





Phase I Formula Finish facility design was originally developed by Shell Oil Products Company to test the branded car wash concept. This design proved difficult to permit in many municipalities. We redesigned the facility to allow for easier permitting, and to accommodate and conform to facility design standards mandated by both brands.



Phase II Formula Finish Car Wash exterior design and branding by BrandMob



Phase II Star Finish Car Wash exterior design by James McFarlin.

BrandMob Develops and Implements Branded Car Wash Program for Shell & Texaco

After extensive consumer research and years of proprietary chemical product development, Shell Oil Products Company launches a branded car wash program to revitalize its network of car washes at retail petroleum outlets.

Background

Car wash is a conjunctive-use profit center concept that has been available at retail petroleum outlets for decades. Many petroleum companies and retailers view car wash as an ancillary service which helps promote gasoline sales. However, as gasoline product margins continue to be under competitive pressure, there is now a gradual, but definitive, trend toward treating car wash as a stand-alone profit center.

On the demand side, recent consumer surveys, revealed important trends in consumer preference. The percentages of consumers washing their cars at home or using self-serve car washes have decreased significantly. The majority cited convenience as the primary decision-driver, and many would prefer to visit a car wash facility with add-on services. Clearly, convenience emerged as the key factor in business success.

Primary features comprised highly visible architectural elements, state-of-the-art equipment technology, proprietary chemicals and a customer satisfaction focus. Phase I of the program roll-out was a limited market test that included a dozen locations in three metro areas nationwide.

Pilot location results would be used to refine the program for Phase II program roll-out.

Objectives

- Analyze market test results and identify strengths and areas for improvement;
- Refine and create additional program guidelines and components for Phase II program roll-out in strategic market areas; and
- Develop a wide range of marketing communications materials essential for successful program implementation.

Analysis of Market Test Results

We conducted comprehensive analysis of the pilot location results. The scope included: car wash facility design and signage, site selection and evaluation process, compensation and profit-sharing arrangements with the retailer, pricing strategy, car wash operation, vehicle damage and customer complaint handling, local store promotions.

Marketing Communications Materials

A strategic mix of program materials and tools were developed for the branded car wash program to communicate the program guidelines, procedures and benefits to internal personnel, retailers and consumers.



Implementation guide was designed for internal personnel involved with program implementation.

Major findings included:

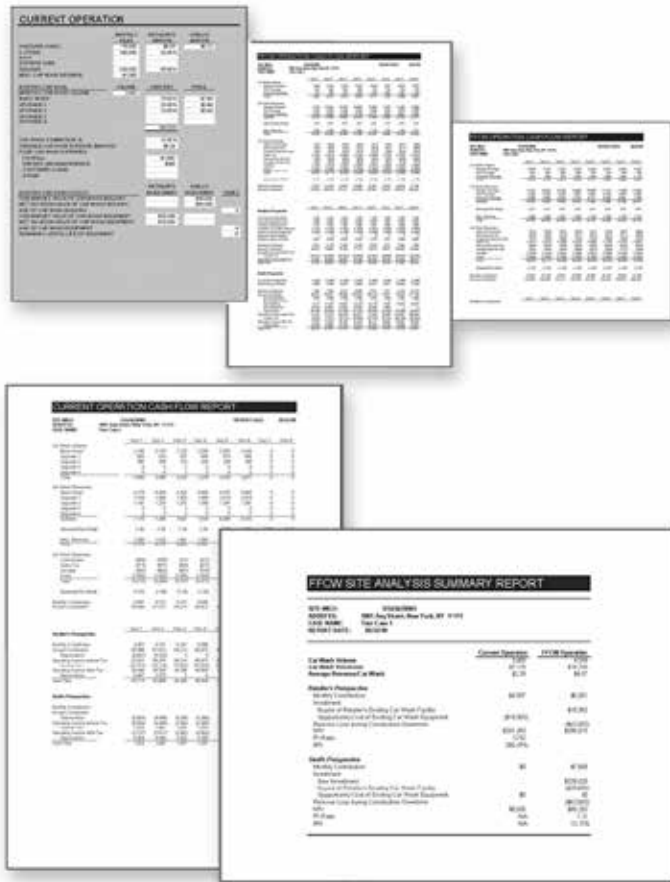
- Customer feedback confirmed that the car wash logo and facility design were visually appealing and served to differentiate the car wash as a unique offering. However, certain architectural elements proved difficult to secure approval of municipal planning commissions having stringent guidelines.
- Some of the pilot locations generated tremendous revenues, while others realized modest sales. There appeared to be a need for more in-depth site potential review and competitive analysis which would aid in selecting the locations with the best projected returns.
- Customer satisfaction guarantee was an important feature of the branded car wash program. There was a need to create a streamlined, centralized complaint-handling process to improve customer satisfaction and manage vehicle damage claims.

