Learn from Those Who Have Gone Before

Those who work in the sign, graphics and visual communications industry are great about sharing their learnings with others. Each year, ISA International Sign Expo is one of the places that this happens. Relationships are formed. Problems solved. Equipment explored.

So it’s only logical that the same folks also would be willing to share their favorite reasons for attending.

Worth Repeating

No matter how many times you’ve been, ISA International Sign Expo always offers new experiences. Exhibitors introduce new products, so no event is like the one before.

That’s what keeps Mark Carter from Supreme Outdoor Advertising in Kingston, Jamaica, coming back.

“I’ve been in the industry for many years, and this show is known to be the number one show,” Carter said. “This is where we find the innovative stuff. My company uses this show as a flagship to explore for new things every year and we have never been failed in all the years we’ve been coming.”

“...and we have never been failed in all the years we’ve been coming.”

At ISA Sign Expo 2019, Carter brought his nephew for the first time. “Within the first hour, we learned of at least 10 new products,” he said. “We left with a lot of new ideas.”
A Business Advantage, No Matter the Size

For a small sign, graphics and visual communications company like Gillies Signs in Salt Lake City, Utah, attendance offers unprecedented options for networking. “It’s nice to be able to put names to the faces of the people that we’ve done business with for 30 years now,” said Angelina Madrid.

For a small sign, graphics and visual communications company like Gillies Signs in Salt Lake City, Utah, attendance offers unprecedented options for networking.

Events like the ISA Networking Reception for National and Custom Sign Companies help raise the company profile. “It really helps to get our name out there. Being in a room with a bunch of other companies, and actually meeting them, handshake, handing out your cards, it’s more personal than over the phone or through email.”

Getting an up-close look at new advances in technology could help her company become more competitive. “Vinyl is very popular right now. The huge tables can plot so much at a time, and mechanically doing it saves so much time. I love seeing the new stuff.”

Wrapper’s Paradise

Since ISA International Sign Expo represents the breadth of the sign, graphics and visual communications industry, specialists can find inspiration to expand into related fields. David Patchel from JT’s Auto Glass and Tint in Boise, Idaho, was particularly taken with watching wrap experts as part of the ISA Wrap Experience in 2019. Plans for 2020 include more events for this rapidly growing segment of the industry.

Watching experts perform was “just mind-blowing,” Patchel said. “Seeing their technique and how flawless it is was really intriguing. I would like to learn more from them and get my hands on their material.”

JT’s Auto Glass had the “whole staff” come out, Patchel said.

ISA Sign Expo 2020 will offer even more opportunities for business-building ideas, with expanded wrap offerings.

Christopher Ezell from Big Picture Graphics in Sedalia, Colorado, said ISA Sign Expo always provides something he can take back to his business to “make it stronger, to make it more profitable, new technologies that can make us more efficient. There’s actually a table here that we’re planning on purchasing at some point that’s going to increase our production speeds.”

Come Ready to Buy... And Learn

Sure, there are plenty of ways to research products before purchasing them. Heather Dorsey, owner at Dorsey Sign Company in Delmar, New York, had done her research as she explored buying a new printer. Before the event, she used the event app to set up appointments with all the vendors that she wanted to meet with. “To be able to go over the different printers and materials and really have a one-on-one was a big deal,” she said. “This isn't something you can get from your computer.”

She left ISA Sign Expo 2019 with a confirmation on the printer she intended to purchase. She also learned about other products that could “make my business more efficient.”

With her business currently focused on providing signage for several nature preserves in her area, she was thrilled to find an educational session on creating signage for parks, trails and green spaces. “You cannot find out this information,” she said. “There’s no one to really call when you’re trying to figure out how to work with a conservancy for the first time.”

Two Final Tips

Cortney Hall from Imagine 8 in Chicago attended ISA Sign Expo for the first time in 2019. She shares a couple of tips that she learned the hard way. “Wear comfortable shoes, because it’s huge,” she said. “And bring plenty of business cards because there is so much to see here.”