

| CASE STUDY |

THIS IS YOUR SIGN

Signs point the way to small-town success.

BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO

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Before any small business opens its doors, signage is likely one of the first investments made. After all, a great sign is essential to attracting customers and driving sales. But we'd venture to say that signage isn't just a directional tool; it's also one of the most crucial components of downtown revitalization success.

Want to start a business? Hang out your shingle... but make sure it has impact.

Signage plays a pivotal role in enticing people to shop downtown. While beautiful buildings are the foundation, the allure of vibrant signs can't be underestimated. These are not just marketing tools, but also silent salespersons that subtly guide foot traffic into stores. They create a visual appeal and a sense of intrigue that encourages customers to explore further. Each colorful sign shines like a beacon, highlighting the individuality of our small businesses, and collectively creating a vibrant shopping environment that's practically irresistible. They set the stage for the customer experience, and in a charming, bustling downtown setting like Bellefontaine, they're a key factor in creating memorable and unique shopping experiences that customers can't find in a mall or online. These signs don't just point the way; they draw people in, contribute to our small-town charm, and ultimately, drive our local economy.

NOT JUST DECORATION

The signage on the building facades of a downtown area has a huge impact on foot traffic and potential customers. A well-designed facade sign can catch the eye from afar, drawing people in to explore the shops and restaurants. In Bellefontaine, for example, the beautifully crafted facades of local businesses are adorned with eye-catching signs that showcase their unique offerings. These signs not only add charm to the streetscape but also serve as powerful marketing tools for small businesses.

A sign can also make or break a first impression, and in turn, affect whether a customer decides to enter the store or keep walking. In downtown Bellefontaine, facade signs are carefully designed to reflect the unique character of each business while also creating a cohesive aesthetic for the entire street. From vintage-inspired hand-painted signs to unmissable neon displays, our signs are not only functional but also add charm and personality to the town.

Here, signage is not an afterthought. We have invested in beautiful, long-lasting, and creative signs that make a statement and draw customers in.

STEP ON IN

In addition to facade signs, sidewalk signs are also a common sight in downtown Bellefontaine. These signs not only provide useful information such as store hours and special offers but also act as an effective wayfinding tool for pedestrians. They make it easier for customers to locate businesses and encourage impulsive purchases from passersby. Moreover, sidewalk signs can be easily changed or updated, allowing businesses to promote daily specials or seasonal offers effortlessly.

They also add to the bustling and lively atmosphere of our downtown area, giving shoppers something interesting to look at while they explore.

With any town or city, finding your way around can be a challenge for visitors and even for longtime residents. That's where a strong wayfinding plan comes in.



Storefront Sidewalk Sign



Window Sign



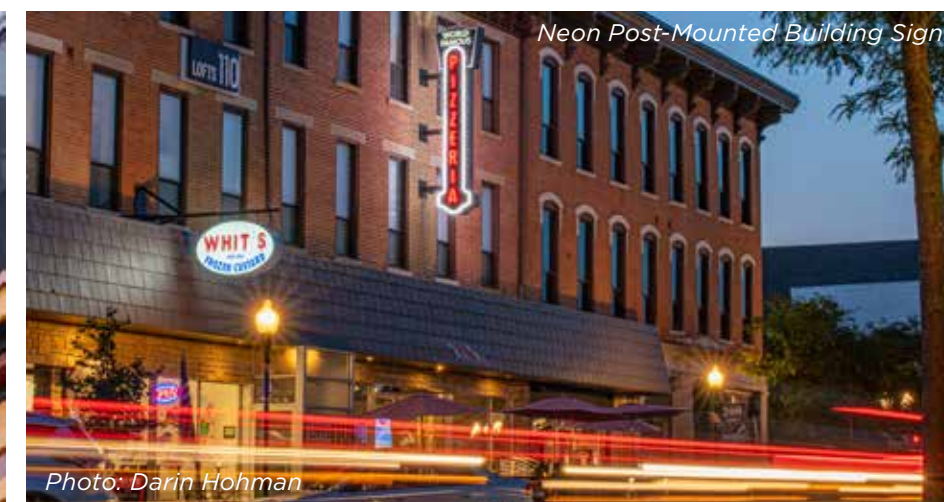
Sandwich Board Sidewalk Sign



Rooftop Channel Lit District Sign



Backlit Post-Mounted Building Sign



Neon Post-Mounted Building Sign

Photo: Darin Hohman



| SMALL BUSINESS. BIG IMPACT. |

A sign is not just a sign. We'd venture to say they are some of the most crucial tools for successful downtown revitalization.

