

# FRONT-END OVERHAUL



## I know what you're thinking: 'That is one ugly billboard'

by Gabe Trahan

Here's the thing. With the exception of my photo and the name of the store, what's pictured below is very close to a mirror image of a prototype billboard that a member sent asking my opinion. You probably agree with me that it's not just my hair that makes this board bad.

Don't get me wrong. I like billboards! I just don't like this one. Billboards are a form of marketing. When selling any form of marketing or advertising, project designers need to make a decision. Do they make the ad flattering by focusing on the store and the store owner, or try to compel people who see the ad to become new customers?

Ads that flatter the client are not only easy to write, they're even easier to sell. Who doesn't want their photo on a giant billboard for everyone to see? Heck, I'm surprised they didn't tell the owner to put photos of his children on the board – that would've been a slam-dunk sale. It takes 10 minutes or less to write a flattering ad. Ask how long they have been in business and if they offer good customer service, mention that the store is locally owned, slap on a phone number, and you're good to go!

Good to go nowhere, that is.

Notice that the year the store was first opened is mentioned twice. It's great that the store has been around for 63 years, but that one fact does not rattle people's bones enough to make them change their pharmacy shopping habits. "Local" and "locally" also get a big mention, but it's not telling us the clear benefits of choosing locally owned.

If you are driving 40 miles per hour, you are going to be able to read

about nine words on a billboard. Here are some guidelines on designing billboards. Keep it short and compelling. Forget putting your full address on the board as the town or city name will do. Do not clutter up the board with a phone number. If people want to find you, they will Google you. The photo you use for the billboard should be of a staff member consulting a customer. In as few words as possible, describe how your store will create a better experience for anyone who chooses your pharmacy. Something like, "We will be a partner in your good health," or "We make time to answer all of your questions." They are both more compelling than "Est. 1955." Use a font that is easy to read. I recommend blue highway with white colors on a dark background.

Find a billboard location that you can easily afford. Traffic count can run up the cost. A well-worded board with few hundred cars going by a day is a much better investment than a cluttered board with 10,000 cars going by a day. Here's one more thing. Don't get too excited when someone on the street mentions seeing your photo on a billboard. Instead, get excited when someone comes in your store to become a customer and mentions seeing you on your billboard. ■

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