

LYN M. FALK ON STORE DESIGN

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

You only get one chance to wow new customers. Make the most of it!

Never underestimate the value of your storefront when it comes to making a good first impression. Potential customers will form an opinion of your business before they ever put a foot inside, based on how it looks.

Your exterior should reflect your brand, attract attention and motivate people to enter.

Here's a list of the items to check when looking at your storefront. If you have additional entrances, these apply to all!

✔ Landscaping — Is everything well maintained?

✔ Finishes — Do they reflect your brand color and style?

✔ Signs — Are they in good shape and properly located?

✔ Lighting — Are the façade, main sign and window displays illuminated to attract attention from afar?

✔ Parking area — Is it clearly marked and free of debris and garbage?

✔ Music/aroma — Can you pipe outside to initiate a sensory experience?

✔ Decorations — Do they reflect your brand and make a statement?

✔ Window displays — Are they conversation worthy?

✔ Overall image — Is the current “look” what you want to convey?

✔ Building maintenance — Does everything look fresh?

✔ Entrance door/handle — This is the first point of physical interaction. Is it memorable?

If you answered “no” to any of the above and/or want to otherwise improve your storefront, follow this advice:



Bone-shaped door handles at Wet Nose in Geneva, IL, greet customers.

SIGNS, SIGNS

If you have vehicle traffic going past your storefront, make sure your sign is high. Have a smaller sign at eye level for pedestrian traffic. Always include your hours, website, and social media icons on the front door or window. Do *not* use adhesive tape to hang signs; instead, choose acrylic sign holders.

LIGHT IT UP

The right amount and type of lighting is imperative to attracting attention after the sun sets. If you're located on a street that stays active after you close, keep the lights that illuminate your façade and



Store signage at DOGPerfect in Lakewood Ranch, FL, catches the eye during the day and after dark.

window displays on a timer until traffic slows. Consider wall sconces to highlight architectural elements, or add pendant lights in front of your store's entrance.

VERY IMPORTANT PETS

When looking at your parking area, can you identify spots where signage would make VIP guests feel special? If you have a “drop-off/pick-up” zone, highlight the area with fun branded signage, and paint the sidewalk or parking spot a different color.



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DECORATIONS

Decorative accessories can be a defining factor when it comes to showcasing your brand outside. Bring your store's colors and “personality” into outdoor seating, planters, awnings, flags/banners, artwork and door handles.

Your storefront is a visual billboard for your brand. Since you only get one chance to make a first impression, make it great and make it memorable.

true tales



LUCKY PUP!

A staff member picked up a loose dog in the middle of a rural road. She knew the dog looked familiar, but couldn't place him. She took him to the local SPCA, where he was scanned for a microchip. Turns out, he was a dog who frequently comes to day care! The owners had not updated their contact information with the microchip company, but we fortunately did have updated information and were able to get them reunited. — **Jennifer Hall, All Things Pawssible, Charlottesville, VA**

pet peeves / ANONYMOUS VENTINGS FROM PET BUSINESS OWNERS AND TOP MANAGERS

CUSTOMER MATH

Customer: But this food isn't any cheaper than the prescription food from the vet. Me: this is a 25-pound bag. The prescription food you were buying was an 8-pound bag. Customer: Well, it's the *same price!* I'm not saving anything. Me: It's *simple math.* Why can't you understand that?!