Program Implementation

During program development, Shell Oil and Texaco formed an alliance to merge their downstream operations in the U.S. Similar branded car wash program was developed for the Texaco brand. Program elements were created or modified to fit the standards and requirements mandated by both brands, enabling synergy capture. At the same time, perceptible differences were maintained to support distinctive brand positioning and management strategies.

Major refinements included:

- Working with engineering specialists, we surveyed municipalities regarding their building guidelines and reviewed internal records of past building plan submittals. Certain architectural elements were redesigned to increase the likelihood of receiving approval. A planning commission submittal package was also developed for field engineering personnel.
- We created site potential review worksheets to assist field personnel to systematically evaluate the site to determine site layout and car wash configuration, and to project car wash revenue potential and construction cost estimates.
- We developed a computer-based site analysis model to assist in economic analysis and perform "What If" scenario analysis.
- We developed signage and identification items to be placed at strategic locations throughout the retail facility to increase customers' awareness of and promote the car wash offering.
- Streamlined complaint-handling procedures were developed. Toll-free hot line, with well-trained staff, was implemented to ensure proper handling of customer complaints. Video cameras located at the car wash were added to the program requirements to minimize disputes and spurious damage claims.
- Local store promotions are critical for retailing success. We tested several methods for car wash promotion at the local level, tabulated the return rates and created a grand-opening package incorporating the elements proven effective in our tests.



Internal Personnel Communications

Site analysis model

Developed for detailed car wash operation profitability analysis, from both the company's and the retailer's perspectives, and for both "the status quo" and "with branded car wash program" scenarios.



Phase II program guide

Pilot location results were incorporated in this Phase II program guide used in the national roll out of FormulaFinish and StarFinish branded car wash facilities.

Phase 2 Exterior Design

We designed the Phase 2 exterior for both brands to facilitate ease of permitting and reduce the overall construction cost.

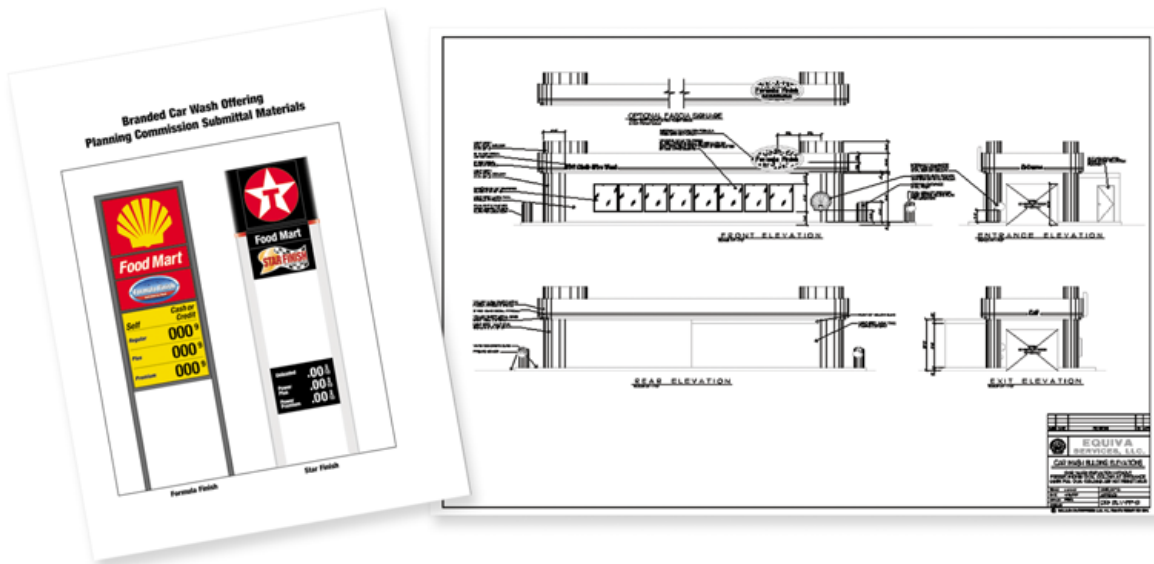


Shell FormulaFinish Branded Car Wash Exterior



Planning Commission Submission Guide

This booklet contained all the necessary items to start the permitting process, including preliminary site plans, floor plans, building profiles, signage specifications, etc.



