Join us for this annual odyssey, as we share some of these great successes of 2018.
It was the year 2018, when key moments changed the global sign, graphics and visual communications industry forever:

Over 20,000 industry advocates attended ISA International Sign Expo* in Orlando, the largest outpouring the industry has ever seen — and one of the largest in ISA Sign Expo history. 144% more industry professionals dared to use ISA Online Learning Courses to onboard, train and upskill employees, with 412 proudly sharing their new ISA Digital Badge certifications.

And industry defenders of safety abided by OSHA’s crane operator certification requirement, which finally went into effect nearly 20 years after the process began.
explosive connections

ISA International Sign Expo® integrated more attendees, networking and education than ever before!

attendees networking education

Over **20,000 attendees** were inspired by the products and equipment of nearly 600 exhibitors, who reported that "sales were outstanding."

The ever-popular Networking Reception for National and Custom Sign Companies featured 30+ national companies and was jam-packed with installers and sign companies.

Attendees were inspired with stories of leadership in the Game Changer sessions and found the knowledge they need to transform their business through pre-conference boot camps.

2018 innovation awards

Three award-winning innovations recognized the leaders in the sign, graphics and visual communications industry for creating new and innovative products.

save the date:

**FOR ISA SIGN EXPO 2020 IN ORLANDO, FL, APRIL 2–4!**

SIGNEXPO.ORG
ISA CONVERGE™ delivered exclusive networking opportunities and a host of business solutions and emerging trends.

ISA XDP bridged the gap with the creative industry, focusing on sign materials education with industry vendors.

“The chance to meet one-on-one with suppliers and understand their new offerings and create or build direct relationships in a relaxed environment provides better insight and communication.”
— John Yarger, North American Signs

“ISA Converge is the single best networking event in the industry. It is a true value to have the opportunity to schedule appointments with so many leaders of the sign industry.”
— Ken Licklider, Covestro

“Being new to the sign industry, and experiential graphics in general, getting exposure to new materials and ways of creating signs was overwhelming; however, meeting the other ISA XDP delegates was so helpful. I feel better armed to work on new projects moving forward.”
— Chelsea Sanders, MSA Architects

“The ISA XDP gives a new insight into all the different people that work in the ever-changing sign industry, an invaluable opportunity to network with those people, and a great foundation to learn about innovative new products on the scene.”
— Jessica Schrader, CVEDesign
Workforce development programs engaged qualified workers, bringing awareness of industry-specific training opportunities.

11,751 educators learned about great careers in the industry for their students through a partnership with ACTE.

6 new Online Learning Courses broadened training opportunities, with a total of 68 Online Learning Courses across 9 different subject areas. ISA Online Learning Courses are available 24/7 on installation, project management and general education at signs.org/online.

6,865 students shared their relevant work skills on their resumes, having received ISA Credential Assessments with Digital Badges (since 2015).

144% more companies and individuals took ISA Online Learning Courses to build their industry-specific skillsets.

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2,299 Digital Badges have been awarded since the program began in October 2018, including 12 Sign Industry Professional Badges!

84 COMPANIES POSTING | 120 JOBS POSTED

More employers explored the ISA job board Record job postings benefited from new promotional format

New social media posts, as well as an added link in the ISA Industry News Tracker, ISA’s weekly email newsletter, for each job

56% increase over 2017

70% of companies in the sign, graphics and visual communications industry reported having trouble finding qualified workers to hire.*

17 educational webinars kept the industry up-to-date on topics, including federal workforce regulations and building a better workplace. Did you miss an interesting webinar? Catch up on recorded webinars at signs.org/webinars.

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412 individuals showcased their relevant work skills across social media and on digital resumes with the new ISA Digital Badges for ISA Online Learning Courses.

*Source: ISA 2018 Pulse of the Industry, signs.org/pulse

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sign manufacturing day drives more students to industry careers, enhancing valuable and ongoing relationships with both schools and employees.

86% said they would consider a career in manufacturing or sign manufacturing after attending. Before the event, only 36% said they had considered a career in manufacturing.

99% learned information about new careers.

More than 3,500 students and educators toured 84 sign, graphics or visual communications companies.

100% said they learned something new and interesting about the sign industry and found the tour interesting and engaging.

