

## A LOCAL BAHAMIAN COMPANY DOES MORE THAN YOU THINK

*Full building wrap using 3M vinyl on large format printer. Images on windows and doors use one-way vision vinyl.*

There is a building on Shirley Street that you cannot help but notice when you drive past it. Demanding your attention it attests that those working inside know what they are doing. And they do it well.

Welcome to **the SignMan**.

This 'colour revolution' is worth judging by its cover if you consider that the purpose of a sign is to make you stand out in a crowd. Known primarily for its elaborate banners, the company designs, fabricates and sells signs. However, once you step inside their showroom, it is quite clear that they are capable of satisfying much greater imaging needs. "We are solution-engineers, not order-takers," said SignMan's General Manager, Peter Bates.

His team works to create innovations, extending from project start (design) to finish (installation). This includes projects as small as 'Happy Birthday' banners to large-scale imaging projects such as overhauling a brand's image. Whether a client is in the market for promotional products, or redecoration complete with wall murals and decorative accents, they always say, 'yes we can'. The SignMan is an 'Imaging Center' in the truest sense.

The company opened its doors on May 15, 1990 with five employees. Born and cultivated by Bates, his wife, Kate and daughter, Cindy, the business grew out of 1200 square feet with one circular saw, a ladder and a van.

The SignMan made a name for itself in The Bahamas creating big, bold, exciting signs though they were not always quite as big as their present portfolio and exterior. The team was, and remains today, dedicated to engineering solutions for their clients. Bates remembers meeting every night to discuss how they were going to manufacture and deliver what they promised to their clients earlier that day. Despite the fact that the material they were working with at the time was relatively new, they managed to revolutionize the use of vinyl in The Bahamas on banners, boats and planes.

Then hardship and tragedy struck in 1998 when Cindy was diagnosed with cancer and the team lost her in early 1999. Bates makes no bones about the fact that the business survived because of the strength of the team.

"Everyone just filled in the gaps with work, support and love," he said.

Now, 10 years later, the company is stronger than ever, boasting fully-staffed design, graphics, production, paint, assembly, and installation departments.

As a member of the International Sign Association (ISA) and the SignBiz Network, the SignMan has access to hundreds of sign companies and business owners, keeping them on the cutting edge of product development, technology and pricing, making their capabilities extend well beyond their four walls on Shirley Street.

## ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

Perhaps of greatest importance is not what they design, manufacture and install, but how they do it, that is, how they construct 'solutions' for their clients' imaging problems.



*Flat cut-out letters and logo using CNC router. Painted and installed with studs. Wall design by The SignMan.*

Under the latest development regime at the airport, the SignMan has been responsible for implementing the wayfinding signage, that is, those signs which direct you to your desired destination, which, according to Nicole Henfield, Manager of Customer Experience for Nassau Airport Development (NAD), has been very successful. Henfield is very pleased with the relationship her company maintains with the SignMan.



*Printed vinyl insert using the VISTA sign frame system.*

"There has never been a time," she said, "when they have not been able to service the airport's imaging needs."

Though, problems do occur. Most recently, while installing some wayfinding signage, they had to grapple with the delima of not having any structure to place the sign to make it properly visible.

Henfield said, "They have gone out of their way and bent over backward to come up with a solution, going so far as to have it custom-made."

Michael Bain, administrative officer for all Commonwealth Bank branches, said, "everything from the smallest decal to their main monument signs have been designed, manufactured and installed by the SignMan."



*Monument and building logo and letters - formed plastic and stud mounted. Banner - large format printing. Enter-Exit signs CNS shaped and stencil painted - HDU.*

He, like Ms. Henfield, affirms the team's excellent customer service and said, "they are so efficient with their proofing process that it leaves little room for errors, always allowing Commonwealth Bank to receive its signage on time, exactly as promised."

A sign is often the finishing touch to a building. It identifies and seeks to make it stand out from its competitors making the SignMan and the architectural, design and construction industries are intrinsically connected and dependent on one another. The company has collaborated with architects many times to come up with ideas to enhance a building's image.

Jackson Burnside, a prominent Bahamian architect, has consulted and contracted the company on many occasions.

"They have consistently provided good technical assistance and advice," he said. "The group is always open and willing to satisfy their clients. They are prepared to ask the kinds of questions that provoke answers necessary to deliver solutions."



