



Sign Fab's Sign Industry Reference Guide: Chapter 2

Chapter Two of our reference guide goes into detail about ordering and manufacturing signs. From quoting to delivery, this chapter will take you step-by-step into the process of manufacturing a sign here at Sign Fab.

Quoting Process

The first step to any sign is getting a quote. We've covered this topic before, so we'll keep it short in this article. For more detailed information on our quoting and ordering processes, [click here](#). When you request a quote, it makes things go a lot faster if you make sure you have as much of the following as possible:

- **Contact information** for your company. This is especially important if you are a new customer. We'll need to know your business' name, a contact within the company, a physical address for shipping and a billing address if applicable, your phone number, and an e-mail that's checked frequently.
- **Artwork** for the sign. The preferred formats are editable files such as a PDF, AI, EPS, or CDR files. These are the most common editable vector file formats, and it makes it extremely easy for us to use and work with to provide you an accurate quote. Also, make sure everything is drawn to scale in the artwork.
- **Measurements** of the sign. If possible, include the sign's dimensions in your artwork. If that's not possible, or you have no artwork, make sure you include the height of the tallest letter, the height of a standard lowercase letter, the width of your sign, and even the font if possible in your quote request.
- **Face Options.** Know ahead of time if your sign will need something specific or special, such as vinyl or digital print applied to the face.
- **Painted Returns.** This, too, will increase the quote, so it's best to make sure we know so your quote accurately reflects the sign.
- **Instant Quotes:** To receive instant quotes just [sign up](#) or [login](#) to our Sign Designer on our website. This allows you to access the instant quote generator. After you type in your information for your sign you will instantly receive a quote.

Mounting. You'll need to know how the sign is going to be mounted, and whether it's remote, self-contained, or going on a raceway.

