



10 Things to Know

Before Buying an LED Sign



Summary

The decision to invest in an LED sign should be driven by the business or organizational objectives you hope that investment will yield. An informed buyer can learn the right questions to ask and what features to consider. You might think this process is complex. Not to worry. Here are a few basic guidelines, some good questions to ask and a few things to look for that can help you make the decision with confidence.

“10 Things” OVERVIEW

1. What is an LED sign?
2. How does an LED sign work?
3. Who should consider investing in an LED sign?
4. How do LED signs compare to other forms of advertising?
5. How do I choose the right LED sign?
6. How much should I budget for an LED sign?
7. How do I choose a local sign partner?
8. After I've chosen an LED sign partner, what's next?
9. Why should I consider Watchfire LED signs?
10. If I'm interested, how do I move forward?

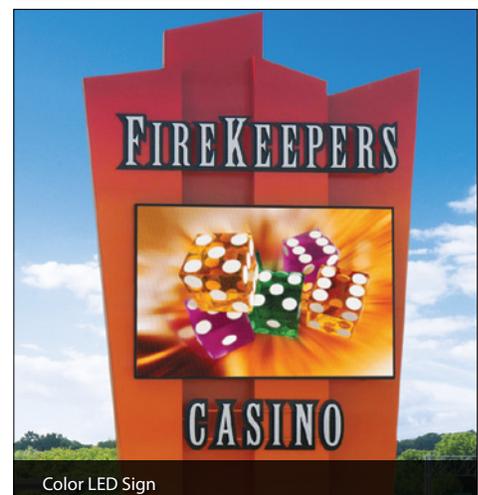
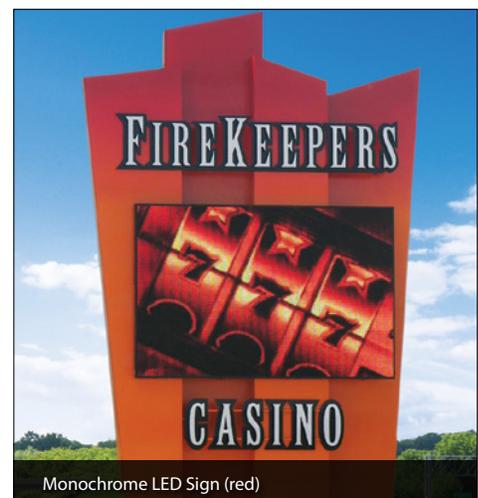
1. What is an LED Sign?

An LED (light emitting diode) is an efficient, effective and ultrabright alternative to incandescent light bulbs. Unlike traditional light bulbs, LEDs do not burn out because there is no filament. Instead they slowly dim over a long period of time (about 100,000 hours or 11+ years).

An LED sign is made up of individual panels — also called “modules” — that are about 12" square. The modular design allows the signs to be configured to almost any size. LED signs are typically double-sided and are available in monochrome or full color.

LED signs are usually one component in a larger sign structure, as in the examples shown here. Messages can be programmed and scheduled easily using software installed on the computer that controls the sign.

Each module of an LED sign contains LEDs arranged in “pixels”. A high-quality color sign will typically have three LEDs per pixel: one red, one green and one blue. The distance between pixels determines the resolution of the sign. The closer pixels are together, the higher the resolution, or image quality, of the LED sign.



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2. How Does an LED Sign Work?

An LED sign works through a standard PC that connects to the sign via one of these four methods:

- Wireless radio (RWF or high-security)
- Broadband wireless or DSL
- Fiber optic
- Phone modem

A high-quality LED sign will come with easy-to-use software that allows the user to create, schedule and update messages on the sign. The sign owner or a designated staff member will often manage the advertising featured on the LED sign. That person will choose and arrange text and images for each sign message. Once created, messages can be scheduled and updated right away or weeks or months in advance. Custom artwork and original ads can all be part of the messaging mix.

3. Who Should Consider Investing in an LED Sign?

If your business or organization is visible from the highway or a busy street — whether it’s vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic or both — you should consider advertising with an LED sign. In addition, if you are already investing in more

expensive advertising to reach potential customers, you should consider an LED sign. What’s more expensive, you ask? Read on.

4. How Do LED Signs Compare to Other Forms of Advertising?

Just look at how LED signs stack up. Compare an LED sign in terms of the number of impressions, cost per impression and how much it costs on a per-day basis. It beats newspaper, yellow pages and radio hands down. And only with an LED sign can you change your message instantaneously. LED signs can be used to quickly reduce inventory or boost site-specific and time-specific sales — perfect for a restaurant that wants to clear out perishable food items by offering a limited-time special, for instance.

Yellow Pages	Radio	Newspaper	Watchfire Sign
Full-Page Ad 4,000[†]	Average Daily Audience 11,600	Sunday Readership 17,000	Passing Motorists 34,600
\$2.25 per 100 impressions	\$1.33 per 100 impressions	\$2.26 per 100 impressions	\$0.03-\$0.06 per 100 impressions
\$90* a day	\$154* a day	\$384* a day	\$10 to \$20 a day

* Typical or average prices shown

† Based on 1/10th of population accessing daily



“Since we installed our Watchfire LED Sign, we’ve been able to cut our advertising budget by an astounding 60%! We’ve really enjoyed successful fundraising efforts, particularly our annual spring raffle. I believe this is due in large part to the strategic placement of the LED sign on the school grounds.”

