

allsignspointtogreen.com

Changing the ecology of signs...

December 11th, 2009 --> Business Plan

The Business

Allsignspointtgreen.com is a website for the sign maker, designer, and client alike, who want ecologically friendly options when choosing signage for their business or event. The portal operates as a synthesis between a supply chain chart and a telephone directory. This allows visitors to establish the "what's" and "how's" to their sign project, using minimal effort. It also enables them to find the vendor they need, capable of achieving the goals they put forth.

Allsignspointtgreen.com will establish itself as a leader in the emerging sustainable sign industry. By bringing graphic designers, sign makers and producers together and then creating a user-experience as simple as buying a plane ticket, allsignspointtgreen.com will not only create the model for sustainability today, but also the model for business in the sign industry tomorrow.

By serving as knowledge-brokers, allsignspointtgreen.com will become the destination for all your sustainable sign information and consultation. It will not only inform an inquirer how to acquire certain sustainable materials, but also what materials and methods are best for their sustainable sign project and where best to acquire them.

Allsignspointtgreen.com will be powered by two very driven partners, Thomas Sebazco and Noble Cumming. They are concerned with searching for better and more user-friendly ways to bring sustainability to the sign industry, so that it can stay for good, displacing the current, unsustainable model.

Allsignspointtgreen.com promises to be a low-overhead, profitable business with guaranteed growth and significant potential for future investment opportunities.



A Sign of the Times

Signs, no matter what their use, are an integral part of the business landscape. Even in the era of on-line commerce, it is hard to conceive of a successful business without a sign (speakeasies non-withstanding). In fact, a recent study by San Diego State University, found that visible street signage can increase a business' revenue up to 15%. While the principles of sign design have stayed roughly the same, technology has fundamentally changed the methods of production over the last 2 decades.

Alas, for all the changes, ecology has only recently become a driver of signage innovation. Part of the reason for this is durability. Signs need to hold up in many environments and weather conditions. Another reason is financial. It is hard for sign shops to gauge a return-on-investment in signs, due to the small scale and short turnaround of an average project. Factoring just these two reasons, means that the average sign maker is going to focus on getting the cheapest materials which require the least labor to apply and can last the longest in multiple conditions. That means vinyl.

Currently, the predominant method for sign production is adhesive backed vinyl with solvent-based printing. Though terrible for the environment, it is an improvement on the former materials used by sign makers. The need for durable signs, in the past, led to paints containing high levels of V.O.C.s. As a result, many sign painters who were subjected to such chemicals during the sign making process, often developed an array of health problems. Still, vinyl does contain V.O.C.s and multiple endocrine disrupters. It's manufacturing process is also quite toxic. Most vinyl for signage is produced in countries with poor environmental standards.

In the last couple of years, a number of eco-products have arrived on the scene, some more ecologically friendly than others, all claiming to be good for the environment. As with any sector, these claims run the gamut from truly sustainable, to just plain greenwashing. In response to these new products, various eco sign makers have emerged and several have added eco options to their existing services. Still, of the estimated 17,000+ sign businesses in the US, eco-friendly shops are currently in the minority. Eco-friendly options are clearly not the main focus of the sign industry.



