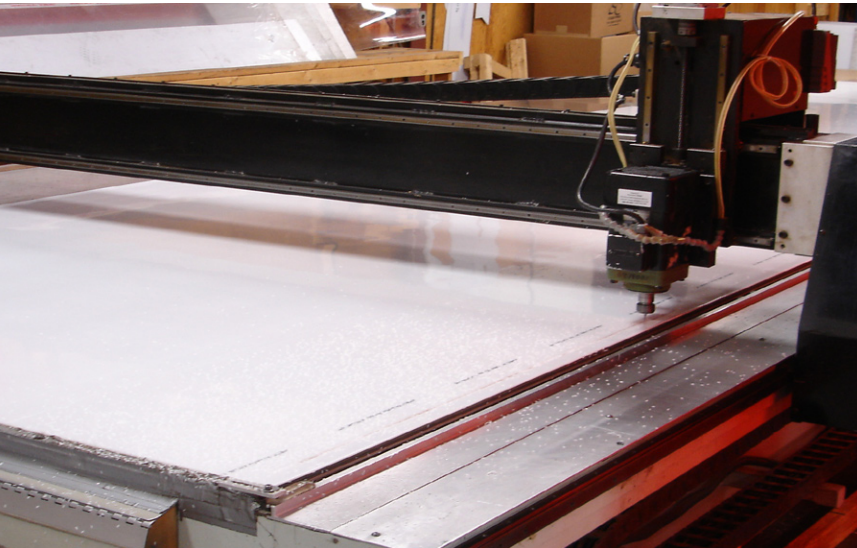


# THE BRIGHT STUFF: SIGNFLEX ACRYLIC SHEET HELPS OFFICEMAX SIGNS SHINE



## *New LED Signage Installed at Over 200 Retail Locations*

A corporate logo is one of the most essential components of a brand. The visual interpretation of a company's identity and character, a logo is a powerful tool for conveying the quality of products and services to customers. In a retail environment where consumers make quick purchasing decisions, successful logos are even more important for driving sales and establishing customer loyalty. As a result, when OfficeMax recently decided to differentiate its brand by switching the color motif of its corporate logo from a standard red to white and black, the change needed to be clearly communicated to consumers at retail locations.

Needing to alter the look of its stores to comply with the new logo, Office Max turned to sign manufacturer North American Signs (South Bend, IN), to create and manage the installation of new exterior signage at over 200 locations nationwide. Seeking an innovative material to create large-format LED channel letters, North American Signs found that ACRYLITE® SignFlex™ acrylic sheet from CYRO Industries (Parsippany, NJ), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Degussa, offered the unique combination of aesthetics and performance necessary for the project.

### QUALITY FROM THE START

For the OfficeMax sign redesign project, North American Signs conceptualized 6' internally illuminated LED

channel letters that would incorporate the corporate white/black color scheme. For the face of the signs to truly stand out, the firm needed a material that could not only withstand exposure to the outdoor environment, but also provide high light transmission and create a unique lighting effect able to grasp consumer attention. As North American Signs was researching material to fabricate the first set of new channel letters for an OfficeMax store near Cleveland, OH, Doug McCoige, Director of Operations at North American Signs, came across ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet through attending an industry tradeshow.

Specially formulated to provide a frosted appearance throughout its composition, ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet possesses unique optical properties that evenly diffuse light without the use of a diffuser film, making it ideal for backlit applications. The acrylic sheet incorporates a textured surface that works to hide scratches, enhancing the service life of exterior signs that can be exposed to debris and other environmental elements.

White ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet particularly appealed to McCoige for the OfficeMax project. Providing up to 60 percent light transmission, this version of the acrylic product incorporates a bright white pigment that creates a striking cloud-like appearance.

# OfficeMax



“Once I saw the light diffusion properties of the white ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet, I knew it would be a great fit for the OfficeMax signs,” explains McCoige. “Not only does the material allow a high level of light to pass through, but it also diffuses illumination hot spots for a smooth, even look.”

When McCoige approached CYRO with the idea of using ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet for OfficeMax stores, CYRO technical specialists provided expert support to meet the demands for this exterior signage. “CYRO technical representatives offered the expertise and flexibility we needed to meet the material needs of this project,” adds McCoige.

## FABRICATING A BRAND ICON

Once the material was selected, North American Signs was ready to begin fabricating new signage for each of the over 200 retail stores. To spell out the OfficeMax name in large-format channel letters, North American Signs would start with a CNC-routed aluminum back for each letter.

The company then fabricates the returns, or sides, of the letters by bending aluminum coil stock to appropriate shapes. These aluminum sides are painted white on the inside and black on the outside to maintain the brightness of the interior LED cavity while showing a black appearance on the letter surface.

The sign facing varies by location. For retail stores with dark exteriors, including stores in shopping malls, white ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet is adhered to the aluminum returns with black Jewelite trimcap to complete each letter.

“For these signs, it was essential to eliminate the appearance of hot spots that internal lighting can cause,” comments McCoige. “ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet was a great choice since it can evenly diffuse light without requiring us to use a separate diffuser film, and this makes fabrication simpler.”

To create a suitable contrast with the façade of stores featuring light-colored exteriors, however, the face of the sign is covered with a black vinyl that is evenly perforated with tiny holes. This gives the sign a black appearance during daytime hours, when the sign is unlit, and a bright white appearance during evening hours, when the LED lighting pierces through the perforations.

“The high light transmission of ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet is central to the locations that use black perforated vinyl because it maximizes the amount of light that can pass through the holes to illuminate the sign,” remarks McCoige.

## MOUNTING AN IMAGE

Once a complete set of channel letters is fabricated for an OfficeMax location, North American Signs ships the signage and mounting equipment to an affiliated instal-

lation company near the designated store. The combined durability of the ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet and LED lights greatly reduces the risk of sign breakage during shipping, ensuring that each sign is received in a fully operational state.

“We haven’t experienced any breakage of the LED channel letters during shipment. This is a notable improvement over signs that employ alternative materials, like neon,” comments McCoige.

Along with the channel letters and equipment, each installer also receives a full-size paper pattern from North American Signs, which is used to precisely mark the areas to drill holes in exterior of the store for mounting the sign. After these holes are completed, the pattern is removed, wires are run through the holes, and each channel letter is attached by stainless steel lag bolts to the storefront. The back of each letter incorporates a rivnut fastener that enables secure wall attachment. The light weight of the ACRYLITE SignFlex sheet also makes the signs easier for installers to handle, further facilitating installation.

## SHINING RESULTS

As work continues for the sign update project, OfficeMax has been pleased with the look and performance of the channel letter signs at its retail stores. Able to complete each location with a lead time of only three to five weeks, including research and fabrication, North American Signs guarantees that retail stores do not have to wait long for their new look.

“OfficeMax has expressed a strong, positive reaction to the new signs,” comments McCoige. “This accounts for the company’s interest in continuing the project to include the rest of its retail locations across the nation.”

*CYRO Industries is a wholly owned subsidiary of Degussa. Headquartered in Parsippany, NJ, CYRO is North America’s largest acrylic sheet manufacturer and a leading producer of acrylic polymer products and MMA. As the innovative suppliers of specialty acrylic solutions to existing and emerging markets, CYRO and Degussa offer broad technological and global resources to respond to market demands. CYRO offers on-line technical support 24/7, through the TechKnowlogy Center at [www.cyro.com](http://www.cyro.com).*

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