"We had approximately three weeks to design and manufacture the signage and air freight it to the US, allowing time for it to be held in customs.

"As we didn't have exact dimensions of the New York shopfront, EM Signs manufactured two different size signs so that we had options.

"The US production crew couldn't believe that we had sent over branch signage as well as an ATM mock-up. The finished product looked like the Greater had a real branch set up in New York."

The Seinfeld campaign has been hugely successful for the Greater, raising brand profile by as much as 19%.

"In its area of operations, the Greater's advertising has greater recall than that of any financial institution, including the Commonwealth Bank," Debbie said.

If you want signage that plays a key role in your firm's recall, contact EM Signs today on 02 4968 1212.



Sign DA Delays Can Be Avoided

Imagine planning a product launch only to find that replacing your existing freeway sign will take 13 weeks.

How do you get around Development and Planning Application delays?

One of Australia's most experienced corporate signage contractors, EM Signs, sees the problem frequently, particularly in Victoria.

EM Signs Victoria Manager, Steve King said that the process can be made painless by involving the sign manufacturer at the outset of the project.

"We undertake the approvals process for all of our clients and thus have extensive experience with all of the rules of every entity involved, from local councils to Vic Roads.

"If we are involved at the start we can advise the client's creative team what will require a new DA and what will be regarded as a simple like-for-like changeover," Steve said.

"Pylon signage is perfect for refacing without delay but as soon as you add a new element such as lights you are in the approvals cesspit.

"It's a common problem in Victoria where the rule of thumb with councils here is that pylon signage can only be replaced like for like.

Steve said that a simple approvals process through council takes around six weeks and obviously the sign can't be manufactured until the approvals are through so the total time frame is around 12 weeks.



Adding problems with covenants or involving Vic Roads approval can add a further three weeks.

EM Signs has just finished installing pylon signs at the Dingley International Hotel. The 8 x 5.5m double sided pylon features LED lighting as well as two LED screens with scrolling messages.

According to Steve the firm has many new projects undergoing approval and is expecting one order for 40 pylon signs.

How National Companies Ensure WA Sign Quality

One sign manufacturer solved their problems

National companies share a common problem – suppliers on the east coast use sub-contractors on the west coast with an “all care but no responsibility” attitude.

This is particularly a problem in the signage industry. One company that recognised the problem early and is now benefiting from its commitment to establishing its own Perth operation is EM Signs.

EM opened a facility in the Perth suburb of Belmont six years ago to better service the WA needs of clients that include Target, Toyota, Hyundai, Hungry Jacks, Snooze and KFC.

Far from a token presence, EM Signs Western Australia is headed by a 20-year veteran of the company, Bruce Hardes, employs up to five installers and has its own manufacturing facility for small to medium jobs.

Bruce, a cabinetmaker/shopfitter by trade, has worked in all of EM's factories and knows the

business from the ground up. More importantly he has a feel for the west's unique market where EM signs has gained rapid acceptance.

“A strong indicator of that acceptance is the fact that most major builders here now recommend us to their clients, basically because of the quality of our work and service and the fact that we take responsibility for everything from site cleanup to polishing signs.

“These are the things that most sub-contractors don't do when they are installing signs on behalf of east coast sign companies – the reason our own east coast clients are glad we set up here,” Bruce said.

When doing a national roll-out of new signage for clients, such as that done recently for Kubota Tractors and the establishment of Krush Bars for KFC, all of the signage is produced in NSW and shipped to the west for installation.

Bruce said that because of EM Signs economies of scale, freight costs do not present a problem.

“Historically we have found we are still less expensive than the major sign companies on the West Coast, of which there are only two to three major ones.

The west is still something of a raw market in Bruce's eyes with a lot of signwriting and not as much illumination works as the east. There is also a strong proliferation of small backyard digital printers.

“We have a distinct advantage, one that only comes with a hands on family company, in that we do all of the work and provide service before and after the sign is installed.

As is the case on the East Coast, some of the major retailers have dipped their toes into the Asian sign manufacturing market but recoiled when the initial price advantages were lost due to poor quality.