

Industry SEPTEMBER 2019 TRENDS



Sign, graphics and visual communications company leaders identified healthcare and education as the top areas of growth, according to the ISA Pulse, which provides a snapshot of the business trends.



THE INTERNATIONAL SIGN ASSOCIATION

2020 Foresight:

Sign, Graphics Industry Well Positioned for Success

It's hard to believe, but 2019 is two-thirds over. It may seem natural to start looking ahead to 2020. But consider that there is still a good chunk of 2019 left. It's not too late to turn a down year around, or to double down on growth plans, breaking through the goals you set nine months ago.

As I reflect on 2019, I want to share some of the successes that ISA has seen and our plans for the future.

I have to start by sharing my appreciation for the ISA board of directors. This year, as ISA chairman of the board, I've seen up close how hard they work together to support ISA and ISA members, taking my understanding to a different level. I always knew that the ISA board of directors were some of the smartest, most dedicated and hardest-working people in the sign, graphics and visual communications industry. This year has dramatically reinforced that.

The ISA board of directors and ISA staff continue to amaze me in terms of what they get done and the effort they put in to make sure that ISA, members and the industry are ahead of the curve when it comes to challenges, opportunities and new technologies.

Their insight and direction have helped position ISA to lead its members and the industry through dramatic change. Technology is transforming the way we do business, but even more so, having an impact on our end users.

The retail world is changing, causing sign, graphics and visual communications companies to refocus our efforts to help retailers better market their products and services. Healthcare and education sectors also have been changing more broadly, and it is offering opportunities for sign, graphics and visual communications companies to expand relationships with these sectors.

Sign, graphics and visual communications company leaders identified working with healthcare and education institutions on their signage programs as the top areas of growth, according to the ISA Pulse, which provides a snapshot of the business trends.



To capitalize on those opportunities requires flexibility. Working with higher education facilities is a lot different than a chain of restaurants or clothing stores.

For companies that are willing to invest in learning how to serve those new industries, growth is there for the taking.

ISA continues to focus on helping businesses explore those new areas of opportunities. We also are looking at ramping up expertise so that we can lead member companies in understanding more about the sectors that we serve.

Targeting Pressing Problems

ISA continues to work intensely on solving issues that threaten our businesses and industry. Workforce is one of the most significant threats, but we're seeing signs of progress. We're hearing a lot from members about the kind of training they need and are adapting our efforts to deliver training in the manner they want it.

We continue to work and improve on the advocacy side. We're watching very closely court action related to distinctions of on- and off-premise signs. We still believe and advocate that there are key reasons for the distinction, and communities should be allowed to regulate on- and off-premise differently. We'll stay on top of that as various lawsuits make their way through the courts.

We will keep on educating communities about the importance of our products to their businesses and communities. We all understand the economic impact of signs to businesses and how they provide quality jobs, a strong tax base and vibrant communities. It's a winning argument and one that we continue to share with local leaders.

The Industry's Leading Event

ISA International Sign Expo 2019 was a tremendous success, but we're planning to top it in 2020. We already know that we'll co-locate along with Impressions Expo, introducing sign, graphics and visual communications professionals to opportunities in garment and textiles. We expect more co-locations to come, too.

But we're also looking at ways we can help the industry capitalize on changings in technology. Each year, one of the highlights for me is to explore the many new innovations that have been introduced since the previous ISA Sign Expo. This year will be no different. We will raise the spotlight on some of the technologies that are

poised to transform our industry—and perhaps the broader world—in the coming year. Look for more news on that front in the coming weeks.

Hope for the Future

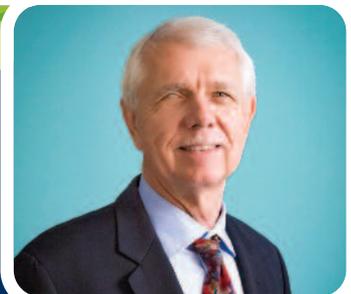
There is no doubt that we are in the midst of tremendous change. But there is one way to stay ahead of the curve on all these changes: Get involved and stay involved. I think an increasing number of you understand that. We're seeing more interest in leadership positions, people who want to contribute to shaping our industry going forward.

Speaking of the future state of the sign, graphics and visual communications industry, there are few programs that do that as well as the ISA Elite. This program brings up-and-coming industry leaders together for networking and training events. The connections in this year-long training initiative continue on.

I have always been a strong supporter of this event, but in 2019, one of the participants was from my company, Sign-Age of Tampa Bay. Ian Adair, a production specialist, has showcased the impact of this program. While Ian is getting the training, he is bringing that insight back to our offices. He is able to influence 17 others because of what he has been exposed to through the ISA Elite program.

As we look to the future, look around your staff and see who might be a good fit for the ISA Elite. Nominations will open soon at www.signs.org/isaelite. I promise you, it is an investment worth making because your company will reap many benefits.

The same could be said of deepening the participation in ISA and in planning to bring a team of people to ISA International Sign Expo 2020. The year may be two-thirds over, but we're all looking at ways to seize the rest of the year and to propel our companies—and our industry—well into the next decade.



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