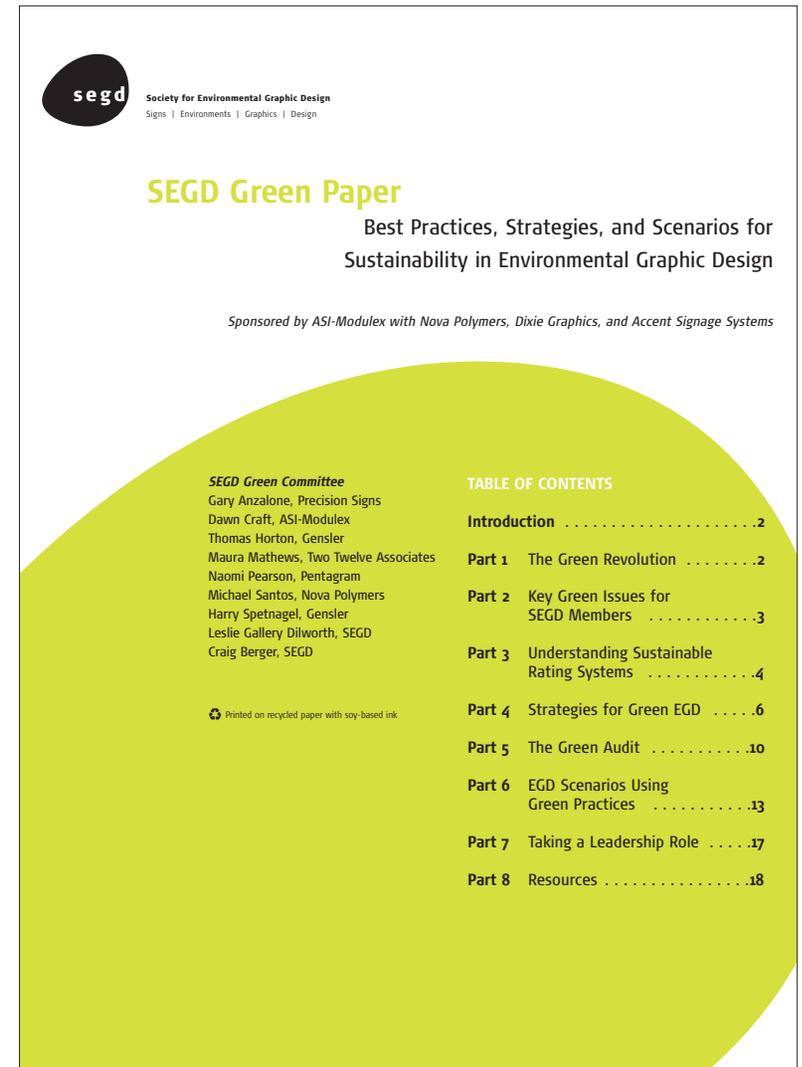
A Sign of the Times, continued...

Many people in the graphic design industry specialize in environmental graphics. Of them, some do try to address sustainability. Probably the most authoritative piece on the subject, the Society of Environmental Graphic Designers' Green Paper, was published in 2007. Together with its online companion, the web-based SEGD Green Resource Guide, the two are aimed at developing and sharing "best practices" for sustainable environmental graphics. However, while the Green Paper is well made, the guide is little more than a personal blog, intended for a professional audience.

On the side of the sign manufacturing, ecosignage.org is intended as a source of "viable eco-resources and green initiatives for signage". Created by the owners of the national franchise Signbiz, it works like a phone book, giving interested parties a list of product overviews and information. However, the site is not well maintained and the information within may no longer be useful.

Few groups are talking. Ask the average sign vendor about eco-friendly sign options and unfortunately, they'll have very little to share. Only after an exhaustive online search, do references to the aforementioned sources begin to surface. No system of standards for products exists and information on eco-products must be sought by the customer, whether vendor, client or designer. LEED certification is oft mentioned, but in its present state, the LEED process means little to those not involved with architecture.

Even as a trade, little data exists in general on the sign making industry. This is a problem. The time is ripe for a source that can bring the sign industry into the 21st century and provide the information needed to propel it in the right direction.



December 6, 2009

The Mission

Allsignspointtogreen.com is dedicated to driving sustainability in the realm of sign design and production. It strives to be both the catalyst and the recognized leader in the sign industry as it emerges as a model of sustainability for the world.

3 basic principles drive allsignspointtogreen.com

- 1--> Designers and sign makers need to communicate.
- 2--> Sustainability must work in principle and in action.
- 3--> Together, clients and vendors can drive the change that is needed to green the sign industry.

Though allsignspointtogreen.com is driven strongly by values, it is still a business and has its feet firmly planted in an ever-growing business sector. However, those values are going to be the lifeblood of the business. They will help maintain focus as various techniques are utilized to cause significant change in the sign industry.

Who is in charge?

Noble Cumming is a Brooklyn-based Graphic Designer, specializing in Branding and Identities, Conceptual Design, Packaging, Signage, Publications and Production Direction.

With over 12 years of experience, He worked as a sign maker, printer, and production artist before attending Design School. Since then, he has created design and branding for companies including Coca-Cola, Starwood Brands, Club-Med, Mercedes-Benz, Lexus and Asahi Beer. His experience and knowledge of sustainable design makes him adaptable to many environments.

