Welcome to Team Sign Shop!

Thank you for considering the Sign Shop as one of your co-op experiences!

We think we’re pretty awesome, but don’t just take our word for it.

Click one person or scroll through them all to learn what past co-ops have to say about this job and its role in their future careers.
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

I liked the independence of the work and trust put into me by management. You really run your own projects, manage your time, and I felt like we had more creative freedom and experience working with a client than at other co-ops.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

Experiencing the process of designing for and installing something in a three dimensional space. Before I worked at the Sign Shop I didn’t realize designing, cutting, and installing vinyl lettering was something I could learn and eventually master. Also, X-acto skills.

Katie Gavenda
BFA Graphic Design 2010

Sign Shop Co-op:
Summer II/Fall 2007
Summer II/Fall 2009

Other Co-op Experience:
Northeastern University
Marketing & Communications

Where is she now?

Katie is the graphic designer for a fair trade clothing and accessories company based out of Chicago, IL. She handles all the social media and some photography in addition to designing their biweekly emails and semi annual catalogs.

She does some other things here and there, but maybe you should just buy a llama shirt from her?
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

I really loved how hands on the work in the Sign Shop was. A lot of the design work I’ve done has been strictly digital, but being able to work on a project and physically see it come together is awesome. The work I did at the shop taught me to plan ahead and about the logical and mathematical side of design, which were valuable skills moving forward.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

Most influential thing that I learned at the Sign Shop was seeing out the design process from start to finish. A lot of the work in the classroom up to my co-op had been only about the design, and didn’t take outside factors into account. With this co-op I learned a lot about working with clients who don’t always come from design backgrounds, and how to leverage their feedback and provide guidance when needed. I also picked up some less design related skills like invoicing that have been beneficial in my work since.

Where is he now?

Mark now works full time for the Boston Beer Company as a graphic designer working on point of sale displays, packaging and other marketing collateral. He does a decent amount of freelance on the side, including work for some contacts he met while working at the Sign Shop! As much as he loves his job, he misses all of the cupcakes and candy that were somehow always in the shop.
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

There is no place on earth like the Sign Shop! I loved working here because you get to work on signs and banners for all over campus. It’s very rewarding to see your work around Northeastern. The people who work here are always the best. When I first started everyone was very helpful at answering any questions I had. This has definitely been my favorite job to date! I have so many great memories from my time working here.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

The most influential thing I learned working at the Sign Shop is prioritizing and time management. At the shop you can be working on multiple projects at once. If you get started early you won’t be scrambling when your deadlines approach. You will learn to give yourself enough time to make everything look great. I also learned how to work with lots of different people. From working with everyone in the shop on various projects, to working with people who are placing orders. It was definitely a great learning experience for me.

Where is she now?

Justine is currently working as a graphic designer at Ballinger—an Architecture, Engineering and Interior Design firm in Philadelphia, PA. In the summer, she and her sister run a bakery/cafe in Avalon, New Jersey. Life is good!
Brian Nelson
BS Graphic Design 2008

Sign Shop Co-op:
Summer II/Fall 2005
Summer II/Fall 2006

Other Co-op Experience:
MC Communications
NU Campus Recreation

Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

It was an awesome environment. There were older students there who knew the ropes and mentored the younger students, which was a great way to learn. And our supervisors created an environment where we could still be college students. We had a lot of fun, but still got a LOT of work done.

It taught me a lot. After having three very different co-op experiences, I look back on my time at the Sign Shop and realize how important it was for me. I learned so much about real-world production, managing customers, and knew Illustrator like the back of my hand - way better than most of my other classmates. It’s a great way to meet people and get to know the campus. You work with older and (sometimes) younger students at the Sign Shop itself. You also meet a lot of great people while you do your job. Facilities staff, other students, professors, and university staff were all your “clients”, so it became a good way for me to network within the campus, too.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

How to properly create a vector file. Most files that came into the Sign Shop were junk. Extra information, dirty vectors with clipping paths or too many anchor points - stuff that makes plotters and routers angry. Manually cleaning these up was really an important lesson in understanding how vectors work, and it gave me a huge amount of experience in Illustrator. Practical, real-world experience. This is honestly something I use every single day in my current job.

Where is he now?

Brian is living in CT and working as a Product Designer for a company in LA. He manages a team of web developers in creating a web/mobile app for small businesses. He also does all of the print and web marketing as well as consulting on projects for their larger parent corporation. Brian continues freelance work on the side for many clients that he met here at Northeastern. You can find his work at briannelsondesign.com.
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

I loved working at the Sign Shop for so many reasons- it’s hard to narrow it down, but I chose my top two reasons. First, I’d like to say the people. The people are SO great. Everyone works as a team to get things done and collaborates so well. I don’t know what it is about the shop, but it’s a magical place that brings in great people. We laugh a lot and truly enjoy working alongside each other. Second, I’d have to say that it’s so satisfying to step away from the computer every once in a while and fabricate something yourself. Whether it be a 20-ft banner, installing vinyl lettering on a building, or installing nameplates, it really feels great to get to work with your hands and know you did a great job. And the extra bonus is seeing your work in action on campus ALL the time!

