INDUSTRY TRENDS
The International Sign Association

FEBRUARY 2017 EDITION

ISA Sign Expo: A Great Place to Buy

When David Schauer, president of San Diego-based Signtech, attends ISA International Sign Expo, he typically has a shopping list. In recent years, he has purchased a printer, an ADA system and a laser. This year, he’s considering replacing a metal bender.

“I go with the intention of spending some money and upgrading my equipment,” he said. “We don’t want to be stagnant with our equipment.”

The same could be said of Signtech’s business strategy. The printer and ADA system were purchased to bring those services in-house.

“As a full-service sign company, we’ve really built our business on not subcontracting anything out,” David said. “It has given us the ability to do everything for our clients.”

Visiting the large ISA International Sign Expo tradeshow floor opens up the world of possibilities that exist in the sign, graphics and visual communications industry. Schauer has a couple of tips: “Commit a lot of time on the tradeshow floor and educate yourself,” he said. Then, be ready to buy because the event offers the best pricing.

Those savings have paid off, allowing Signtech to continue to expand. His printers are now tackling jobs that his company “would have never touched before.” As print quality
has improved, Signtech has moved into point-of-purchase signs that combine with high-end photography. “We’ve been mainly an electric sign company. But with some of the equipment we’ve purchased at ISA International Sign Expo, we can do so much more for our clients. It has helped us stay on the cutting edge, not just in the equipment we have but in the services we offer.”

It has also helped his employees. When ISA International Sign Expo is held in Las Vegas, it is an easy drive for Signtech employees based in San Diego. So Schauer provides a stipend toward travel expenses for any employee who wants to attend.

Signtech also purchases the company package of education and encourages employees to take part.

“We make it into a big event, a bonding experience,” he said.

The Signtech employees are easy to spot; attendees get a custom-made Signtech shirt to wear. One year, it was a baseball jersey; another, a football shirt. They gather on Saturday night for a big company party. Sometimes, there are as many as 60 employees who choose to attend.

To make sure that the employees spend time learning on the tradeshow floor, Schauer devises a scavenger hunt. Employees visit certain designated booths, take photos and text them to Schauer.

Beyond the fun and bonding, Schauer sees the payoff in employee development. “It’s really about getting people excited about this industry,” he said. “People who have never been to ISA International Sign Expo have no idea how large this industry is. This is a great way of teaching them about the industry and getting them excited about the business and our company.”

With more than 20,000 expected to attend, ISA International Sign Expo 2017 provides an opportunity for unparalleled connections. For Jessica Brearley, manager of NW Custom Signs & Graphics, it offers a chance to learn from others.

“We’d just bump into people and begin a conversation. We asked a lot about day-to-day operations and for suggestions on how to run our operations. It gave us plenty of ideas to figure out where we need to advance and ways we can continue to grow our company.”

Jessica Brearley
NW Custom Signs & Graphics

The above trend growth for all market segments should continue through 2018 as well.
CHANGE Your Business

The popular “Game Changer” sessions—designed to inject powerful insights and ideas to transform your sign, graphics and visual communications company—are back. On tap for 2017:

- **“Surprising Lessons From 100 Days of Rejection”**
  Jia Jiang, entrepreneur and author, will explore how to turn rejection into progress. He believes successful leaders can turn rejection into enterprise, insult into ambition, and regret into courage.

- **“The One and The Nine: Building Teams & Organizations That Win”**
  Jake Wood, co-founder and president, Team Rubicon, considers how organizations can rethink what they know about leadership, change management and risk. Walk away with a framework for becoming a better leader and building more agile organizations.

Game Changer sessions frequently sell out. Register early at www.signexpo.org/signs.

Make Important Connections

ISA International Sign Expo 2017 is the place to network for the sign, graphics and visual communications industry. Explore the power of connections at these events:

- **ISA Rocks!**
  The Industry Party. ISA and ISA Affiliated Associations host this kick-off party, which includes music, dancing and fun.

- **ISA Networking Reception for National and Custom Sign Companies.**
  National companies need installers; custom companies need the work. This popular event brings together both to build business relationships and grow revenue streams.

- **Young Professionals Happy Hour.**
  Networking for those under age 35.

- **Lounge & Learn.**
  Work your mind while resting your feet on the tradeshow floor. These 30-minute educational sessions cover current trends and product demonstrations in the industry.

- **Digital Reception.**
  This invitation-only event pulls together integrators, end users, suppliers and distributors of interactive dynamic displays, as well as designers, specifiers and architects, right on the show floor in the Digital Park. To request an invitation, please email info@signs.org.

- **Last Hour Happy Hour.**
  Wrap up the day on the trade showfloor with mingling and a free beer. Bars are set up throughout the trade showfloor each day.

STATS • FACTS

In North America, digital out-of-home advertising revenue surpassed $1.8B in 2016, according to the ISA Sign Industry Quarterly Economic...
Discover New Opportunities

Print is so important to the sign, graphics and visual communications industry and ISA Sign Expo is bringing together a number of print niches to find synergies. Those print-related organizations partnering with ISA by holding sessions or meetings at ISA Sign Expo are: CPP Expo; Printing Industries of America affiliates including, PIA of Southern California, Visual Media Alliance – Northern California, PIA of San Diego, Western States Printing Alliance – Arizona, Pacific Printing Industries Association; Xplor International members; Association of College and University Printers, and NAPCO Media. Other co-locations include Sign Biz, Signarama, the National Signage Research and Education Conference (NSREC) and the National Association of Sign Supply Distributors (NASSD).

Expand Your Mind

Overcome obstacles and explore opportunities through educational sessions. Session topics include:

- Design
- Digital Signage
- Marketing Your Business
- Organizing Your Business
- Protecting Your Business
- Running Your Business
- Selling Your Business

For Nick Wilson of Oxford Graphics, ISA International Sign Expo offers a way to explore...

“ different opportunities for our business. New products, new machines that can help our business grow. You see where the industry is going with regard to the machines and what's coming up next. It's a good opportunity to see where your business needs to go, or if we need to change something. You can definitely learn a lot.”