Thomas Sebazzo is a Queens-based Art Director, Sculptor and Businessman. His expertise in material sourcing and fabrication makes him invaluable in build-out scenarios.

His long resumé includes managing a Real Estate Investment Firm, directing the Miss Texas Pageant and more recently, designing web sites. He currently manages the business half of Silverflower Landscape Architecture and Fine Horticulture a company he founded in 2007 with his partner and wife EunYoung Sebazzo.

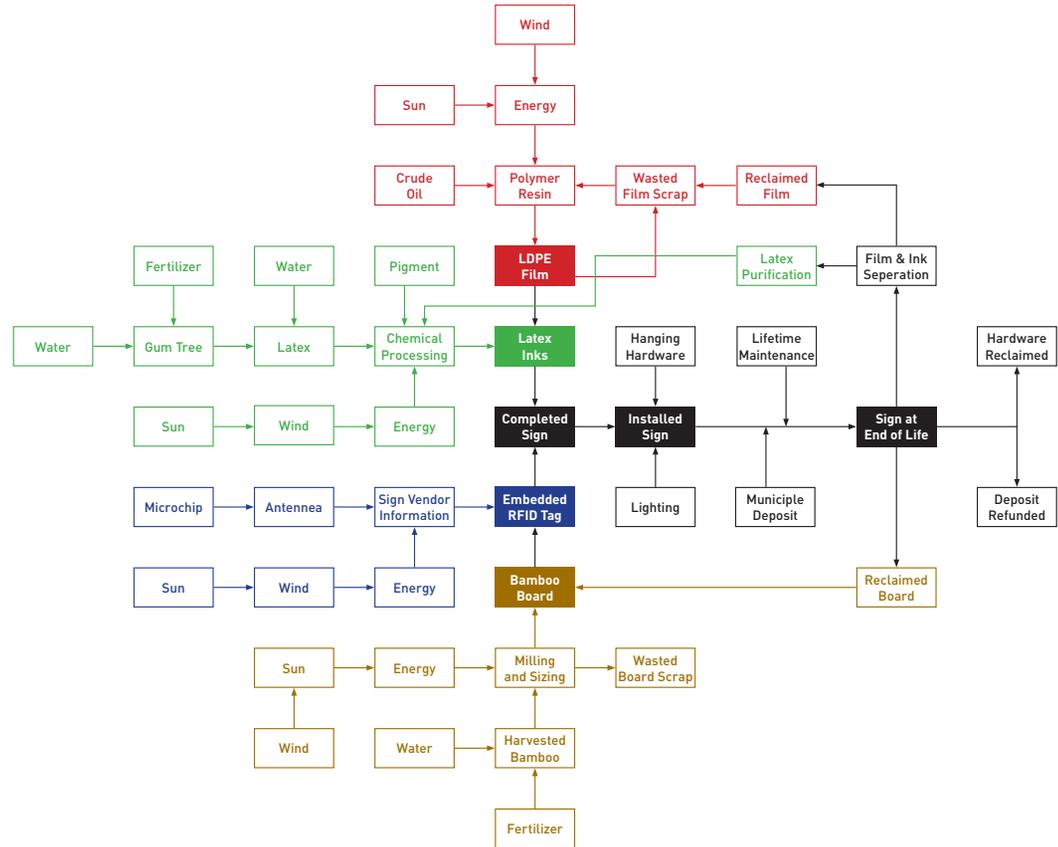
Tom and Noble have been working together since meeting on September 12th 2001. From designing and installing New York's annual Taste of the Nation event, to designing and marketing one of the hottest new toys on the market in South Korea, the two are inseparable as they are effective. Together, both enjoy Fine Art, Old School Hip-Hop and Cooking.



