

INTEGRATED SIGNAGE

No theater can be complete without some form of signage. Whether mounted along the face of the building to promote the brand name, positioned above the concession stand to draw extra attention, or to announce the movies playing in each auditorium, signage plays an important role in getting the message across. We typically associate signage with identifying a product or brand, providing information or direction, or to simply reinforce the obvious. Although these are the very basic applications for signage, if developed and integrated into an overall design concept, signage can elude far greater effects by supporting an experience, provoking emotion and creating anticipation for movie-goers.

INTEGRATION

Signage should also reinforce a design concept and the desired look and feel of a particular space or feature. To do so, it must integrate with the architectural design. A poorly-thought-out use of signage – often resulting from incorporating signage as an afterthought to a fully-developed design concept – can significantly detract from the overall quality and perception of the space or feature the signage is referencing. For this reason, the integration process should begin at the preliminary design stages of a project, with the final product being a collaboration between the architect and signage-designer.

“[Theater] signage should harmonize with the mood of the space being promoted, being treated as an extension of what it serves to identify.”


Several factors should be considered when developing signage into a design concept: the size of lettering or images, fabrication materials, also color and lighting, should all be evaluated when incorporating signage elements into a design. Each feature impacts upon the overall effectiveness of the signage and the role played in enhancing the patron-experience.

How do you know if your theater’s signs actually work? JKR Partners’ **Paul Georges & Robert McCall** examine, in outline, how exhibitors can extract the very best from their cinema signage.

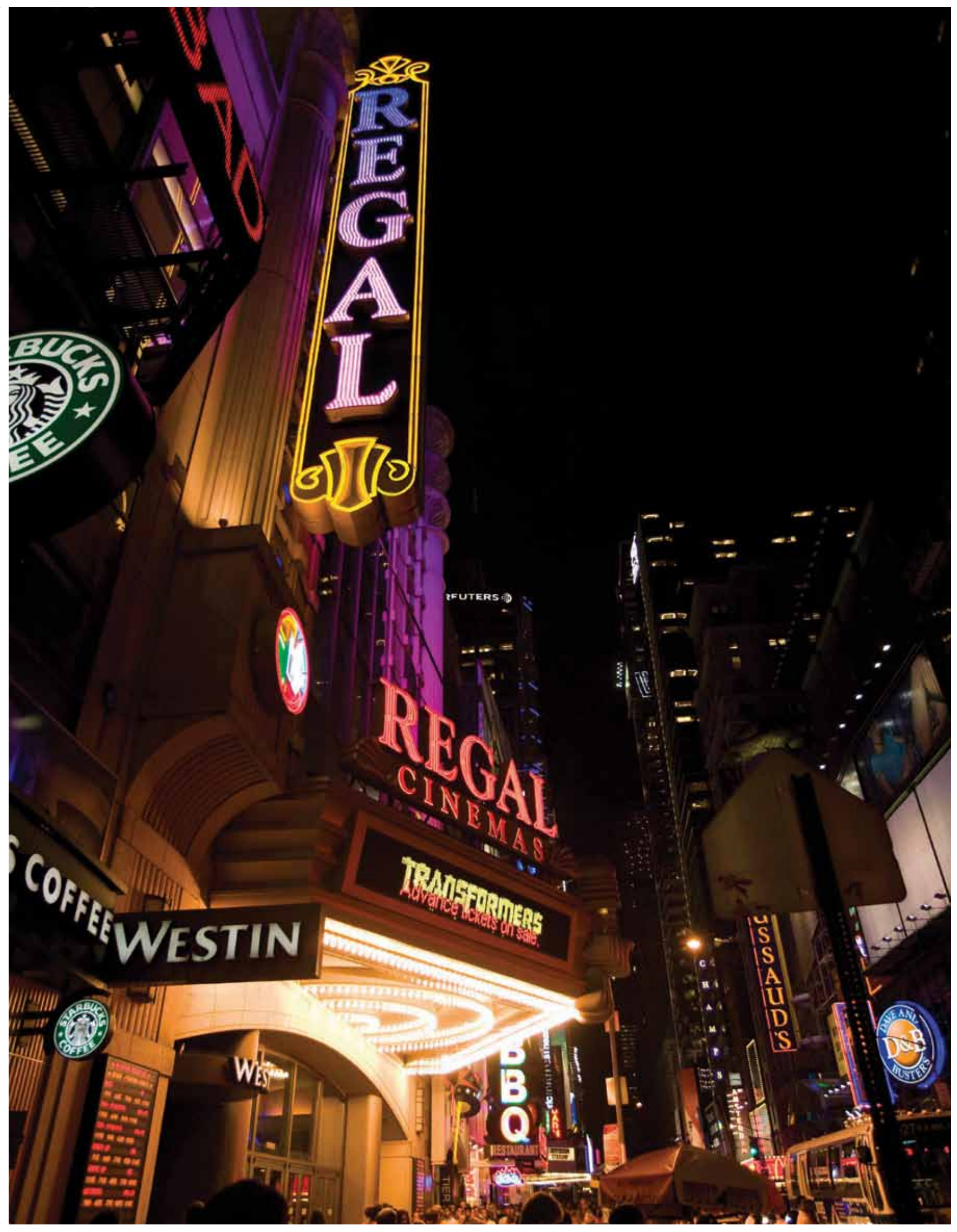
IMPACT, AMBIENCE

The overall impact of any use of signage should be in harmony with the mood of the space, the amenity offered, or the experience the signage is promoting. For example, a premium seating lounge area should be identified with a sophisticated palette of finishes and details corresponding to the more luxurious space created for the premium guest. Also, the scale and impact of signage to identify the premium large screen-format auditorium should serve as a prelude to the movie presentation experience to follow. In either case, the signage should be treated as an extension of what it serves to identify.

Signage can also enhance a visual display, often achieved through the introduction of “movement.” This can be accomplished by a changing data display along a digital display-board for informational purposes, or by incorporating programmable color-changing LED lighting systems as part of the signage element, and thus creating a theatrical environment. Color-changing lighting is especially effective in altering the character and mood of a space and for stimulating emotion and excitement from your guests.

We experience signage every day and are aware of its importance. As designers, we look for ways for signage to serve beyond its basic purpose. When integrated with a design concept, signage can reinforce, as well as enhance, your patrons’ movie-going experience, with the overall objective of creating a venue that will serve to leave guests thinking about their next visit. 

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