For more information about how your downtown might benefit from the power of signage, visit comstoroutdoor.com today.



Wayfinding is more than just basic navigation; it's about creating a seamless experience for people as they explore and interact with your small town.

In essence, wayfinding is the art and science of helping individuals understand where they are in relation to their surroundings and how to get where they want to go. It may seem like a small detail, but effective wayfinding can greatly improve the overall experience of a downtown area and enhance your community's appeal to visitors.

One of the key benefits of implementing wayfinding in downtown areas is that it helps promote local businesses. By providing clear signage and directions, visitors are more likely to discover and explore different shops, restaurants, and attractions. This not only supports the local economy but also brings a sense of vibrancy to the downtown area.

Wayfinding may seem like a small aspect of a community, but it plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall experience and promoting a small town to visitors. By investing in effective wayfinding strategies, we can support local businesses, improve safety, and showcase the charm and character of our downtown area, making it a welcoming and navigable destination for all.

SIT AND STAY A WHILE

Creating a vibrant and engaging downtown streetscape is crucial for driving retail sales and attracting visitors to an area. This is particularly important in small towns, where the downtown area may be the hub of economic activity and a key source of revenue for local businesses.

When designing a downtown streetscape, there are several factors to consider in order to create a space that will attract visitors. One important element is creating a sense of community and gathering space. This can be achieved through designing wide sidewalks, public seating areas, and incorporating outdoor events and "stop and stay" activities.

Bellefontaine has worked hard to create these kinds of spaces. Several years ago, we installed an oversized, bright orange chair, designed to become an "Instagrammable opportunity" for visitors and residents alike. This chair quickly became a popular spot for photos, with people traveling from surrounding towns just to take a picture on it. As a result, it has become an iconic landmark in our downtown and helped to drive foot traffic and sales to nearby businesses.

By providing spaces for people to gather and interact, visitors are more likely to stay longer in the downtown area, increasing the potential for retail sales. Our orange chair was a low-cost method of generating visibility for Downtown Bellefontaine through user-generated content online.

It creates a sense of uniqueness and character and has become a local landmark that highlights the unique culture and identity of our town. This helps visitors feel more connected to the area and in turn, makes them more likely to explore and support local businesses.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Window signs are another crucial element in the downtown Bellefontaine signage scene. These signs not only add visual interest to storefronts but also act as a window (pun intended) into what the business has to offer. They can showcase products, promotions, and even brand messaging, making it easier for businesses to communicate with potential customers even before they step inside. In conjunction with other forms of signage, window signs play a vital role in attracting foot traffic and ultimately contributing to the success of small businesses.

MURALS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Murals have always been a way to bring color and life to city streets, but in small towns they take on an even greater significance. These pieces of art are more than just decoration; they are a celebration of the local community and its unique culture. In recent years, murals have become increasingly popular in small towns as a way to revitalize downtown areas and attract visitors.

The impact of murals on a small town's downtown streetscape cannot be overstated. These vibrant and eye-catching works of art instantly enliven any street they are displayed on, turning an otherwise dull and lifeless area into a hub of energy. Murals can also provide a sense of identity for the community, showcasing its history and values through colorful imagery.

In Bellefontaine, we added a mural to help identify one of our Downtown area's claims to fame: America's Shortest Street. McKinley Avenue is only 30 feet long and for decades, was only marked by a small street sign. The town worked with the building owner to make McKinley Avenue more visible with a mural that is almost as long as the street itself. This landmark is now not only clearly visible, but has become a photo opportunity for visitors and residents alike. It's just one example of how murals can not only enliven a downtown area, but also serve as a unique identifier for the town.

Another benefit of adding murals to a small town's streetscape is the boost it can provide to local businesses. Murals draw attention and foot traffic, making it more likely for people to shop and dine in the area. In turn, this can help support the local economy and promote small businesses. Murals also create a sense of pride among residents, who are often eager to show off their town's newest addition to visitors.