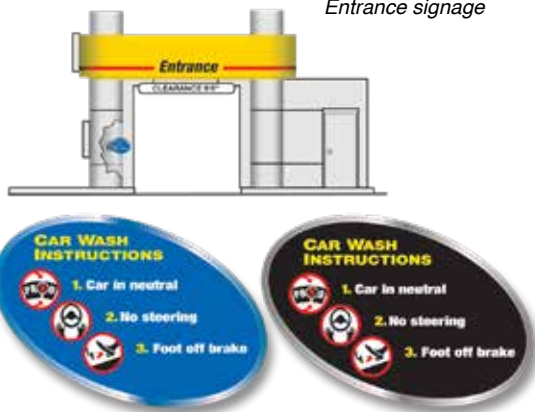
Service brochure options



Price change stickers



Entrance signage



Branded Car Wash POS

We developed exterior fuel dispenser, menu of services, entrance and exit signage.

StarFinish exit sign



Free standing exit kiosk with wait/go lights





Car Care Center

This all on one kiosk allows car wash customers to self maintain the interior of their vehicle.

Retailer Communications



Core marketing brochure was created to acquaint retailers with program highlights.

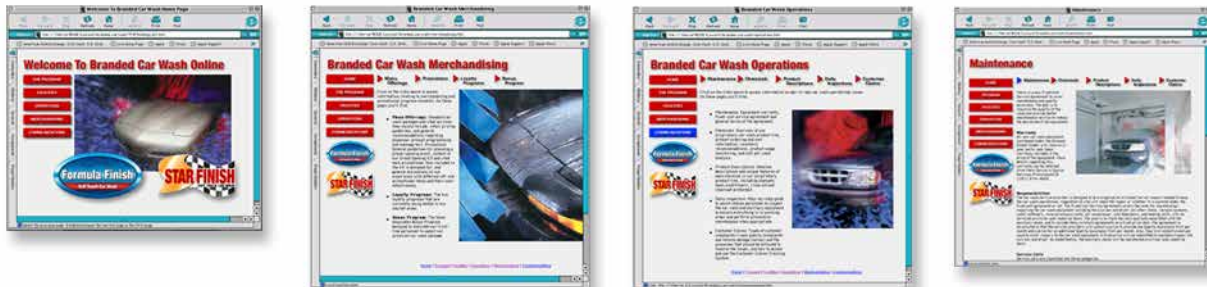
Information guide covered branded car wash facility image and car wash operation and brand standards.



Easy-to-read training manual was developed for branded car wash location personnel; emphasis was on customer service and upgrade sales techniques.



Web-based version of the program implementation tools including database of current branded car wash sites and development status, latest news and program updates, order forms and ancillary planning and project tracking tools





Consumer Promotional Materials

Several types of on- and off-site promotions, including direct mail, were tested during the market-test phase of the program. Ultimately, a multi-pronged promotional campaign including hand distribution of flyers and door hangers along with ad inserts in local publications and on-site POS proved to be the most effective. In one test market, a coordinated promotional campaign consisting of on- and off-site promotions received a whopping 27% response rate.



Direct mail example includes coupon offer.



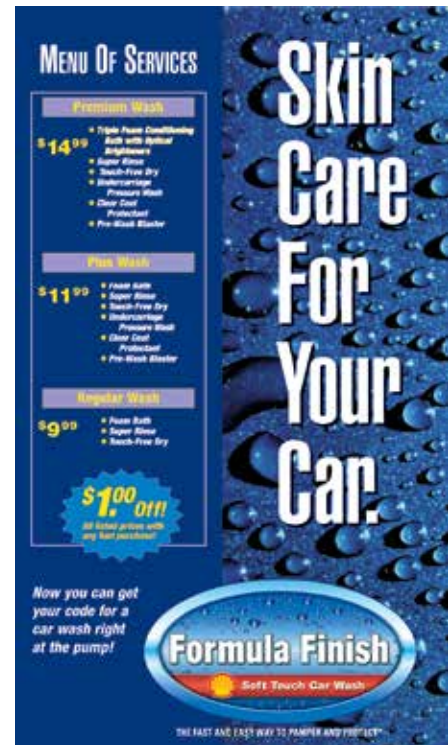
Now open decorative flags



Fuel dispenser POS including pump topper, side lug on and menu of services



Under construction messaging





Outdoor

We created ongoing outdoor messaging such as the curb sign shown above. This messaging that was tied to the ongoing off-site local marketing.

Shown above left is an example of one version of the branded car wash primary identifier we developed.