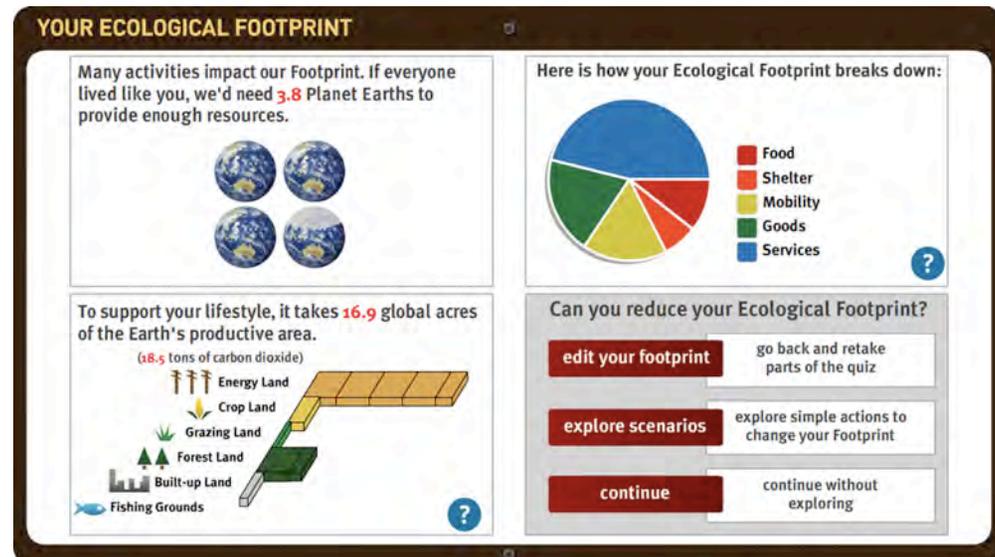
How It Works

Allsignspointtgreen.com can be divided into three parts

- 1 --> At the heart of allsignspointtgreen.com lies a very basic supply-chain model. Like an eco-footprint calculator (for an example, see www.earthday.net), the supply-chain model will allow the visitor to make basic decisions about the kind of sign they envision and how it can be created. Each step will provide links to various internal articles and external sites with relevant tips and production information.
- 2 --> A vetted business directory operates much like a low-end certification process. Before adding businesses to the list, information would be gathered concerning their capabilities. Those companies who choose to advertise would also be vetted, but then receive preferential positioning in the directory.
- 3 --> The website will also be home to articles and press releases concerning new and existing materials and technologies, as well as case-studies for inspiration. A subscription-based service, this part will also be responsible for much of our future development.



As the website is maintained by the coder and interns, Thomas Sebazco and Noble Cumming will be scouring the countryside, establishing eco-partnerships and soliciting potential advertising clientele. Further presentations will be developed and seminars hosted around the region. This is intended to not only increase awareness, but to spread knowledge and encourage the sign industry to adopt new and better methods.

