



Our Approach to Selling Signs Part 4: Viewing Distance & Sight Lines

DOWN TO A SCIENCE

There are reasons for selecting certain sign products, and the best solutions can only be accurately estimated once you determine what's best for your particular site. Our approach to selling signs is a *process*. Throughout what usually ends up being a series of meetings, our project managers educate customers about effective sign design, asking important questions to “scientifically” develop each sign proposal.

Two important sign design considerations in choosing the right sign for the site are:

- What's the best height relative to the roadway elevation and obstructions?
- What's the optimum viewing distance from the road?

STEPS TO MAXIMIZE VISIBILITY:

1. Determine Obstructions

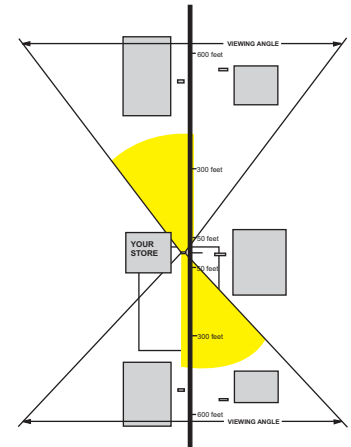
First, you need to determine any viewing obstructions that could prompt raising the overall height of your sign. Crowded visual environments detract passers by from reading low-to-the-ground signs, so elevating signs can enhance their visibility in certain areas. Sometimes, simply because of a low grade, you have to elevate a sign just to get it in the proper viewing zone for motorists. In cases where signage fronts interstates or other high speed thoroughfares, the higher the sign the better for maximum exposure.

2. Chart your Visibility Zone

Once you determine the right height, you need to map out your "visibility zone." The optimum visibility zone is in the area where the line of sight drawn at 45 degrees from the sign in each viewing direction intersects the center of the roadway extending back to a place on the highway within the driver's cone of vision without visual obstruction to a point where the sign can be designed to maximize the local code.

3. Design Your Sign

After you have figured out the maximum line of sight, you need to plan the minimum letter height for readability from that distance. (As a general rule of thumb, calculate about 1 inch of letter height for every 36 feet of sight distance based on average letter contrast and 20/20 vision on a clear day.) Keep in mind that LED-lit signs actually have a greater visibility distance at night and LED message signs have better readability 24 hours a day because of the sign brightness. In addition to sign height and letter height, other factors like viewer reaction time, viewer reaction distance, color contrast, and negative space also play a part in the overall scientific sign design for optimum visibility. Now you can design an effective sign sized correctly, designed for best contrast and readability, maximizing code to do the best job of turning traffic into customers.



In this hypothetical case, a minimum letter height readable from 500 feet should suit the conditions of one straight main road, 45 MPH average traffic speed, no close obstructions. This would indicate a 14 inch high line height, leading to the design of an 80 sq. foot site ID sign with a 30 sq. foot electronic message center below, maximizing the 110 sq. foot code allowance for sign area.



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customers about effective sign design
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