

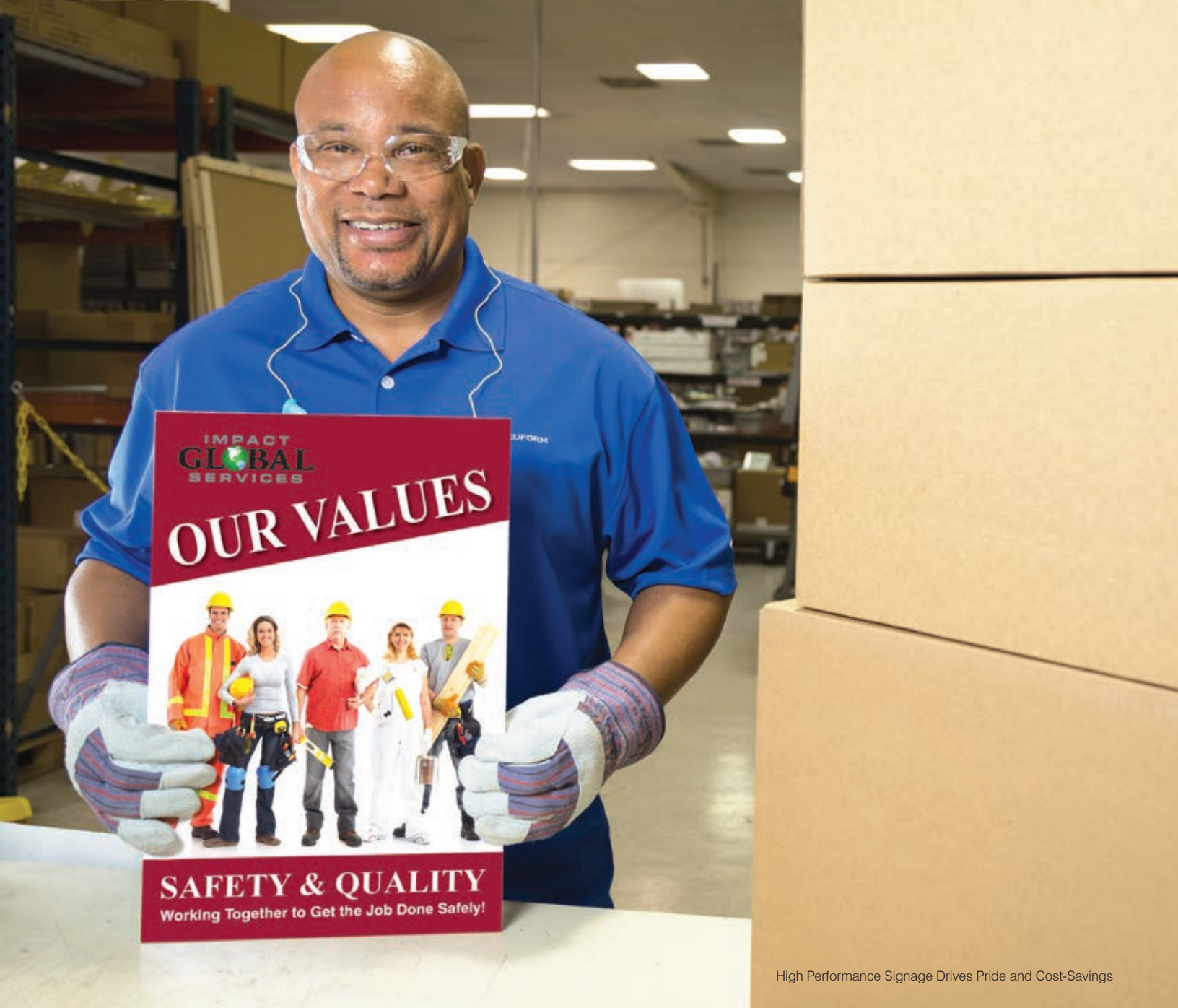
# The Cost of Ownership

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YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR



**ACCUFORM**<sup>®</sup>  
Justrite Safety Group



High Performance Signage Drives Pride and Cost-Savings

# The Value of High Performance Signage

Safety signs are lifesavers, and also the most visible, daily artifacts of your company's safety culture. Their value cannot be overstated.

Take one of the most ubiquitous signs: the EXIT sign. When workers, visitors, vendors, etc. enter your factory floors, warehouse, or offices, the first thing they should look for is how to exit in an emergency. OSHA and NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) requirements

call for EXIT signs to be clearly marked and unobstructed.

And safety signs placed throughout a facility signs can prevent serious injuries and fatalities. PPE (personal protective equipment) signs alert workers and visitors to hazards, and require workers to take precautions, such as using safety eyewear, gloves, respirators, hearing protectors, and hard hats before entering hazardous areas.



Many other safety signs provide similar “high stakes” protection: DANGER FLAMMABLE, BIOHAZARDS, DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE, DANGER CONFINED SPACE, FORKLIFT TRAFFIC, HAZARDOUS MACHINERY, AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY, AND WARNING: SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS AREA.

