

SIGN BANNERS 101 - Everything you always wanted to know about sign banners, but were afraid to ask.

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Sign banners can be used to advertise your business, promote your event, or even welcome your son home from boot camp.

There are a lot of options available with today's technology. What was once a time consuming (hand painted) and expensive process has become affordable and limited only to your imagination.

Sign banners are typically produced using 2 standard processes. For **sign banners** requiring only single (solid) color text, the vinyl banner would most likely be made using adhesive **vinyl lettering**. The Vinyl Lettering would be cut on a plotter and then applied to the vinyl banner blank. If the banner requires a photograph, has fading colors, or has multiple color combinations, it will most likely be printed on a wide format printer. **Vinyl lettered banners** are cheaper and tend to not fade as easily in the sun, however, **digitally printed sign banners** offer a much wider range of color matching and design options.

Small vinyl banner material is typically 2 feet, 3 feet, or 4 feet tall on a roll. It can be cut to any length. Other sizes include 6 feet and 8 feet tall, but are limited in the color choices. Digital banners used for billboards and building wraps are often 8 feet, 10 feet, 12 feet and 16 feet tall. The nice thing about flexible vinyl banner material is that it can be welded or seamed to create any size banner imaginable. For instance, a vinyl banner viewed at a racetrack could be 60'x200'. A **welcome home sign banner** or family reunion banner might be 2'x4'.

Vinyl banners designed to hang over a street are referred to as **street banners**. They are typically made from a heavier vinyl (16 to 18 oz per square yard). In addition, they should have nylon webbing hemmed into the perimeter and gussets reinforcing the corners. Options include brass grommets (usually every 2-3 feet - top and bottom) and D-rings in the corners. That will assist with mounting the sign banner to a steel cable and maintaining tension on it. Other options include cutting wind slits into the street banner. These are half circles cut into the banner to help reduce wind load. Keep in mind, a large vinyl banner is just like a sail on a sailboat. It will need to be well constructed and secured properly.

You can create your own artwork or have it created professionally. If you are not familiar with artwork requirements, you should leave it to the professionals. There are a lot of variables that need to be taken into consideration. (i.e. You can't scan something off your business card and enlarge it to banner size without it becoming very distorted). Also, keep it simple. If you cram a bunch of stuff on your vinyl banner, most people won't be able to (or take the time to) read it anyway.

Once the artwork is finalized, the industry standard for vinyl banner production is 1-2 weeks. Most companies offer Rush service for you procrastinators, but it will usually incur Rush charges (who do you think pays the Overtime for someone to stay late?).

Sign banners with vinyl lettering are usually rated (outdoors) for 3-5 years. Digitally printed sign banners are rated for 2-3 years (using UV resistant, solvent based inks). Other short term options are available, but the cost is about the same, so I would recommend only solvent based inks.

Finally, don't be your own worst enemy. Sign banners should be stored rolled. It wouldn't hurt to keep the box it was shipped in for storing it. **Sign banners** are easily damaged and should not be folded (this will cause creases). If you fold them into a ball and throw them into the trunk of your car, they will look like some college kids laundry (but they won't iron out). However, if you install and store them properly, their investment will bring you great returns.

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