- Jeanne Mulvaney,
Director of Development at Schlarman High School

5. How Do I Choose the Right LED Sign?

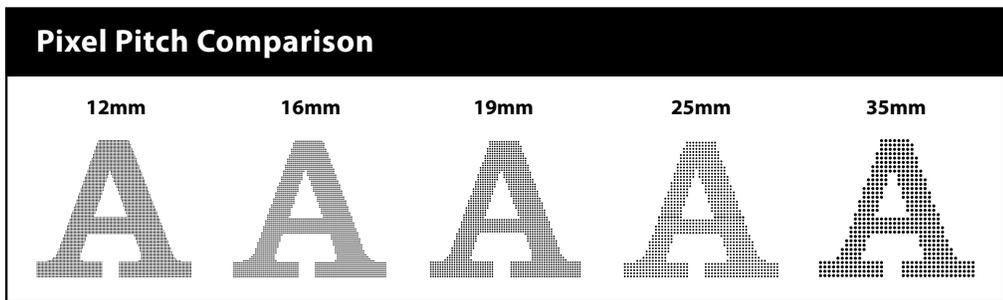
As you learn more about LED signs, a local sign dealer will be a valuable source of information, but here are a few items to consider right away:

Display size

- How far will viewers be from your LED sign?
- At what speed will traffic pass your sign?
- How can you maximize the visual impact of your signage in a competitive market?
- Will a new LED sign fit with your current sign structure?
- Do local ordinances set limits on the size of your LED sign?

Pixel pitch

- Will the resolution be high enough for viewers to see and respond to your advertising?
- If you plan to feature images, will the sign show the level of detail you want?



Tighter pixels (e.g., 12 or 16mm) are more expensive, but create a more vivid experience when viewers are typically closer to your sign. Pixels that are more spread out are less expensive and work well when viewing from a long distance, such as from the highway.

Color or monochrome

- Will the products or services you want to advertise work best in color?
- What are your sign's surroundings?
- How will color or monochrome stand out?

Here's a helpful guide as you consider which LED sign will work best for you:

Color Sign Selection Chart — By Pitch					
My most important feature is:	12mm	16mm	19mm	25mm	35mm
Price/Square Foot	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Distance Viewing	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Image Quality/Color Depth	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Display of Small Characters	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Display of Large Characters	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴

Monochrome Sign Selection Chart — By Pitch		
My most important feature is:	19mm	35mm
Price/Square Foot	🔴	🔴
Distance Viewing	🔴	🔴
Image Quality/Shading Levels	🔴	🔴
Display of Small Characters	🔴	🔴
Display of Large Characters	🔴	🔴

LEGEND		
🔴	🔴	🔴
Good	Better	Best

6. How Much Should I Budget for an LED Sign?

Your LED sign purchase will involve several variables: sign size, color and display features, among others. Each of these will impact the total price tag. In general, though, the price of an LED sign is primarily driven by LED quality, density and color. The price of a quality product will usually run between \$10,000 for a small, basic sign to as much as \$300,000 for a large full-color video display.

Many business owners just beginning to learn about digital signage may be surprised at the investment required. But once they understand that LED signs provide timely,

relevant, effective advertising, build their customer base, and provide quick, consistent return on investment, the wisdom of a digital sign purchase becomes clear. As a business owner becomes more educated about the features a quality product should include — fully encapsulated modules, all-aluminum cabinets, energy-efficient design, easy-to-use software, rigorous quality testing, personalized service and solid warranty protection — they will also understand that there is more to making a sound, smart LED sign investment than just the initial price tag.

7. How Do I Choose a Local Sign Partner?

Watchfire sells LED signs through a network of experienced custom sign companies. It's our goal to help you form a relationship with your local sign company for a few reasons:

- Your local sign partner will be ready to help you navigate your local zoning and permitting process.
- Your local sign company will help you shape the overall structural design of your signage, including the LED sign.
- At installation, your local sign company will be on-site to lend their expertise and answer your questions.
- After your sign is in place, your local sign company will be available to help, should a service issue or question arise.

To select a local sign partner to talk with about your LED sign purchase, you might want to start with a manufacturer you trust. They should be able to provide a list of trained, experienced, reliable dealers who can help you shape your LED sign investment strategy right out of the gate. Be sure to ask for references and to see signs installed in the field. Perform your due diligence and you'll have a valued partner for the life of your sign.

8. After I've Chosen an LED Sign Partner, What's Next?

A brief overview of the process looks like this:

1. Determine the specifications of your size, color, position and pixels.
2. Coordinate price quotes with your local sign partner.
3. Consider a factory tour. The knowledge you gain can be valuable.
4. Seek references. Check them.
5. Take jobsite photos. Photos will help your sign partner create a rendering of the new sign that will complement your business.
6. Finalize the sign design.
7. Place your order.
8. 4-6 week turnaround is typical for US-based manufacturers.
9. The local company will install your sign.
10. LED sign manufacturer provides software-training basics.

9. Why Should I Consider Watchfire LED Signs?

An LED sign is not only a smart advertising investment, it's an investment in your connection with your customers. Watchfire maximizes the return on your investment by making the best-looking signs on "Main Street." Watchfire LED signs can help your business grow. Here's how:

- We manufacture the best looking, most reliable, high performance LED signs in the industry.
- Watchfire LED signs are flexible point-of-purchase advertising tools that help you drive traffic and increase your customer base.
- Our signs are sold exclusively through our network of expert custom sign companies, giving you a local partner dedicated to earning — and keeping — your business.
- Our Ignite® Graphics Software makes sign updating quick and easy. It lets you create, schedule and update your advertising from one simple program.
- We design, engineer and manufacture our LED signs, start to finish, in our Danville, IL headquarters.
- Watchfire has over 40,000 LED signs in daily operation worldwide.

10. If I'm Interested, How Do I Move Forward?

Give us a call today. We'll be happy to:

- Refer you to a trusted local sign dealer.
- Offer you initial budget and spec guidance.
- Send you a FREE traffic analysis, to help you understand what impact an LED sign can have at your location.

Call Watchfire at 800-637-2645 or learn more at watchfiresigns.com.