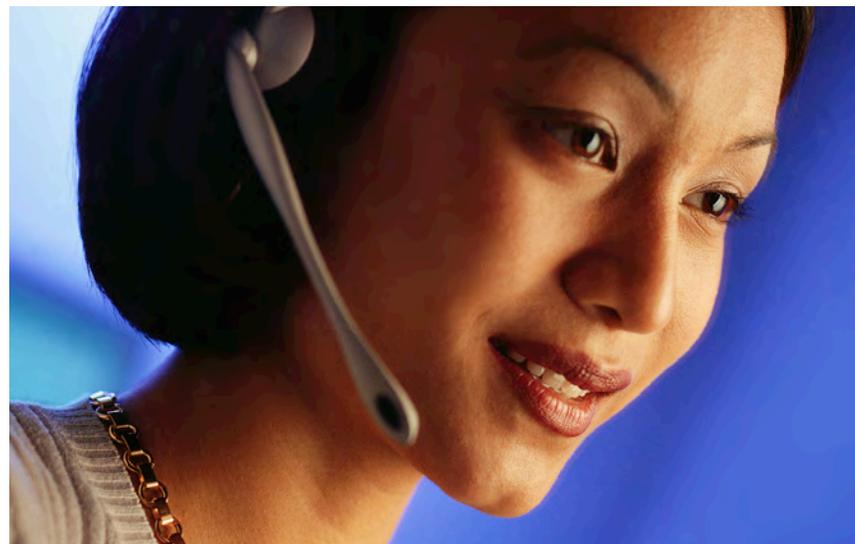
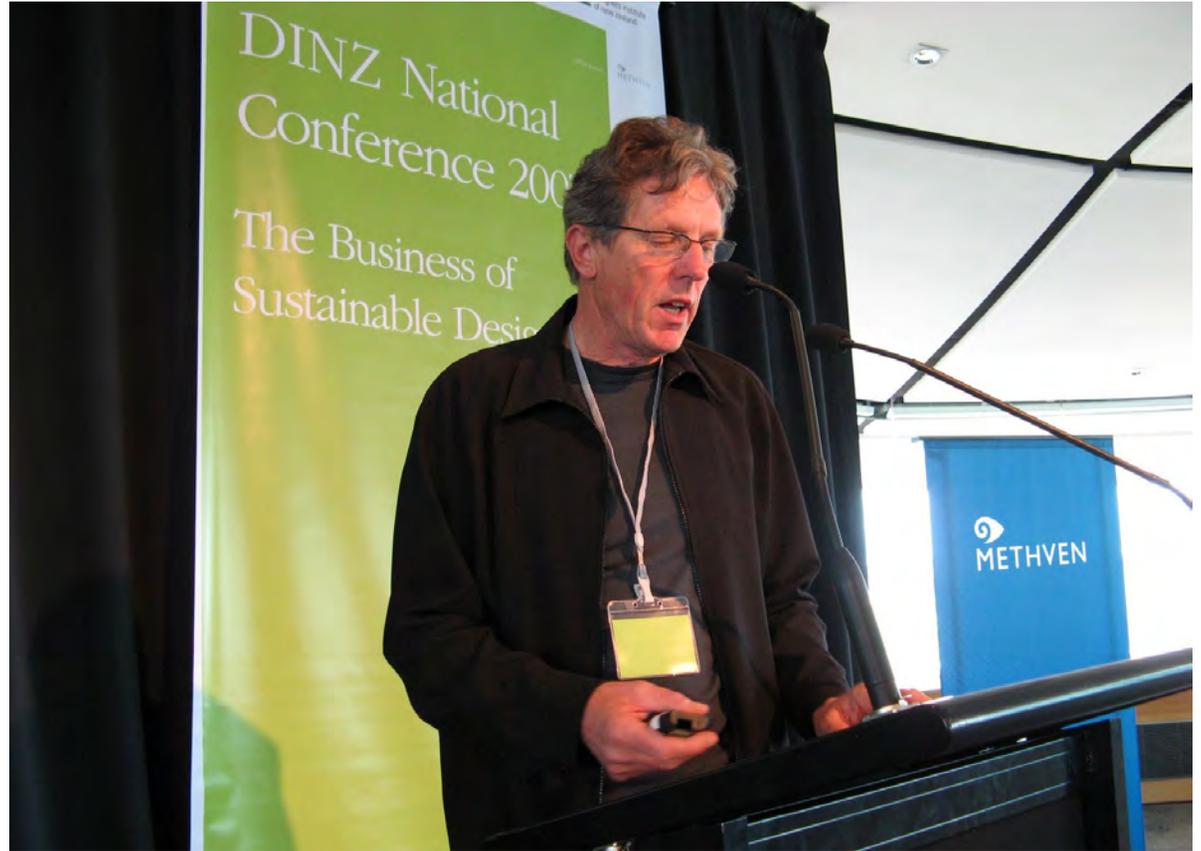


Marketing

Allsignspointtgreen.com will simultaneously market in sign maker, designer and marketing publications (both print and online).

Aggressive campaigning will be important and ongoing, allowing allsignspointtgreen.com to present itself at a trade shows and conferences. Direct marketing in the form of cold-calls and mailers will also be utilized to get the word out. To a smaller audience of "early adopters", curated "kits" of emerging technologies will be sent, along with direct contact information. Partnering with established sign shops will enable the road testing of new products and technologies, giving the involved industries a bar by which to measure themselves. Also, partnering with various exhibition groups will legitimize the role of allsignspointtgreen.com as the source for information on ecologically friendly exhibit fabrication and design.

Building legitimacy as the best purveyors of information on sustainability to the sign industry is going to be very important in marketing endeavors. Speaking at various conventions and seminars as well as giving lectures and workshops to sign makers and designers alike will serve to create a platform, for which allsignspointtgreen.com can name the terms of the dialog. Directing people to allsignspointtgreen.com for further information will establish a clientele of early-adopters, and build trust with potential readers.



