

Communicate efficiently your brand identity

Practical guides
to optimise your shop

Summary

A

36 effective ways to communicate your brand identity

At street level, aim for appeal and clarity

02

Finetune signage inside your shop

04

Promotions, themes, sales... be creative but concise

04

Packaging matters!

05

B

Who are we?

Contact

05

Thanks

05

36 effective ways to communicate your brand identity

Your story, your knowhow, your speciality, the soul you breathe into your shop... all of these factors are an integral part of your USP. Convey them clearly to existing and potential customers.

Nothing is more frustrating than not being able to find a shop because it is poorly signposted: a clearly visible sign and a legible street number, in a contrasting colour, placed to the right of the door may seem like small details, but they make a huge difference!

People also like to know what makes you unique. This builds a respect for your business that goes beyond the products you sell.

How can you communicate your identity? Which elements should you communicate? How can you communicate effectively to capture the attention of customers?

You can do so in many ways and in several areas: follow our guide!

At street level, aim for appeal and clarity

1. Before even thinking about the wording on your window, sign or awning, remember to consider the overall impact of your shopfront. Your shop must be clearly visible from the street, close up and from a distance. Whether on foot or in a car, passers-by will not turn their head to look at your shop or stop unless the facade and window display are appealing and impactful as a whole. To find out more, consult our dedicated window and shopfront guides

The message of a window must be read and understood very quickly: pedestrians spend an average of just 3 to 7 seconds looking.



2. The basic rule? A window must never be "bare", with no text above.
3. Keeping it simple is often the most impactful and direct option: the name of your business and its speciality, in an attractive font, does the job perfectly

well. A word of warning: while the font chosen for the name of your business can be artistic and unique, choose something easily legible for the tagline (your speciality).

A few inspirational examples:

https://www.charleroi.be/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/reglements-comm/2-%20CHARTE%20TERRASSES%20-ENSEIGNES%20CHARLEROI_160302.pdf

4. Make it inclusive of all customers: choose large, legible and contrasting lettering for partially-sighted customers, and position it 1.40 m from ground level for customers with reduced mobility. There is an easy rule for ensuring good legibility: divide reading distance by 200. If you want something to be legible from a distance of 10 metres, the letters must be at least 5 cm high. If you want the text to be legible to passers-by on bikes and in cars, letters must be at least 10 cm high.

Regardless of height, all glazed areas must be well marked: as a minimum, they should have visibility strips in a contrasting colour at a height of 140 to 160 cm.



5. Unless it is a clear graphic choice, for instance an art project, avoid overcrowding your window with drawings and text: an excess of photos, offers and writing is detrimental to legibility.
6. The easiest way of adding text to your window? Window stickers! As well as the fact it requires no particular skill, using stickers means that you do not have to deal with as many planning regulations. Several suppliers offer affordable personalised stickers (see our Windows" guide).
7. Before affixing self-adhesive or painted letters to your window, apply soap to the surface: this will allow you to adjust the position of the stickers more easily.
8. Even if the name of your business is already present on your sign, it can be useful to repeat it on the

window, depending on the layout of the street. Stand at pavement level and put yourself in the shoes of a passer-by when making this decision.

9. Use the surface of your window to display your web address and social media accounts: a useful way of staying in touch with customers, if you are on holiday or closed!

Current legislation in Brussels states that text on shop windows must not cover more than 50% of their surface. Certain municipalities are stricter: seek information from your local planning office.



10. If you have an artistic spirit and the talent to match, or know someone who does, transform your glazing into a work of art.
11. Take care to choose the right colour for any text on the window: it must contrast with the window background and should not be too dark, to ensure it remains visible/legible.
12. Do not forget the display itself: graphics must never conceal the products.

Before considering a new sign for your shopfront, always consult the local authorities in your municipality, who will be able to inform you of best practices.

For example, the following was posted by the City of Charleroi:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52dbef69e4b09473684733c7/t/571e3c96b6aa60aa50/1d3ec6/1461599477561/Charleroi+Bouwemmaster+-+Charte+ENSEIGNES-TERRASSES.pdf>



13. Before adding text or logos to your window, consider the overall impression created by your shopfront, including the sign, any awnings and the window. Everything should be balanced and, above all, useful: not all of these elements are always necessary.
14. Not sure whether to choose a parallel or perpendicular sign? Choose the one best suited to the location of your shop: in a narrow or pedestrianised shopping street, choose a

perpendicular sign, which offers greater visibility. This must be placed at a height of at least 2.20 metres. On the other hand, if you are located on a wide avenue with large volumes of customers passing your business on foot or by car, opt for a parallel sign.

15. On a tight budget? No problem! Choosing the right font (the style of the lettering in which your text is written) and using it wisely is an affordable and creative way of making your sign stand out from those of your competitors.

Several inspiring examples here:
<https://www.hier-dp.com/>



A few examples of suitable colours and symbols for parallel signs: endless creativity!

