



Case Study - Signwriting

A few simple tips for success

Background:

On 19 March 2002 we moved into offices at 1136 Gold Coast Highway, Palm Beach. The offices contain a reception area, 3 offices, a boardroom and a tearoom.

The offices were rented from a local agent.

Access for clients is available via a street frontage glass door and a rear glass door. Once inside, visitors enter via another large glass door, with large glass panels on either side.

After being in the offices for approximately 5 days we found time to commence the search for a signwriter. Three- (3) signwriters were approached.

Signwriter 1

Well branded and heavily advertised franchise business that we have used previously for assorted jobs. We personally called into their Burleigh Heads premises on a Monday morning, introduced ourselves and provided information on our situation.

The Sales Manager spoke with us and promised a visit on Tuesday morning.

No-one turned up on Tuesday morning. No telephone call was made to us advising that we wouldn't be visited.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Sales Manager called in and took measurements of the various places we suggested the signs. She said hello to the business owner. She promised a quote would be faxed the next day. Quote received via fax the next day.

Signwriter 2

Telephoned him from his Yellow Pages advertisement. Promised to call in the following day. Still waiting (15 days later) for a visit.

Signwriter 3

Telephoned him from his Yellow Pages advertisement. He came when promised and measured the various areas. He said he would fax through a quote - received 2 days later.

We telephoned him the next day and accepted the quote and asked him when the job could be done. He said he would review the specifications (we gave each signwriter a printed version of logo and wording requirements) and get back to me.

He got back to me the next day. He had lost our specifications and needed them refaxed. We refaxed them an hour later. Two days later they called in and started the job.

Comments:

Firstly, the franchisee should get his money back from the franchise owner. What you should be getting when you buy a franchise is a set of standards and processes to follow to ensure your business success.

It's basically a "Do what we say and you will maximise your income potential" kind of thing.

They aren't providing that (or adequate training).

The **second guy** who didn't turn up - unfortunately that's common amongst tradespeople.

The **third guy** was the best by far....**but still very bad.**

Okay, Marketing Guru...what should have happened.

This is Tailored Signwriting now! Let's take a look how these businesses can implement a few simple (and free) strategies to get their strike rates through the roof.

If someone calls my business I work from my script which is:

"Good morning, Tailored Signwriting, Brendon speaking. How can we help?"

(Sure, sounds a bit thick, but it creates a professional first impression. And it works.)

"Hello. I'm Bob and I need some signwriting done on my new office doors."

"Thanks for calling Bob. You've certainly called the right place. We specialise in all sorts of signwriting, Bob, and we guarantee a fantastic job."

Congratulate your customer for selecting you

Bob has just been congratulated for making a good decision. We told Bob that we are experts and that he'll get a great job.

Then we would go on and ask Bob whatever technical questions are relevant - all leading up to securing an appointment.

"As you know Bob, we want to ensure you get the best result, so I'll need to come and have a chat and see exactly what you want done and where. Is this afternoon a good time Bob? How about 3.00 p.m. - I'll need about 15 minutes of your time."

Make an appointment to meet

Did you notice the "**As you know...**" - Bob would have given us some sort of agreement when we said that. Now we have him agreeing he will get the best result if he chooses us.

Bob has no way of assessing our expertise thus far. We've led the conversation the right way, Bob agrees (no-one in my experience has ever said, "Well actually, no I don't know you want to ensure the best job!") because it is the natural thing to do.

So, in the first 30 seconds of the conversation, Bob has found out we are professional, he found out he called the right place, he found out we are experts, he knows we guarantee our work and then we have him agreeing he will get the best result if he chooses us.

We have set the appointment up for the same day (or as soon as possible) - why give someone else the opportunity to get in and get your business? The buyer is motivated. Sell your service to him while he is motivated. It is much easier.

All that in 30 seconds!

Not bad for 30 seconds work.

"Bob, before I go I wonder if you can help me? We are trying to figure out which of our advertising works best - how did you find out about us?"

