

THE SIGNS NOW QUALITY SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

The mission of Signs Now is “to take care of our staff, **to impress our customers** and to grow our sales”

We know that the key to customer satisfaction is to ensure that the customer has a clear understanding of the services we offer and to ensure that we deliver on our promises. A key value for Signs Now is summarised thus:-

WE DO WHAT WE SAY WE DO

There are 101 things we have to get right when we take an order for a sign – size, colours, fonts, location, material, shape, design, artwork, timing, etc.

THE SYSTEM

Over the years we have developed a robust system of customer service which has been proven thousands of times to assure customer satisfaction.

The system was designed by Bill Dunphy – who had previously guided Lyreco UK to BS 5750 accreditation back in 1992. The system is managed by Bill’s wife, Therese.

Here are the key components of the system:-

1 THE ENQUIRY

It is all too easy to lose sight of an enquiry in the day-to-day activity of the business. We have a number of policies in place to ensure an enquiry is never lost or neglected:

We answer the phone within 3 rings (in office hours)

All customer emails are centralised and acknowledged on the day of receipt

Telephone messages are checked first thing every morning

Enquiries are recorded in an **Enquiry Register** and tracked

2. THE SITE VISIT

For some smaller enquiries we are able to answer the customer's questions by email or phone. For larger enquiries we find that it is necessary to visit the customer's site. This gives us the opportunity to gather information about the signs required – the purpose, the location, the measurements, the customer's ideas and wishes. It also allows the **Signs Now Surveyor** to show the customer photos and samples of the kinds of signs that the customer may be interested in. By the end of the visit the Surveyor will have a firm grasp of the customer's requirements. The Surveyor will also carry out a **Risk Assessment** which we can use to ensure safe working should we eventually get the job.

3 THE ESTIMATE

Within 48 hours the Surveyor will prepare a detailed cost quotation (**Estimate**). Using photos of the customer site he will superimpose a simulation of what the proposed signs would look like in situ – a **Visual**. Very often the Surveyor will take this proposal in person to the customer – on some occasions the estimate and the visual and the **terms and conditions** will be emailed or posted to the client.

4 THE ORDER

If the customer is satisfied with the quote we will ask the customer to sign the quote and, if there is no existing credit account, we will require a 50% deposit. At this stage we will advise the client of 3 key dates:-

Artwork Date - when the customer can expect to see our draft artwork

Approval Date - the date when we need the customer's final approval

Installation Date - the date we have booked to install the signs

5 WORKS ORDER

A **Works Order** is raised with all the technical detail we need to make the exact signs ordered by the customer. This will be our internal work sheet to ensure we choose the right materials, that we cut to the right sizes and shapes, and that we reproduce the required colours and fonts.

6 ARTWORK APPROVAL

A Sign Designer will study the work-file and will produce a design for each sign showing how that sign will look. Typically the designs are emailed to the client for

checking, amendment and approval. We will not make any sign until we get **artwork approval**

7 MANUFACTURE

We employ a number of sign makers and fabricators and we use a range of machines to make signs

- **Vinyl Plotter** – we have number of these. Many signs are made from vinyl and these plotters cut the vinyl to the size and shape required
- **JV3 Mimaki Printer** – this can print the customer's image on to white vinyl which can then be applied to your sign
- **Arizona Flat Bed** – this prints directly on to the substrate (plastic, metal, glass, acrylic, etc.)
- **Laminator** – to add extra protection for a sign and to deter vandalism we can apply a clear laminate material to the customer's sign
- **CNC Router** – this allows us to cut plastic and metal signs to the shape required. Our designer agrees the shape with the client and the design file is then sent to the router
- **Braille Machine** – allows us to make our own tactile and braille signs
- **Saws** – we have a range of saws – panel saws, post saw, mitre saws – to cut material sheets to the size the customer requires
- **Welding Bay** – we manufacture many steel and aluminium signs. We can cut the metal, we can weld metal components together to create the steel frames and ground cages for our larger signs
- **Stainless Welding Bay** – allows us to make our own built up stainless steel letters

8 QUALITY CONTROL

Once the signs are made they will be placed in our Quarantine Area where they will be quality inspected. The Inspector will study the signed off paperwork and the works order to confirm that the signs have been made to the correct specification and the signs have been made to a good quality. The Inspector confirms that the QC has been completed on the **QC Checklist**.

9 INSTALLATION

As explained earlier a date for installation will have been scheduled once the order was taken. The Lead Installer will call the client well in advance to confirm that everything is ready for the install.

THE RESULTS

10 THANK YOU

Some time after you receive a sign from Signs Now you will get an email thanking you for your business and asking you for feedback on the service we have given to you. We keep a log of all replies and they are totalled. To date we have received many hundreds of replies and they show

Impressed	42%
Pleased	37%
Satisfied	21%
Dissatisfied	much less than 1%

ACCREDITATION

In 2006 Signs Now was successfully assessed for ISO 9001 by NQA.

AWARDS

1999	West Midlands Small Business of the Year
2002	Signs Now Million Dollar Club
2008	Sign Business of the Year (awarded by the British Sign Association)
2009	Outstanding Service Award – given by West Midlands Police
2010	Black Country – Outstanding Business of the Year