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

I can’t count the number of times signage has come up in my professional life. Whether it be street pole city banners, billboards, or space or event signage, it always comes up. The Sign Shop really taught me the tools for this part of design. You have a lot more to consider designing signage such as viewpoint, contrast in the environment, legibility, etc. I always have this “I got this” attitude when it comes to this- which surprises most people.

Where is she now?

Meg is the Marketing & Communications designer at Occidental College in LA. She does web design and print, such as invitations and annual reports. She was recently put in charge of a - you guessed it - signage project! She'll be designing everything for a new wing of the school and reminiscing over the hands-on installation process from the old days at the Sign Shop. Meg also continues freelance design work on the side.
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

The people made the Sign Shop job amazing. It’s such a fun environment. There is always so much work going on and having a room filled with designers is an excellent support system for feedback and tips. Getting to see how things work in a real-life setting in terms of designing for the customer with real deadlines and limitations and their own perspective/taste instead of designing for your own work was also a crucial lesson to learn. Doing work with a functional purpose is infinitely more educational than creating theoretical projects for theoretical clients in a classroom.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

Most influential thing I learned at the Sign Shop was how to cut/weed/tape/apply vinyl. It seems simple, and it seems like Sign Shop 101, but that single skill got me three other jobs within 18 months of graduating.

Where is he now?

Dan is currently a Production Artist for Life Is Good. He’s been working in the licensed sports apparel business since college with experience at ‘47 Brand as well. His work here at the Sign Shop making promo boards for the NU baseball and basketball teams was directly responsible for opening the door to his first gig making sports gear.
Leah Glennon
BFA Graphic Design 2015

Sign Shop Co-op:
Spring/Summer I 2012

Other Co-op Experience:
UbiCare

Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?
I loved having the opportunity to learn and develop some hands on skills in addition to design skills. I felt like working at the shop was a great exercise in learning to compromise with the customer. In design classes you are given a project and although you have to defend your work you don’t really have anyone telling you to do something you really don’t want to do, if someone makes a suggestion it is typically one that will make your work look better.

At the Sign Shop, as in the real world, you have someone asking for something that may make the project look worse, from a design standpoint. You have to learn to honor customers requests while making the project look as good as possible. I think that this is something that a lot of people don’t get to experience until they get their first full time job and at that point it’s a very rude awakening, I think it’s a great thing to learn early on. The fact that you communicate directly with the customer is huge!

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?
Taking ownership of a project and following it through from start to finish. This taught me how to interact with a customer/client and remain professional and productive no matter what the circumstance. It allowed me to design something on a computer and then actually create the final physical product myself and having the responsibility of ensuring that a project stays on schedule every step of the way AND gets delivered on time was a huge responsibility and the time and stress management I learned from that experience has been a HUGE advantage to me.

Where is she now?
Leah is a Studio Designer at LehmanMillet Advertising with a concentration in production. She creates books and presentation boards to pitch to clients, taking the files through every finalizing step of the process. She also designs logos and brochure layouts. She is now (sadly for us) bringing all of her amazing baked goods to her co-workers there but insists that she misses us and will visit with cupcakes soon enough.
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

Where do I even begin with the Northeastern Sign Shop?!! Hands down, it was one of the best experiences I have ever had. Everyone is warm and helps the best they can everyday. And there is ALWAYS free food!! If I had to do it over again I would in a heart beat!

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

I still find myself using techniques I have learned at the shop. Everything from knowing how to use adhesives, being consistent, perfecting craft, to customer service. It’s hard work but you learn a lot and every day is different.

Where is she now?

Nicole is freelancing in New York City and has been working on her lettering skills via #the100dayproject aka #100daysoflyricsbyNRB. You can find her here:

Instagram: @nicolebonasoro
website: nicolebonasoro.com

Feel free to reach out or ask her any questions!
Why did you love working at the Sign Shop?

The Sign Shop’s close knit family helped me distinguish my place as a student here at Northeastern. As a transfer, it was harder to make friends on campus outside of classes. Being a co-op and a part-timer at the Sign Shop allowed me to meet some of my closest friends here at Northeastern.

At the Sign Shop we receive requests for signage for all types of on campus events. This allowed room for creative freedom in communication with internal clients. After clarification on brand guidelines, you can utilize the variety of colored vinyl to be as adventurous as you prefer when producing signs.

What was the most helpful thing you learned working here that sticks with you today?

The most important thing that I learned from the Sign Shop is that you learn not only from Northeastern’s design courses, but also from fellow designers. Whenever I faced a design challenge, or design related question, I could always turn to my co-workers or supervisors (Chrissi and Emily) for advice. Being surrounded by other students and former students of Northeastern is helpful for paving your path as a designer during and after your co-op experience.

Where is she now?

Brianna is one of the many students that continued working for the Sign Shop part-time after her co-op was over. She has mastered time management while balancing a schedule for work and school. She has been able to continue her work experience here, proving job commitment and responsibility on her resume as she prepares to graduate. We will be sad to see her go!