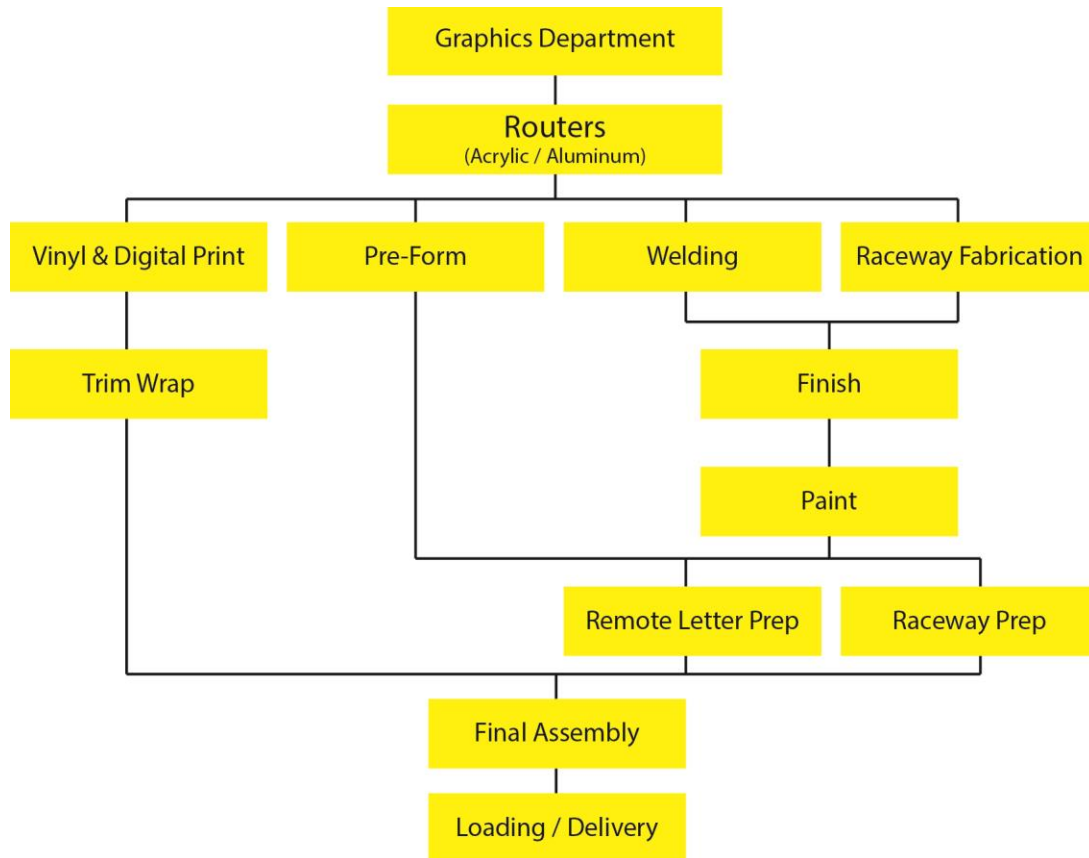
Ordering Process

When you're ready to place an order, we'll need a few more details to ensure fast production. The most important information needed that often gets overlooked at this stage is color options. We have a wide selection of color choices available. To see our color selection, [click here](#) to view our virtual 2017 Sign Guide catalog. Here are a few things that you'll need to choose colors for:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| • Acrylic faces | • Return |
| • LEDs | • Raceway |
| • Trim | • Vinyl |



Manufacturing Process



Above is a flow chart of our manufacturing process. Below, we'll go into a little more detail as to what happens in each stop on the flow chart. The first area that an ordered sign hits after placing your down payment is the graphics department.

1. **Graphics Department** – In our graphics department, our team cleans the artwork making sure all curves are ready for manufacturing and the stroke widths are optimally set to give off the best lighting. After the artwork is cleaned up, our graphics team produces the drawings with the correct colors and accurate dimensions. The finished artwork is sent to you for approval. After the artwork is approved, the LED layout and, if necessary, the raceway mounting pattern are created and the sign moves on to the routers.
2. **Routers** – Here is where the aluminum cans and acrylic faces are machine-routed. Not much to it, but very important in the manufacturing process. After the aluminum is routed, it takes a visit to the finishing room. We'll touch base on that in a second, but first, we'll follow the faces through production.



3. **Vinyl and Digital Print** – If your sign's faces require vinyl or digital print, this is when it's done. After being routed, the faces go to our vinyl room and our specialists carefully lay the vinyl and/or digital print. We use high-quality vinyl's for all our faces and can get almost any brand or color as requested; just ask our sales department when getting your quote. After that is finished, the faces head off to the trim wrapping room.
4. **Trim Wrap** – This is where the faces get trim-wrapped. We have a wide variety of colors and widths to choose from and can get a majority of specialty colors upon request. We use high-end glue to adhere the trim to the face. After the trim is in place and has set, they go to the final assembly, but before we hit that topic, we're going to back up and follow the routed aluminum through the manufacturing process.



5. **Pre-form** – This is the most common route for our signs. After the aluminum backs are routed, they go to pre-form, where the returns are machine-bent from pre-finished aluminum and stapled to the backs. The finished can then goes to our caulk and peel station, then off to final assembly.



6. **Welding** – Some signs, such as a complex logo or capsule or reverse channel letter signs, require welding instead of pre-form. Our welders carefully measure out and weld together the backs or fronts of the sign to the aluminum return. After this step is finished, they go off to our finishing department. We'll talk about that in a second, but first we'll talk about raceways.

7. **Raceway Fabrication** – Not every sign requires a raceway, but most do. After our graphics department finishes the drawings, the specifications go to our raceway department for fabrication. Most raceways are made of pre-fabricated materials, but some do require special routed parts to finish construction. After the fabrication is finished, they also go off to our finishing department.
8. **Finishing** – This is where the cans get washed and sanded. This preps them for paint.
9. **Paint** – Paint is applied to the cans as necessary. We use high-quality paint that is sure to stick to your sign and not fade for the life of the sign.
10. **Remote Letter Prep** – Here, remote letters and signs receive the final touches before hitting the final assembly line. This includes, as previously mentioned, caulk and peel if necessary, and the installation of mounting hardware.
11. **Raceway Prep** – During raceway prep, mounting holes are drilled and the raceway is prepared for final assembly.
12. **Final Assembly** – Finally, all the previously mentioned areas come together. The cans are mounted to the raceways, the LEDs are inserted into each letter, logo, and capsule, and the faces are installed and secured. After ensuring that all signs have been manufactured to our high-quality standards, they head off to the loading and delivery area.
13. **Loading / Delivery** – We take pride in offering our very own delivery service. In this final step to the manufacturing process, all signs are carefully packaged, shrink wrapped and mounted on our delivery trucks and all necessary accessories are compiled into their specific boxes.



Now you've seen the full manufacturing process for our company. If ever you have any questions, don't hesitate to call or e-mail us and ask! Customer service is very important to us, and we want to make sure you know what to expect when it comes to quoting, ordering, manufacturing, and delivery. Make sure to check back in next month for Chapter Three of our Reference Guide!