16. Your aim? Efficiency! Choose a simple shape and a unique, memorable and easily legible message.

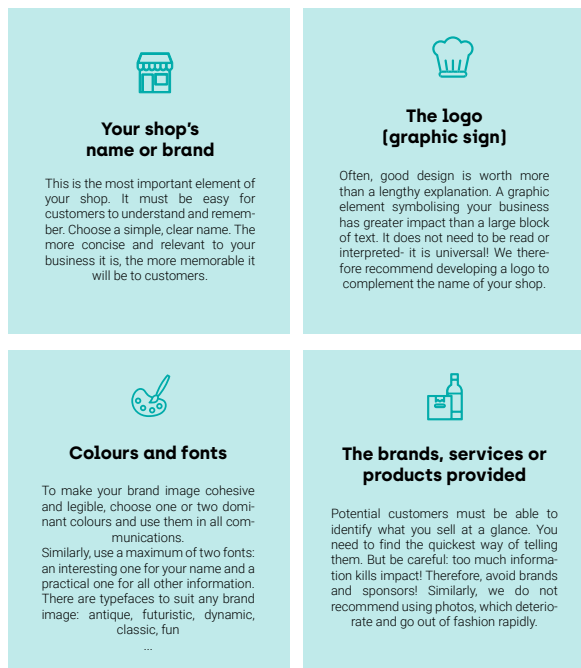
Certain areas have specific regulations on the colour of sun awnings. For example, they must be red and green in the Unesco heritage area around the Grand Place. Do your research!



17. On a parallel sign, the name of your business may be positioned wherever you like: right, left centre...

18. Unleash your inner artist! There are many different types of sign, including cutout, painted or raised lettering.
19. Choose a shape and/or symbol that clearly represents your business: a book for a book shop, a fish for a fishmonger, etc.

A memo on your visual identity



Finetune signage inside your shop

20. Remind customers of the name on your shop on the inside. If customers enter your shop without looking at the sign, you need to tell them your name. If not, it is easily forgotten and you will lose out on word of mouth publicity.
21. The ideal place to state your identity is on the wall behind the till, which is often a bare surface and is visible to customers when they are paying for their purchases.
22. If you have space, include practical information, such as your web address and social media accounts, or even a little history, such as the date your business was founded and the fact that it is family run, if that is the case (i.e. "Family butchers since...")
23. Use logos as markers: for example if you run a fashion boutique and sell jeans, clearly display the logo of a well-known denim brand in an elevated position.

This will allow customers to locate the jeans section easily, even if you also sell other brands, as they will immediately associate the logo with "jeans".

24. If you have a large store or multiple floors, it may be useful to provide a floorplan for your customers. You can find several examples of floorplans on Google. Just search "shop floorplan".
25. Signage must be very clear (for example, use symbols). It may be purely visual, or may include auditory and/or tactile elements.
26. "Hazards" such as the first and last steps of a staircase, or areas where the ceiling is lower (under the eaves or beneath a staircase), should be clearly marked.
27. Listen to your customers. If they ask the same question again and again (e.g. "where can I find such-and-such-a-product?"), this shows that your signage is unclear, poorly positioned, or completely missing. Whatever the case, it needs reconsidering.
28. To streamline information panels, you could opt for simple drawings or icons symbolising products. This will also allow customers who read little or none of your language to find their way around.
29. If you sell products that require explanation (such as usage instructions), consider creating information sheets and placing them nearby. Choose the material and format that suits you: small sheets that slide into a plastic stand, or perhaps small slates, as seen below. Note: the format chosen must be consistent with your identity!

Promotions, themes, sales... be creative but concise

Whether it is a percentage reduction, a buy 2 get 1 free deal, or another type of promotion, make sure customers understand that it is an unmissable opportunity. If you run a food business, clearly labelling the origin of your products is another valuable selling point.

30. The most eye-catching colours, traditionally associated with promotions, are red, orange, yellow and neon. These immediately signal to customers that they can expect to find a bargain!
31. In addition to colour, think about shapes and symbols associated with promotions: exclamation marks, star shaped boards, etc.

- 32. Write promotional messages in a larger font than other text.
- 33. Save your customers effort and encourage impulse buys by calculating the saving for them: the sale price in large text and the normal price next to it in a smaller font or crossed through.
- 34. Make sure promotional items are not drowned out by other products. Consider creating dedicated spaces: a table, a shelf-end.
- 35. Your year is marked by annual events such as Christmas and Valentine's Day, which do not require any specific signage or displays as they are already so internalised by customers.

You can also create your own initiatives! For example, if you have a fishmonger and Tuesday is a quiet day, launch "salmon Tuesday!" with a promotion on this fish. The event must be visible from the inside and outside of your shop, as well as on your social media. In short: make some noise!

Packaging matters!

The issue of packaging and its environmental impact has come to the fore, with both shopkeepers and customers being forced to change their habits. To do your bit, while complying with legislation, check out our guide to eco-responsible shops! Remember, plastic bags have been banned in the Brussels Region since 2017.

B

Who are we?

hub.brussels is the Brussels Agency for Business Support.

hub.brussels is driven by the ambition to make Brussels the most attractive and pleasant place to launch a business.

We offer tailored support, free tools and proven expertise to strengthen your independence, simplify your decisions, and help you succeed in Brussels and beyond.

hub.brussels is also over 200 attentive, dedicated and passionate people, and a promise to support, inspire and propel you, your business, and your most daring projects...

We are hub.brussels; we are with you.

Contact

Got a question or comment on this practical guide? Want to design a shop interior that is both eco-friendly and on trend? Contact the hub.brussels Retail Design expert, Thibaut Surin, at the following address: red@hub.brussels

Thanks

hub.brussels offer our warmest thanks to everyone who has contributed, directly or indirectly, to making this guide a reference on the subject of sustainable shop fitting and design.

While it is not possible to mention all of them here, we would like to give special thanks to Steven Bollé, for his expertise and contagious enthusiasm, and Anne Boulord, for her creative writing skills and unfailing professionalism.

We would also like to express our huge gratitude to all of the brave and inventive retailers and entrepreneurs, who have patiently and passionately answered our numerous questions and supported the publication of this guide.