Excellent work! Cut out the marketing that doesn't work. Increase the marketing that does. If Bob tells me my newspaper ads are working, then I know my money is well spent.

"Thank you Bob. Just to confirm all of that, I will call in today at your offices at 1 Smith St, Smithville at 3 p.m. Thanks again for the call Bob, I look forward to meeting you at 3."

(If the meeting isn't arranged until the next day or beyond, send Bob a "Thanks for the call" letter confirming the meeting time and place.)

Reward whoever refers you business – it's just good manners

And if someone referred Bob to Tailored Signwriting, I'll be finding out who and sending them a bottle of wine and a 'Thank You' card.

A uniform appearance

So now, I turn up on the doorstep at 2.55 p.m. I am neatly dressed in black shoes, navy blue trousers and a blue shirt. My “Tailored Signwriting” ID tag is pinned to my shirt pocket. I am holding a clipboard, which has paper attached. I introduce myself with a firm handshake and good eye contact.

So now I measure the windows, right? Wrong!

Assess your customer’s needs

I ask questions. Lots of questions. I call this a **Needs Assessment**. Some of the questions I would ask include:

- What exactly do you do?
- How long have you been in business?
- What sort of customers do you attract?
- Do you get many walk-ins?
- What sort of image are you trying to portray?
- How do your customers hear about you?
- Are they repeat customers?
- Where do they park?
- Are you a budget business, medium, or high priced?
- What makes people buy from you, rather than your competitors?
- Can I see your previous print ads?
- Can I see your business literature?
- Can I see your brochures?
- What do you need the signage to do?
- Etc

See what we are trying to do? We are showing Bob that we know about his business. We are assessing various aspects of Bob's business so that we can make a recommendation based on what Bob needs.

After all, Bob isn't the signwriting expert. I am.

We are also developing a personal relationship with Bob - he is investing time with me. He doesn't want that investment to be a waste of time.

Bob is now far more likely to choose me than any other signwriter in history!

After all of those questions we get down to what the other signwriters do. We measure. Bob comes with us.

We still ask questions (and make a few comments).

"Does the sun hit this window in the morning Bob?"

"I'll just step outside here Bob as though I'm walking past your office. I want to see what other signs catch the eye, what colour the buildings are, etc"

"Would you prefer white or blue lettering here Bob?"

Closing questions make sense

Ooooooh. Did you see that! Not only are we still showing Bob how good we are (we even thought of looking at the business from the perspective of the customer! The other signwriters probably do that, but I bet none of them say it) but I started asking closing questions.

I've started assuming that Bob will choose us.

"Okay, so what you need Bob is this, this and this. Is that right? When do you need this job completed by?"

"Thursday? No worries at all, we'll be able to meet your schedule."

"Thanks a lot Bob. The information you have given me is terrific. I have a few ideas and I have enough information to do a great job. I'll get back to the office and put together the quote. When do you need the quote by Bob?"

Bob will say "As soon as possible."

I'll say "Okay then Bob, I'll give you a call tomorrow at 11 a.m. Is that good for you?"

Bob says "Yep."

(Maybe I would ask for Bob's budget - probably not.)

I lied to this customer!

Now, if you think I'm going to call Bob at 11 a.m. tomorrow you are crazy!

Bob's getting a call at 9 a.m!

"Good morning Bob. Brendon here from Tailored Signwriting. Because you need this quote ASAP we burnt the midnight oil last night and we are just finishing off the quote now. I need to show you some samples and go over the quote. When is a good time for you...is 10 a.m okay?"

We have exceeded Bob's expectations yet again. He's expecting something (probably a fax) at 11 a.m. Instead he gets a phone call at 9 a.m saying the quote is ready for review. And we've made that all-important 2nd meeting.

(A lot of signwriters will be saying, "Sounds fine in theory, but we only get 1 job for every 5 quotes. It is too inefficient to see everyone.")

My answer to that is this. If they do what I have documented above they will win 99 jobs out of 100, at a higher price. Now it's cost effective!