Revenue

The sources of revenue for the site will be threefold. Though not required, the services will be highly desirable and therefore considered premium offerings.

1--> Vendors and manufacturers can pay for positioning and ad space on the site. We will also sell editorial space for products they wish to promote.

- Cost: Standard** (468x60 pix): **\$400/month**
- Skyscraper** (160x600 pix): **\$1,250/month**
- Leaderboard** (728x90 pix): **\$1,550/month**
- Rectangle** (300x250 pix): **\$1,600/month**
- Sponsored Link**: **\$125/month**

2--> A consultation service will be offered, not only to expand the site's revenue stream, but it's also market exposure.

Cost: Established on a case by case basis.

3--> A subscription service, with in-depth product info., sample kits, e-newsletters and project consultation will be offered to vendors and production managers.

Cost: \$29.95 per month.

Signweb.com (the online arm of the sign magazine (and industry standard) Signs of the Times, shows banners of about 30 vendors per month. If allsignspointtogreen.com were to display 10 vendors per month (2 vendors per position listed in offering #1, above) startup costs would be recouped in just under 24 months.

Rarely does growth happen as quickly as projected (think soft start). But, it can easily be assumed that including all three revenue sources above, startup costs will be recovered within the first 18 months. Including future revenue generators (see Future Growth) in this scope opens the door for more profit and expansion.

E-Newsletter Advertising

SignWeb's e-newsletters, from the editors of *Signs of the Times*, showcase timely news, trends and information that sign professionals need and act on. Your ad, placed in this easy-to-read format, reaches a motivated audience of 19,000 recipients who seek new products and technology.

Format	1x	6x	12x	24x	36x
[1] Skyscraper (120 X 600 PIXELS)	\$1,400	\$1,300	\$1,200	\$1,100	\$1,050
[2] Standard Banner (468 X 60 PIXELS)	\$750	\$700	\$650	\$600	\$550
[3] Square Button (125 X 125 PIXELS)	\$700	\$650	\$600	\$550	\$500
[4] Banner (468 X 60 PIXELS)	\$400	\$375	\$350	\$325	\$300

Ask your account manager about 3x, 9x and 18x rates.

Start-up Expenses

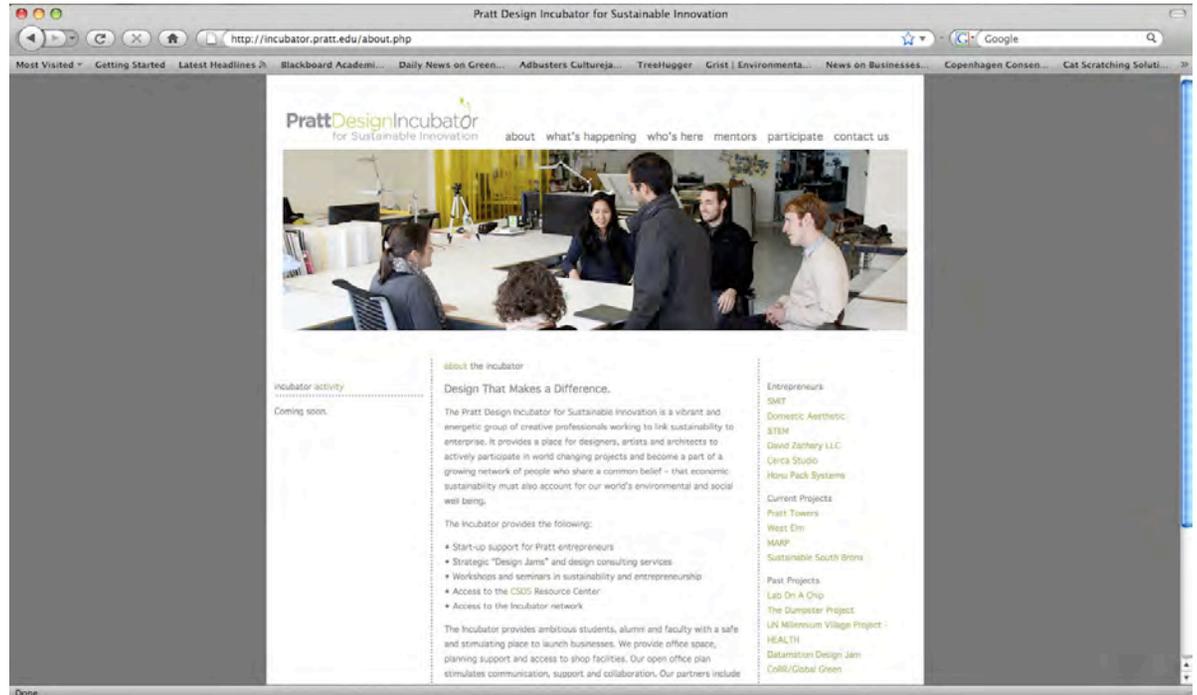
Allsignspointtgreen.com would require startup costs including one year's full time pay for three employees. The third employee must be a seasoned code runner and back-end information architect. A website could be created tomorrow, but the level of coding needed requires a specialist. Fortunately, New York City has many of the best code-runners in the country. Below is a list of estimated start-up expenses.

