

Music to my ears

“The cost of the sign was easily paid for from increase in front-end sales.” Those words were from Harry Webb, president and owner of Webb’s Family Pharmacy. AHHHHH, NICE music to my ears. Webb, who owns three stores in Indiana, is the NCPA Innovation Center’s 2021 NICE Award winner for Best Exterior Sign. I am told he had lots of competition and the three judges had a tough decision to make. I can tell you with confidence that all who entered the best exterior sign category are winners. I do not say this in a condescending way. Those who improve their exterior with signage, or new construction, or improve their delivery car appearance are going to win. They are indeed going to win new customers.

There are three ways to attract new customers:

- **Curbside appeal:** signage or appealing exterior construction
- **Word of mouth:** limited in reach
- **Marketing:** when cleverly done combined with a compelling message, marketing can be very beneficial, but budgeting time and money for marketing is a challenge.



If you can’t be good at all three methods, you better be good at least at one. We shop with our eyes and pay with our wallets. In a way, that can be said for choosing a pharmacy. If the store is nearby and looks prosperous and inviting, a potential customer will at least go inside and check it out. Your legs don’t move until your eyes tell them to do so. It is hard to break even with any method of attracting new customers, but Harry Webb did!

Google coined the acronym ZMOT, or “Zero Moment of Truth.” ZMOT for a pharmacy is the exact time a potential customer is looking to choose a pharmacy. Digital ads and television and newspaper advertising are limited by exposure time and budget. Once a sign is up, either on the building or roadside, it is working for you as long as anyone can see it! The only ongoing investment is paying for the electricity and maintenance. There is no cheaper way to market for new customers than great signage!

If you have a digital sign or a lighted road sign, never ever turn it off! If you have a lighted sign on the building, keep it on all the time and place a smaller lighted “Open – Close” sign in the window. When your delivery vehicle is not being used, park it by the road for everyone to see. Better yet, park it along the side of the road or parking lot near a chain or big-box store. Here is an old fashioned tip for you: lease a billboard sign and make sure to have a light shining on it. Things like billboards have been around for a long time because if they are done well, they work.