At the 10 a.m meeting I say something like this:

"As you know Bob, getting the right signwriting is very important in getting your business noticed. We had a good look at what you need here, we've reviewed your corporate colours, your position, your customers, etc and we recommend you go with white lettering on the front door because it catches the eye a little more with the black background. I would like to suggest we make the logo the predominant feature - it will keep the consistency with those big newspaper ads you run and aid branding and recognition.

I also recommend this, this and this because of that, that and that. It's been our experience that this, this and this...."

We are making recommendations based on knowing lots about Bob's business. And we are also drawing on our experience. Bob knows all this only because we have told him.

"That comes to \$10. As you know, for that you get the full deal, with preparation, application and cleaning. That will do everything that you have asked us to do. As you know, all of our work is 100% guaranteed. Do you have any questions? Does what we recommend meet your needs?"

Bob will say "Yes" to that last question because everything is based on what he has told us. He simply can't say "No." (Even if we are the most expensive, Bob will still more than likely go with us.)

When he says "Yes" we do what 98% of business don't do.

Ask for the business!

We ask for the business.

"Great Bob. Well, would you like us to do this work for you Bob?"

Now sit back and be quiet. He will say "Yes".

Bob says "Yes".

Congratulations. You've made the sale!

Is that it? Nope. Not by a long shot.

Getting the sale is just the start

After you get Bob to sign your order sheet (giving him a copy), you thank him and leave.

When you get back to the office, Bob's details go into your database. Bob will be getting a Christmas card, birthday card, newsletter, letter about some special promotion you are running and plenty more from you.

The job is completed according to what you agreed with Bob. You clean up after yourself (you have a portable vacuum cleaner with you). You make sure Bob is happy with everything. Then you go back out to your work van and bring in the indoor pot plant that you got Bob.

"Bob, we take great pride in providing a quality service and I appreciate you recognising that. And I really appreciate your support of my business. Here's a small gift to welcome you to your new office. It's a Thingyme Ging - a great indoor plant - I'm sure you will be a great success!"

You hand Bob over the plant, along with a "Thank You" card that says thank you for your business.

(You gave Bob a plant for a couple of reasons. 1. It's cost effective. 2. He will see it every day and remember you. You gave a "Thank You" card instead of a letter because you know cards are kept for about 3 times longer than a letter.)

Okay, Bob's in tears now!

Make yourself different from your competition

When you give Bob the invoice (now would be okay), you have a personal note written on it and it also has enclosed a Self Addressed Envelope (you get your money a few days quicker if you use one of these).

So, what do you think? Not bad? Too much? Too much effort and cost? (Actually only costs an extra \$8 - \$6 for the plant, \$2 for the card. The only extra thing has been the visit to deliver the quote.)

Is it perfect? Of course not. But I bet it would be a lot, lot more effective than the 3 signwriters we asked for a quote.

Don't forget to follow Bob up. Send him a Christmas card, send him a birthday card and definitely send him a "1st Anniversary" card when he has been in his new office for a year. Then give Bob a call and say,

"Howdy Bob. It's been exactly 1 year today since we put your signage up. Your signage is due for a freshen up - I'll pop in tomorrow and say hello and take a quick look while I'm there."

And Bob's in business. He has friends in business. Lots of friends. Ask Bob for his friend's names.

You are now a very busy signwriter.

Now that should be the end of this Case Study, but the eagle-eyed would have spotted another opportunity missed.

Add on sales. As you would imagine, Tailored Signwriting sell a range of window cleaning products. And we can sell them to Bob at a great discount. That will keep the signage looking it's best!

Definitely the last thing!

One more. This is definitely the last thing.....

When we moved into these offices, we contacted the 3 signwriters. Maybe the agent we rented the offices from should have made a quick phone call to a signwriter to suggest they call in? Or maybe the signwriters should be marketing to the Real Estate Agents, so he doesn't have to remember to call them? Hmmmmmm.