Expense	Cost (\$)
Legal Fees	1,000.00
Accountant Fees	600.00
Cards, Brochures, Signs	3,500.00
Furniture	1,200.00
Computers (3)	3,600.00
Software	4,200.00
Equipment (phones, camera)	500.00
Insurance	850.00
Salary (3)	210,000.00
Conferences (3 -1 in NYC)	3,100.00
Utilities (internet, phone)	1,440.00
Cash	3,000.00
Total Requirements	232,990.00

By using the Pratt Institute Green Business Incubator Program, student workers and interns would also be available to the office. The incubator will be helpful to the early success of the business by keeping overhead at a minimum. The Incubator provides the following for free, for at least 2 years:

- 1 --> Start-up support for Pratt entrepreneurs.
- 2 --> Office space.
- 3 --> Business/sustainability workshops and seminars.
- 4 --> Access to the CSDS Resource Center.
- 5 --> Access to the Incubator network.

Expenses can be cut further by developing partnerships with established leaders of the sign industry, from 3M, to the Society of Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD), to the ST Media Group (publishers of Signs of the Times).



Future Growth

Allsignspointtgreen.com is poised to follow a growth track, rapidly moving sign making into new territory.

Fortunately, because of the current state of the sign industry, growth is only possible for sustainability. This uniquely positions the business as the leader in that growth.

After the first business year, four developmental steps are envisioned. These steps will expand service and help achieve the mission of the site sooner, at the same time increasing traffic through networking and utility.

Step 1 --> Networking. Traditionally, sign makers have all known their local competitors and have been at ease with passing along business when needed. As the industry expands, sign makers need to communicate regionally, nationally, and even internationally. By creating a business networking arm to the site which can allow for sign makers to speak with each other "in private", they can establish contacts, share knowledge and create business relationships.

Step 2 --> Refining. In the initial version of the website, the process of sustainable sign development operates like an eco-footprint calculator (for an example, see www.earthday.net). This will continue to be part of the site, but it is a product option driven feature which can be manipulated by factors like transportation and sourcing distance. A refined product calculator will be introduced, where inputs can be added by the sign maker, specific to geographic and source variables. It will even allow cross-referencing to be introduced. While at first this feature seems complex, the variables are remarkably finite.

Step 3 --> Calculating. Economics are essential to sustainable development. In fact, economics are essential to any small business for a myriad of reasons. By taking cues from sites like Quicken's online service, Mint (for more information, see www.mint.com) a tracking system based on user-inputs for individual private accounts will be created. This way, project-managers and sign makers can produce legitimate financial evaluations of their sustainable projects. They can also record hard eco-footprint data for product resourcing and LEED certification.

Step 4 --> Tracking. Sign makers care about their customers and their work. In smaller areas, sign makers will have the same customers over an entire career. Often, the business of sign making is not finished with installation. Maintenance is key to the prolonged life of a sign and therefore the business of a sign maker. To aid and improve this, a system using RFID tags and software for the sign maker to embed information about a sign is envisioned. This would include information such as its source, materials, last inspection and license number. This can also be used by companies to gather information in instances of turnover or client relocation. In partnership with the Rockwell Group LAB (R&D development team), research is already underway on how best to enable this exciting new service.

Thank you for your time

We look forward to working with you...