OSHA definitions spell out the high stakes: DANGER: imminent threat of serious injury or death; WARNING: potential danger of serious injury or death; CAUTION: potential danger of injury.

Your workplace safety officers can't be everywhere monitoring machinery, electrical panels, aisles, forklift zones, hazardous waste areas, and potentially slippery surfaces. Signage is proactive: It alerts and warns workers before hazards are encountered.

## Signs of a strong safety culture

A facility where high-performance safety signs are posted wherever needed and are highly visible represents a foundation of a strong safety culture. Clear and consistent communication is essential for a safety culture to be respected and trusted by workers and visitors.

On the other hand, signs that are flimsy, such as those made of styrene, that don't hold up to physical demands, or signs that are old, cracked or peeling, with colors fading and lettering hard to read – what does that indicate to your workforce? That safety is not valued in this workplace.

Use of high-performance safety signage is a constant reminder to workers that your company truly values safety and backs it up with long-term investments. It is “everyday evidence” that your leadership is not running a safety program on the cheap, making minimal investments for minimal compliance.

“Doing the minimum” with safety signs that are obviously worn and outdated can lead to a less alert and attentive workforce that is

more likely to not wear required PPE, discount the chances for injury and emergencies, and ignore DANGER and CAUTION warnings.

So although a lower-quality sign is cheaper up front, you get what you pay for – and could pay more in the long run.

In contrast, high-performance safety signage uses materials such as aluminum, fiberglass, polyethylene or polycarbonate to resist color change, chemicals, corrosion, and abrasions. They come with up to 15-year durability guarantees, and will continue to look good for years while maintaining superior strength. Heavy-duty construction provides a rugged and stylish appearance, with thick-edge design and industrial-strength backing. The legend and message of some high-performance signs can be reverse-printed with UV-resistant inks inscribed on a subsurface sealed with permanently bonded, laminated protection. Signs won't crack, chip or become brittle under extreme environments, either indoors or outdoors. They withstand temperature ranges as much as -60° to 260°F.

## Total Cost of Ownership

Purchasing high-performance safety signage should take into account the total cost of ownership (TCO), which considers both direct and indirect costs over time. It places a single value on the complete life cycle of a purchase, and highlights the difference between purchase price and long-term cost. However, all of the cost categories might not be apparent to busy, hurried purchasers. For example, the total cost of owning a vehicle includes fuel costs (fuel mileage), repairs, maintenance costs and downtime costs. Obviously, the more your car is in the shop, the more inconvenienced you are as the owner. A direct cost consequence might be the need to rent a replacement vehicle. Indirect costs can be your disrupted schedule and time lost to going back and forth for repairs.





Choosing the right material for the right environment can go a long ways towards reducing ongoing costs.

Total Cost of Ownership resembles an iceberg. Your purchasing price may only be the tip of the iceberg. The bulk of the iceberg – and the total costs of ownership – is hidden beneath the surface. For example, Swiss industrial fastener supplier Brossard uses “the rule of 15-85.” The visible, initial price of the fastener makes up only around 15 percent of the total costs. The remaining 85 percent of costs come from sourcing, ordering and stocking the fastener; pre-assembly and assembly; and regularly inspecting for quality.

Total Cost of Ownership for safety signage can be calculated the same way. There are the direct costs of the initial purchase price, and long-term the costs of cleaning, maintenance and repairs, and replacement. A thin plastic sign won't last long in a windy outdoor environment and might be hard to read, and OSHA requires safety signs to be clear and visible. High-performance signs require less maintenance and repair to meet OSHA requirements and less administrative cost, and their durable construction means they last longer and are replaced less often.

Another direct cost of safety signage ownership: the significant costs of accidents, injuries or worse if signs have been destroyed by harsh conditions or are illegible due to cracks, peeling and faded lettering.

Signs that are in disrepair, are neglected and fail to communicate can also lead to the direct costs of OSHA citations and fines.

The indirect costs of owning safety signage are more difficult to calculate, but cannot be ignored. Safety signs are often the

first expression of a company's safety culture that workers and visitors see on a daily basis. Inexpensive signs that are more easily damaged or go missing can negatively affect worker safety attitudes, make workers more likely to take risks and ignore hazards, and create the impression that “the company really doesn't care much about safety.” Such a perception might also erode employee trust in leadership, as well as in morale, loyalty, quality of work and productivity.

The quality of high-performance safety products, including signage, conveys to workers the value that their employer places on keeping them out of harm's way. And in a strong safety culture, safety is a value, not a priority. Priorities come and go and change with the times. Values endure. It's worth considering the direct and indirect costs – the total cost of ownership – of your safety purchasing decisions.

High performance starts at Accuform. We're ready to provide you with products that will last. For more information, visit [www.Accuform.com](http://www.Accuform.com) or call 1-800-237-1001.

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