“Before the tours, I thought that there weren’t good options other than college. However, I quickly learned that you can make decent money, get good benefits, and be paid to go to school for further certification.”
— Student who toured Ruggles Sign

Host a company tour on Sign Manufacturing Day on October 4, 2019! signs.org/mfgday

Outcomes

- Students applied on the spot for internships.
- Industry employees felt pride and excitement showcasing their work and discussing how technical education prepares them for their jobs.
- Valuable and ongoing relationships with area high schools and career institutes.
- Companies set up job shadowing.

Custom videos share the magic of industry careers, offering new ways to connect with prospective employees.

The “Discover a Career in the Sign & Graphics Industry” video was translated into French and Spanish, opening up to a wider population to engage even more potential employees.

Additionally, 25 sign companies customized the video with their company’s logo, posting it on their own websites and using it for their own unique onboarding purposes.

Discover a Career in the Sign & Graphics Industry
guidance through new territories

Comprehensive, industry research enriched business development.

Wage and benefits data to crash your competitors

5.1% average pay increases for hourly employees slightly outpaced increases for salaried management employees (5.0%), and salaried administrative and operational employees (4.8%).

63.0% of respondents indicated that they planned to hire additional staff in the second half of 2018.

Renewed reasons to explore corrugated printing

Sales of color digital corrugated printers are expected to reach **$240 million by 2021**.

Prices are decreasing even as the technologies continue to improve, so brand owners and print shops have more options than ever before.

Emerging wide-format growth areas to explore

Key verticals buying wide-format applications

Percent of overall print budget spent on wide-format print signage:

- Hospitality industry: 21%
- Retail industry: 13%
- Real estate industry: 12%

More data available at signs.org/research
The Chicago Sign Summit targeted significant solutions, identifying revisions in key areas of Chicago’s sign code.

“Chicago’s local entrepreneurs often face significant challenges when it comes to permitting and having signs installed on their premises. Bringing Chicago’s sign code into the 21st century will benefit end users, sign companies and other stakeholders in the city.”
— Elliot Richardson, Small Business Advocacy Council

Wisdom endowed on planners encouraged creative sign design. ISA efforts helped regulate signs and create attractive communities.

Chamber of Commerce executives opted into the value of signs to business, accessing key influencers in the sign code development process.

Unreasonable sign regulations are one of the biggest ways that local governments can hurt businesses, a concept that is all too familiar to chamber officials and their members.

More than 1,000 chamber executives attended the 2018 Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Annual Convention in Des Moines, IA, and were receptive to ISA’s messaging “Signs Mean Business.”

Nearly 200 planners from around the United States learned how to draft sign regulations that encourage creative sign designs during a session at APA’s 2018 National Planning Conference in New Orleans.

Over 5,000 planners attended the APA National Planning Conference, with many stopping by ISA’s booth to get their sign code questions answered and walking away with the latest resources from ISA and SRF.


These efforts wouldn’t be possible without research from the Sign Research Foundation. Check out its annual report from 2018 and support its efforts with a donation at signresearch.org/donate.
Emerging leaders in the 2018 ISA Elite develop tangible action plans for career advancement.

“It has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life in the signage world. You'll be challenged, inspired, encouraged and uplifted.”
— Natalia Camancho, Kalisign USA LLC

“This is a great chance for people looking to learn and get more involved, as well as for companies to send their employees to help create a lifelong employee.”
— Dario Giansante, Global Lux

ISA announced its 75th anniversary in 2019 with future-focused resources, demonstrations at ISA Sign Expo and historical videos.
Elvis Davis was selected for the 2018 Kirk L. Brimley Distinguished Service Award for exemplary leadership and dedication to the industry.

"Elvis has long served the industry in a number of capacities. He also made sure that other sign company owners could learn from his experience, helping others succeed as he has."
— Mark Granberry, Graphic Solutions Group, Inc.

Ken Soday logged in as the 2018 Sign Code Champion, effectively advocating for improved sign regulations.

"Ken has been a valuable resource for ISA, as well as sign, graphics and visual communications companies throughout the Southeast. He understands that if we are able to work collaboratively and credibly with local communities, then we have a much better chance of improving restrictive sign codes so that everyone benefits."
— David Hickey, ISA

Motivated staff and volunteers were laser-focused on global programs to enhance industry growth...

leading the way toward
the future