

What's it cost to produce this 30-by-60-in. entry sign?

A little dimension and an interesting panel shape adds a lot of appeal

By Chris Lovelady

Materials:

One sheet of 3/4-in. PVC board..... \$173
One sheet of 1/2-in. PVC board..... \$129
2-by-4-ft. of 1-in. HDU board..... \$70
Paint, adhesive, etc..... \$75
Total materials..... \$447
Typical markup on materials is 70 to 100%.

Labor:

Router-cut components..... 60 minutes
Carve lion..... 120 minutes
Finishing..... 135 minutes
Assembly..... 105 minutes
Total time..... 7 hours

In a world full of flat signs, adding a 3D graphic and/or letters can add a lot of kick to a sign. It gives you that extra bit of visual appeal that draws and keeps people's attention.

Another way to help set a sign apart is to give it a unique shape. Cutting the sign panel to an interesting shape is one of those things that doesn't take a lot of time but also adds interest. It sure beats a plain old rectangle. We cut the panel to shape on over half of the signs we make—whether they are flat signs or 3D projects.

I used both of these approaches on this 30-by-60-in. sign for a church ministry outreach center. I wanted to do a sign that was interesting and appealing, yet practical to produce at the same time.

Durability was important, too, so I chose materials and finishes that I knew offered longevity. This sign should see many years of use before it needs refinished or replaced.

I cut the letters and the components of the

lion's head on a CNC router, but I hand carved the details. I knew the look I wanted and it was easy to carve once the layers had been cut to shape. The overall depth of the carved panel is about 2 1/2 inches.

It's easy to use a lot of dimension and cool effects when there's a hefty budget for a sign, but more often than not we're faced with a limited budget. Adding a 3D graphic and/or letters can be a great—and viable—solution. **SC**



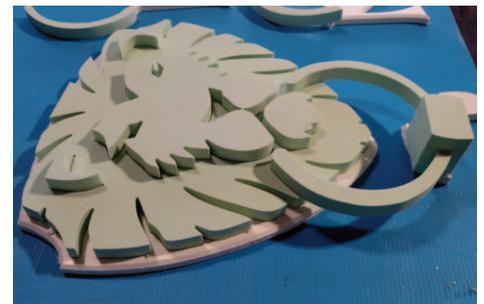
Chris and Debi Lovelady's shop, Vital Signs LLC, is in Thomasville, Georgia.



Router-cut components: 1 hour The letter components for the lion's head were cut to shape on a CNC router. The letters were cut from 1/2-in. Sintra PVC board [www.graphicdisplayusa.com]. For the lion's head, I started with a backer of 1/2-in. Sintra PVC board to give me the rigidity I wanted. I routed an inset to accept the next layer, the mane, which was 1-in. Precision Board HDU board [www.precisionboard.com].



I did the same thing on the mane layer, routing an inset to accept the face components, which were also cut from 1-in. HDU.



Assemble lion's head: 30 minutes I used construction adhesive to bond the layers together. I drove a few short finish nails through the PVC board from the back so that they stuck out the front. I put down the construction adhesive and pressed the mane layer down onto the finish nails. Then I tapped finish nails into the HDU and clipped the heads off so that about 1/4-in. was protruding. Then I applied more adhesive and pressed the next piece into position.



Carve the lion: 2 hours Using chisels and a mallet, I carved the details on the lion's face and mane.



Finish the lion: 45 minutes Once the lion was carved, we painted it with Nova acrylic paint [www.novacolorpaint.com]. The gold ring is Nova Royal Metallic Gold paint.



Finish letters and panel: 90 minutes The letters were finished with Nova acrylic paint. The sign panel was cut from a 4-by-8-ft. sheet of 3/4-in. Sintra PVC board then finished with Sherwin Williams Superpaint. We taped off and painted the panel and border with Nova acrylic paint.



Assemble and complete the sign: 75 minutes Once the components were cut and finished, we mounted the letters on the panel using VHB tape. I hand lettered the secondary copy with Nova acrylic paint.