*Shaped using the CNC router and sandblasted High Density Urethane with aluminum welded frame and PVC lattice.*

After their latest collaboration included work on the Paradise Shopping Village's directory Burnside said, "My client was happy so I was happy."

## SHOWCASING INNOVATION

Engineering innovative solutions demands that the SignMan remain on the cutting edge and they are certainly up to the task.

The SignMan offers quite an expansive product range especially relevant to the architectural industry. The team is capable of designing, manufacturing and installing architectural sign systems that convey a professional image from the main monument sign to apartment door signs or even to office desk signs. It is possible to include directories, floor signage and wayfinding systems that are consistent with the brand as well. Serena Williams, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Fidelity Group, has managed the company's outdoor signage and in-bank display needs with the Signman for the last 15 years.



"They cannot be matched on product quality and all aspects of service, including excellent advice, based on their years of experience," she said. "When we re-branded from British American Bank to Fidelity Bank, I couldn't have had a better partner than the SignMan. It was a huge job involving more than one island and they did an excellent job."

In most cases, a company's vehicle gets an unnoticeable decal or two; the advertising space essentially goes unexploited. In 2005, the SignMan discovered a more modern and explosive version of the car decals they had been applying to vehicles since they first opened. Today, their vehicle wraps boast stunning digitally printed graphics that engulf a company's vehicle and act like a moving billboard. Studies done in the United States suggest that this



*Vehicle wrap using printed vinyl and one way vision vinyl.*



new form of promotion, so termed mobile advertising, is one of the most cost-effective forms of outdoor advertising, garnering thousands of impressions per day. You need not look far to see their quality work; it is all over Nassau - literally!

Their circular saw has all but disappeared, to be replaced with one of their greatest tools - their computer numeric control (CNC) router, which gives them stunning signage and decorative capabilities. Although they have had the router since 1994, it was retrofitted with a new tabletop in early 2009, which further enhanced its true three-dimensional contour routing capacity. It can etch images into tabletops, create wall mounted decorative accents and manufacture full three-dimensional signs. While the technology behind the machine can seem a bit confusing, the quality and exquisite work it produces cannot be disputed. This offers a world of possibilities to amplify creativity in the architecture and interior design industries. This machine makes it possible to customize, design and manufacture pieces that are unique to a building, room or theme. It would seem that the SignMan's limitations are only their clients' imaginations.

The SignMan prides itself on being on top of up and coming trends in the sign industry. At present, the company is on the brink of launching TV-based digital signage, which has the potential to once again revolutionize the sign industry in the Bahamas. LobbyPOP movies, a product line to be released within this package, are constructed using a template-based program that employs standardized industry information to create unique infomercials. Essentially, it seeks to transform waiting areas and lobbies into 'edu-tainment centers', providing customers with quality entertainment while also educating them about a company's available products and services. They intend to pair this with deco-advertising, which would involve interior design and other forms of signage such as wall murals, floor displays and promotional banners and posters. The launch of this 'Digital Revolution' as they have termed it, will be further testament to the fact that the SignMan remains on the cutting edge of its industry and is still a leader in its field.

It has been almost 20 years since it opened and much has changed for the SignMan - its product line, capabilities and



*Large format printed banner installed using a Ackland stretch aluminum frame.*

physical plant have all grown tremendously. The company's dedication to creating smart, innovative solutions for their clients' imaging needs while maintaining an exceptional customer service rapport, however, remains much the same.

Surrounded by hundreds of examples, their 'Colour Revolution' signage certainly demonstrates that they know how to stand out in a crowd and their portfolio suggests that they are more than capable of extending that service to their clients.





Three levels routed then sand blasted and assembled into custom aluminum frame base.

Custom shaped and air-brushed acrylic substrate with Flat Cut-Out acrylic letters attached with spacers.

Channel letters internally illuminated with white LED lights.



Lettering is Flat Cut-Out Stainless Steel with polished Nu-Gold finish. Logo graphic is etched and detail in filled black. Mounted onto custom wooden framed board.

Three layers of dimensional shapes engraved for colour separation and then painted and assembled.



Corner accented piece cut out of 2" HDU using the CNC router.

