



# Seven strategies for maximum effective office signs

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**Your single best DENTAL ADVERTISING RETURN ON INVESTMENT is right under your nose.** Well, really, just above your head — the on-premise signs that connect the public to your dental office.

Office signs can be your best ROI by a long shot, because you only have to pay for them once. Once your sign begins working, it is like a never-ending annuity. But it's easy to overlook the powerful effectiveness of on-premise signage, and whatever opportunity exists is often forgotten, neglected, or underutilized.

Here's how to do your office signs right — for a new location or existing one — to get the max from this work-horse.

**Deal maker or deal breaker: it's a critical consideration.** Before you buy, lease, or renew, evaluate how and where signs can work for you. Pass on locations where adequate signage is not available due either to landlord or zoning restrictions.

**Identify all sign location options.** It might be a “building mounted” or “freestanding” or “monument” sign at the entrance or near a major intersection. It may have one or two or more message faces. If you don't have at least one really solid sign opportunity, it may not be the best location. But think beyond just one — there are usually several options. Can vehicle or pedestrian traffic see your location from more than one direction and/or more than one entrance?

**Walk and drive the property.** Go up and down the street several times, in all directions, both day and evening — as the passing public will be doing — and look carefully at your present sign or prospective sign locations. Snapshots are a helpful reference.

**Plan for visibility and legibility.** Consider sign size, letter height, placement, shape, lighting, and surroundings. You want your message to stand out among other signs and from the background. Avoid any message-blocking obstructions. Consider how to illuminate the sign during evening hours — usually a good idea for at least a few hours after sunset.

**First impressions are important.** If all that the public knows about you is the appearance of your sign, they will judge your practice on the quality seen in the sign. Esthetics, choice of colors, use of white space and clutter avoid-

ance should all speak professionalism.

**Use a benefit-driven message.** This can be a creative (and sometimes personal) challenge, but the message — the right message — is where your sign makes money for the practice. The creative challenge is that available space is limited. And it's a personal challenge if the sign is simply the dentist's name. Like it or not, a personal name is not what's important to the public. It's all about what you can do for them. Think benefit.

**Keep the message short and simple.** Regardless of the physical space allowance, the passing public can't read a lengthy message. In one, two, or maybe three words: What do you do that delivers value and happiness to patients? What's in it for them? If you do many things, say what's of interest to the most people, and educate them about other details when they come in.

**Shop for experienced help at a good price.** In addition to a competitive cost estimate, be sure that the company fabricating the sign has experience, good references, and knows about compliance with regulations, building codes, property standards ... and will deliver and install the work on time.

**Consider a large temporary exterior banner.** Your new permanent sign may take several weeks to design, fabricate, and install. An interim banner can attract attention and new patients — helpful if your office is open before your regular sign is ready.

**Investigate secondary sign opportunities.** Can you provide “way finding” signs approaching the building, in or near the lobby, hallway, or elevator? Make them durable and professional in appearance.

An office sign or signs can be a big investment that lasts for years. But the good news is that they will typically pay for themselves within the first year and never stop generating revenue after that. One final note, of course, is to make a first-class impression with a well-considered and professional sign that's a reflection of your quality practice. **DE**

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