Sidewalk Wayfinding Signs



Stretch Flex Framed Banner Sign



Instagrammable Location Installation



Destination Mural



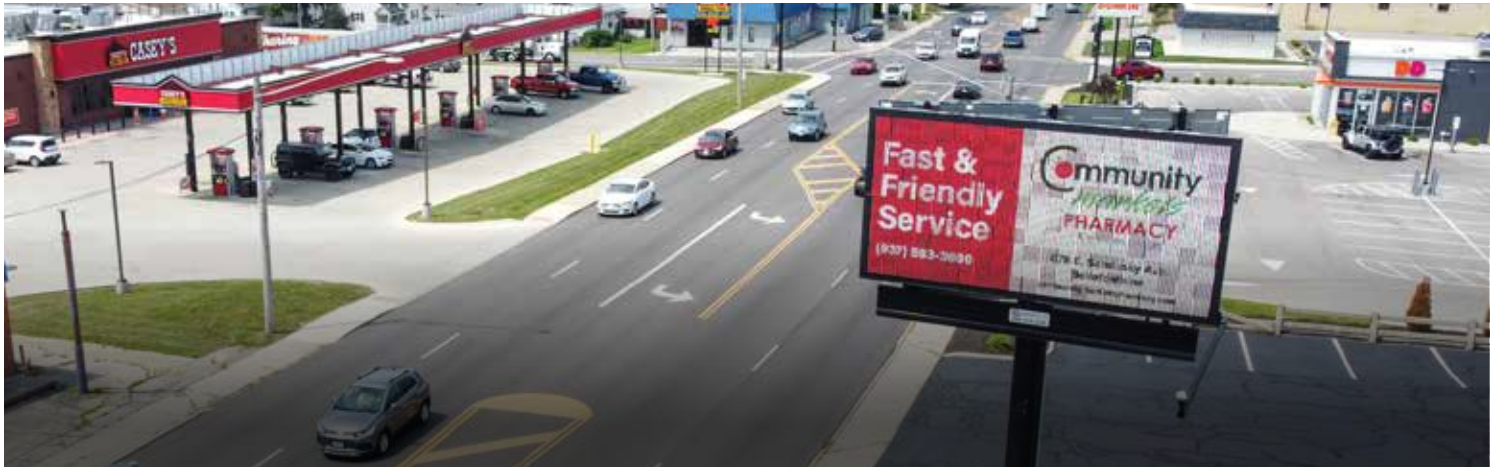
Custom Iron Wayfinding Topper



Sandwich Board Sidewalk Sign



Neon Building Sign



In addition to their visual impact, murals also have the power to bring people together. Community members often come together to plan, design, and even paint these works of art. This collaborative effort not only strengthens community bonds, but also empowers residents to take ownership of their town's public spaces. Murals have the ability to spark conversations and promote positive change in a small town, making them a valuable asset to any downtown area. Overall, murals are an excellent way to enliven and animate a downtown area.

COMING AND GOING

While facade, sidewalk, and window signs cater to the local community, billboards have a more far-reaching impact. Located on highways and major roads leading to Bellefontaine, these signs act as a gateway for visitors and tourists to discover the town's downtown area. They showcase the unique offerings of the small businesses in Bellefontaine and encourage people passing by to make a stop and explore what the town has to offer. Billboards also contribute to the overall marketing efforts of Bellefontaine, promoting the town as a charming and vibrant destination worth visiting.

The best thing about billboards is their affordability and impact. Billboards have one of the lowest cost per thousand impressions (CPM) of any advertising media. For every thousand people who see your message, you pay an average of \$3.75. That is less than a penny a person and better than online advertising, radio, television, or your local newspaper.

COMSTOR Outdoor, a Small Nation Company, has been creating billboards and window signs throughout east-central Ohio and western Indiana for over 20 years.

With over 400 billboard locations throughout Ohio and Indiana, COMSTOR offers turnkey billboard advertising services, from design through final installation. We design and produce display, digital, and mobile billboards, promotional signage, and vinyl banners to help small businesses become visible to their customers.

Billboards provide an effective platform for amplifying the town's message to a broader audience. They create a strong visual impact with their prominent location and sizable specifications, making them impossible to ignore. In Bellefontaine, strategically placed billboards not only promote individual businesses but also collectively market the allure of our charming downtown. They serve as a constant reminder to thousands of passersby about the unique shopping and dining experiences that await in Bellefontaine. Beyond just being oversized signs, these billboards are the town's ambassadors, extending an open invitation to all who pass by, thereby playing an integral role in boosting both tourism and our local economy.

In the end, every element of our town's visual landscape—from the smallest window sign to the most expansive mural, right up to the towering billboards—serves a dual purpose: to spotlight the individual character and appeal of local businesses and to amplify the charm and allure of Bellefontaine collectively. They brighten our streets, foster a sense of community pride, stimulate local commerce, and extend a warm, vibrant invitation to visitors. Signs highlight the hard work and accomplishments of all of our downtown merchants who have worked to transform our town from just another dot on the map into a must-see destination.

Signs do indeed point the way to small-town success.

SMALL NATION develops places, spaces and dreams for small towns and small town entrepreneurs across the country.

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