



Features and Advantages of EMCs

Take into account the following when considering an electronic message center for your business:

Advantages:

- EMCs allow an unlimited number of message changes and variable controls, all easily completed with a computer. The result is lower labor cost and elimination of the physical liabilities often associated with copy changes on traditional reader boards.
- EMCs communicate variable messages as people pass by, allowing greater flexibility in communicating to the public.
- With their automated dimming and focusing systems, EMCs can respond to the visibility needs of the public, increasing safety and conspicuity day and night.
- The flexibility offered by EMCs means your business can advertise specials while also displaying public service information or other items of public interest.
- These signs can quickly "brand" your business site in the local community.
- EMCs are an investment in your business and provide the best and most cost-effective forms of paid advertising. The only form of advertising that may be more powerful is word of mouth (although it can be neither purchased nor controlled).
- The effectiveness of an EMC is not limited by space or surface area constraints as with a reader-board.
- EMCs act as your "salesman on the street," attracting new customers to your business location.
- EMCs allow you to market your products and services to your immediate trade area and prevent wasteful advertising expenses.
- The business owner can change the message as needed to provide information to specific retail customers, and can be used for political, social or community events.
- Software is available that enables a business owner to display sophisticated logos or images on the EMC precisely as planned.



An Answer to the Challenge of Changing Demographics

The public - your existing and potential customers - is on the move, both literally and figuratively, and sometimes catching their attention is like hitting a moving target. Consider that **approximately 18.6% of Americans move every year**. Whether they move a short or long distance, they usually change their basic trade area. Add to that the fact that **15-35% of the traffic on a given street is "just passing through"** (vacation travelers and such), and you can see the great potential for single stops by those unfamiliar with the area.

An electronic or variable message center offers a unique way to capture the attention of these passers-by. **An EMC allows you to communicate more effectively with the typical person passing by at a particular time day by changing the message and graphic of your sign to match the profile on the street.**

The local airport in Monmouth, NJ offers a clever example of this flexibility. The airport used its display to advertise price specials at peak hours to those traveling by on the freeway on the way to and from work. During shopping hours or after-school traffic, the airport changed its display to offer community service messages.

This kind of flexibility increases the readership of a message unit, as it can correspond to the traffic profile by the day of the week, the time of day, or the season. With the right software, virtually any message can be created and displayed.

The demand by businesses for these electronic or variable message centers is increasing because **these signs improve the economic viability of difficult commercial sites with limited space.** Municipalities that wish to prevent urban sprawl or deterioration of urban land are passing enabling acts that require optimization of urban space, and thus are more willing to look at EMCs as a signage option for businesses.



Frequently Asked Questions about EMCs

We have a sign; why does my business need a message center?

Consider for a moment the speed at which traffic passes by the average business. A motorist has only a few seconds to see and comprehend any given sign. For example, on a street with traffic passing at 45 miles per hour, a car that is 500 feet in front of a given sign will have only 7.6 seconds to read the sign before it passes, under normal driving conditions. **A business' sign must be conspicuous if it is to catch the attention of passing motorists within the limited amount of time available.**

Motorists often spot electronic message centers quickly because the copy changes, the letters are illuminated, and the signs have traditionally been used as public service devices. Additionally, electronic message centers may **have greater visibility from further distances, especially in poor lighting conditions**, giving the motorist additional time to read the message displayed while safely maneuvering his or her vehicle.

Message Centers act as a consolidating type of advertising. In other words, they offer businesses a way of posting a variety of information in one place rather than relying on numerous signs and banners displayed in windows, for example. This can be a real advantage for a business located in a district with strict rules about temporary signs.

Most importantly, **the electronic message center almost always increases a business's share of revenue**. This is a result of the "branding" of the site through the use of specific logos, reinforcement of other advertising messages, allowing for public service notices, generating exact impulse stops, and helping to change customers' buying habits once they have stopped.



Frequently Asked Questions about EMCs

Is an electronic message center a cost-effective advertising medium?

Yes. Businesses often select their advertising medium, and messages, based upon the cost per thousand exposures of their message to the public. ON this basis, **no other form of advertising comes close to matching the efficiency and cost-effectiveness, dollar for dollar, of an electronic message display.** Compare the figures below:

- Newspaper advertising - the cost on average is about \$7.39 for 1000 exposures within a 10-mile radius of the business location.
- Television advertising - The cost on average is approximately \$6.26 per 1000 exposures.
- Radio advertising - The cost is about \$5.47 per 1000 exposures.
- New LED electronic message center display - **The cost is less than \$0.15 per 1000 exposures.** How? Assume, for example, that you spend \$30,000.00 on this type of system, and that its useful life is about ten years. The amortized daily cost of the message center would equal about \$2.74. Add to this the daily cost of electricity for this new LED unit (approximately \$0.20), thus giving your business a daily message center expense total of \$8.82. With a daily traffic count of 20,000 vehicles passing your business, you would have a cost of less than \$0.45 per thousand exposures (counting drivers only)!

Best of all, **with an electronic message center, a business does not have to worry about missing its target audience, becoming "yesterday's news," or facing expensive production costs for changing its message,** as happens frequently with the other forms of advertising mentioned.

With an electronic variable message display:

- The business owns the form of advertising
- The advertising works for the business 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- The sign acts as the "salesman on the street" attracting customers into the business
- The advertising speaks directly to the potential customers as they drive past the business location, and the EMC makes the business a landmark in its community.

Finally, many message center manufacturers provide leasing programs, which include service and maintenance, thereby providing another option for covering the cost of usage.



Frequently Asked Questions about EMCs

What level of return on investment can I expect?

For businesses that choose to enhance their signage with an electronic message display, the **owners typically see an increase in business of 15% to 150%**. Using the smaller number, consider the following example.

A small business generating \$1,000.00 a day in revenue adds an electronic message center. The business soon increases by 15%, adding another \$150 per day in total revenue. That translates into an additional \$1,050.00 a week in revenue, or \$54,600.00 per year.

It has been said that in retailing, "the last dollars are the best dollars," meaning that each additional customer adds a greater marginal percentage to the business's bottom line profit. In the foregoing example, we can only speculate upon the actual impact upon profit, but assuming that the business was at or above its "break-even" point before adding the electronic message center, the addition of \$54,600.00 per year in revenue would clearly add to the business's profit.

Keep in mind that with this example, **the investment in the electronic message center unit would likely be about one-third of the additional revenue generated in the first year of its operation alone.**