



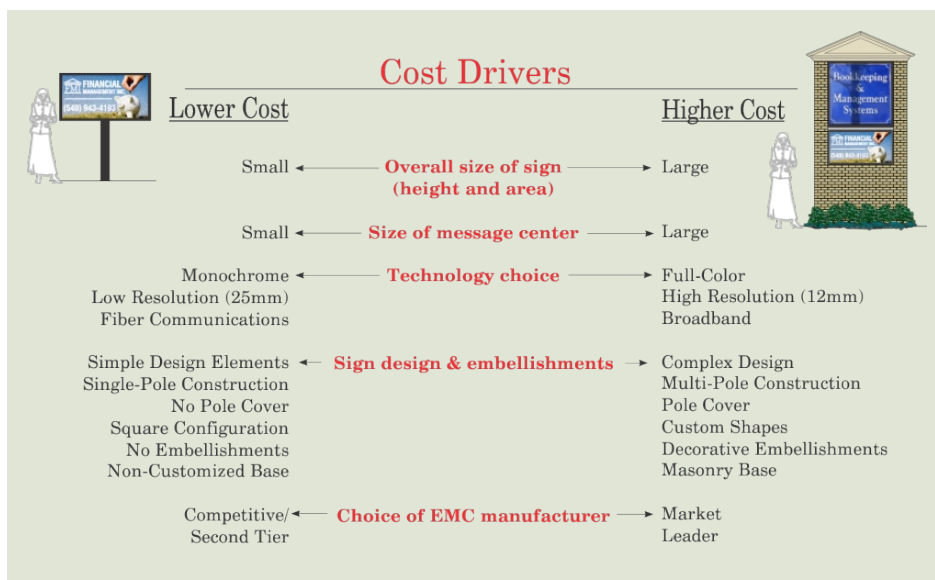
How Much Does a Digital Sign Cost?

RESEARCH NEEDED

How much does a digital sign cost? Dave Elmore, owner of Bookkeeping and Management Systems in central Virginia, says he has over 300 business clients and not a single one has a line item for signage. Similarly most of our customers have foggy ideas about the cost of signage, especially signs with high-tech electronic message centers, so we tend to put quotation marks around the word “budget” when approaching the subject.

To determine sign budgets, sign buyers need to answer: “What type of sign is needed to project our positive image and broadcast ongoing messages that people will see and read?” From this starting point, sign specifications are worked out and the word “budget” begins to lose its quotation marks and become real.

Most customers need help with answering five basic questions pertaining to designing signs with message centers:



- 1) What is your desired image?
- 2) Will you use images/graphics/or just text?
- 3) What fits best with the building & neighborhood?
- 4) What size should it be, determined by viewing distance & sight lines?
- 5) What type of communication technology do you want?

These are the variables that drive price and, once determined, can get you close to what a new electronic sign should cost. Then you can budget for it, and if appropriate, let any groups or departments who have to help pay for it know how much and why.

SLIDING SCALE

The above chart shows the cost drivers that help begin to answer the question, “How much does a digital sign cost?” Just like features listed on the price tag of a new car, different bells and whistles of the equipment add cost. For example, a small simple pole sign with a direct-wired 20mm monochrome message center would be less expensive than a larger full color 12mm sign with an architecturally customized base and decorative top.

CREATIVE ACCOUNTING

Message centers should be viewed as revenue generators versus just marketing expenses. Since most applications of digital signs produce revenue, one should consider the positive impact on operating budgets. Because it's so effective, on-premise digital sign advertising may end up replacing, reducing, or avoiding other ad expenses altogether, perhaps even shrinking advertising budgets from where they were prior to sign installation.

We have seen some companies divide sign purchases across multiple budgets. One client splits the cost of a new digital message sign between its facilities and marketing budgets to make it work. Many retail customers who advertise across multiple media channels sometimes place digital sign purchases in their operating versus capital budgets, making purchases possible by reallocating funds from other lackluster advertising categories for better results. A good example: clients who have reallocated Yellow Pages and other non-productive advertising dollars into new digital signage for much greater ROI.

SOLUTION DRIVEN

If an actual budget number is known and discussed as a max spend early on, our project managers usually tailor the best solution based on someone's budget restrictions, but that doesn't always mean it's the best solution for the site. Don't just look at equipment cost alone when shopping for digital signs. It's more about what *type* of equipment and supporting signage and structural design fit best, based on the above factors. We think the best approach to purchasing a sign is making a comprehensive assessment of all the factors, designing the signage based on that assessment, and coming up with price parameters to provide the best solution possible. To find how much a digital sign would cost for your organization, contact us anytime.

To figure out a budget, ask:

**“What *type* of sign
do I need.”**

Contact: Holiday Signs
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