

American Image Displays Presents...

10 GRAPHIC Design TIPS

For Trade Show Displays

From logo placement to color concerns, this quick guide will start you off on the right foot for your next exhibit design project!

American Image Displays designs and sells almost every style and type of tradeshow display, from small portable "pop-ups" and banner stands to large custom displays and islands. We've been in business for over 25 years and take pride in offering our customers fast and friendly service at very fair prices. And, we have been providing the best online selection of portable display materials since 1996!

800-676-3976
425-556-9511

www.american-image.com

Featured on this page are two of our most popular trade show display products:



Brandcusi 3D Banner



Curved Waveline Display

Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

#1

Continuity Of Design

con•ti•nu•i•ty

noun: continuity

1. The unbroken and consistent existence or operation of something over a period of time.
 - A state of stability and the absence of disruption.
 - A connection or line of development with no sharp breaks.

You have a web site, printed brochures, business cards, magazine advertisements and so on for your company. Hopefully all of those items use the same font styles, colors and images. Marketing your business effectively means having a similar appearance on all of your collateral. Therefore, why shouldn't your Trade Show Display also fall into that category?

Designing a display that has a completely different appearance from all other corporate marketing prevents your clients from making the visual connection to your identity. So, be sure to use the same colors, fonts and images on your display for instant recognition on the show floor.



**DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT**

If that "extra" information must be supplied, try using a banner with shelf support for brochures and cards!



Barracuda Banner

Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

Clear Message

#2

Before you begin your display design you should determine exactly what it is you are trying to communicate at your event. Are you selling a new product/service? Or is the display simply a brand statement?

When the average trade show attendee spends only 3 seconds glancing at each display space on the show floor it is important that you design your graphic to instantly communicate what you want them to know.

If you are selling that new widget that improved MPG by 25%, but put that message smaller below your bland company slogan that takes up the entire display, you have failed to take advantage of the opportunity.

Also, be sure your layout isn't too complex. Those 3 seconds you have to grab attention won't be successful if there are multiple focal points on your layout.

If your goal on the display is to sell a new product, don't overpower that message with unnecessary content!

**UNIMPORTANT DETAILS
OUR LOCATION OUR LOGO
CORPORATE WE NEED SLOGAN
STRUCTURE TO SELL THIS MISSION
COOL IMAGE STATEMENT
COMPANY HISTORY**

DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT

Need to share more
information at your event?
Try a digital solution!



Wave Interactive Player



InTouch ROI System

Visit us online for more
information on these
products and 1000's more!

Cut Down on Text & Fonts

#3

A trade show display is not a brochure or web site. Therefore, do not fill it up with every single feature of your product or service in multiple lines of text and bullet points.

People do not go to trade shows to read copy while standing in your booth. They attend to interact with you personally, learn about your company through conversation, and then receive information afterwards either through email or standard mail.

Get to the point using as little text as possible and keep your font count to a minimum. Multiple lines of text and multiple fonts (especially those that are difficult to read) will cause your audience to simply move on to something more visually appealing.

Using our previous example, let's explore message and text further:

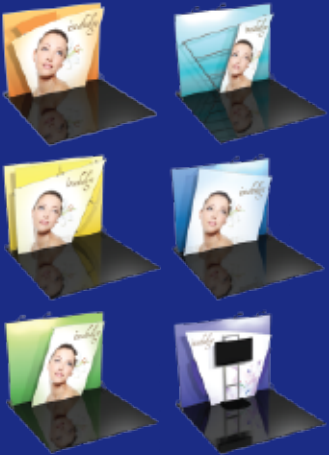
UNIMPORTANT DETAILS
OUR LOCATION OUR LOGO
CORPORATE WE NEED SLOGAN
TO SELL THIS MISSION
STRUCTURE
COOL IMAGE STATEMENT
COMPANY HISTORY

OUR LOGO

WE SELL THIS

DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT

The Nimlok Pulse display system provides multiple options for a unique exhibit.



For your next
Nimlok Exhibit
contact us!

nimlok
authorized distributor

Visit us online for more
information on these
products and 1000's more!

Structure Dictates Layout

#4

Every trade show display is unique in regards to hardware.

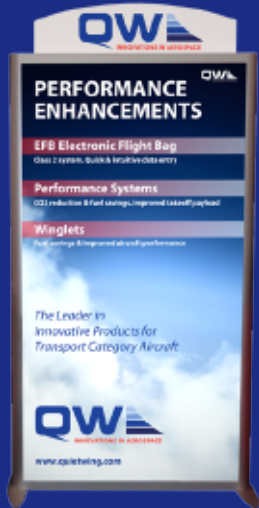
A standard 10ft curved popup with full mural graphics provides you with a basic square canvas to work with, while a hybrid aluminum display with multiple fabric graphic locations offers different layout areas to place your artwork. Therefore, it is important that you fully understand the display structure you are designing for before you begin.

Ask for photos or renderings of the display as well as the graphic templates associated. Then, review all graphic locations so you can take advantage of the structure to its fullest. A layout that was originally prepared for a 2 page spread in a magazine may not translate well to a 20ft wide exhibit if the structure isn't seamless or has hardware separating graphic locations.



DISPLAY HIGHLIGHT

Sometimes the best way to get the eye's attention is to shed some light on your display!



Ask us about our exciting line of backlit silicone edge graphic (SEG) exhibits & systems.

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#5

Where Is The Eye?

Looking at a trade show exhibit from the event floor is similar to how we view most other forms of media in our lives.

We begin in the upper left, move to the right and down. Therefore, avoid placing important design elements in odd locations.

For example, if an important star burst sale offer is part of your layout, it shouldn't be positioned at the bottom left of the display.

Also, most event spaces will have other items such as tables, chairs, kiosks and even people (attendees and booth staff) in front of your exhibit. Therefore, the general rule of thumb is to not place important design elements in the lower four feet of your display.



**DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT**

Bringing your display to life requires the just the right light fixture! Luckily, we have many to choose from.



Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

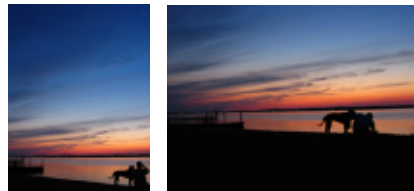
Stock Images & Proper Use

#6

For many companies the display budget can be very tight and hiring a professional photographer may be out of the question. But, that does not mean you can't use professional images. There are many low cost stock photo sources available today that can make you look like a fortune 500 company instead of mom and pop. And most provide royalty free images that you can also use for your other marketing efforts such as brochures and web site. However, there are a few key points to consider:

- i. It is recommended you always purchase the largest file size available. But, before you purchase an image, consult with your exhibit display company about what types of images will work best in regards to file size, resolution and orientation**.
- ii. **Refer back to the structure of your display when choosing images.
- iii. Crop images for best effect. Meaning, if you are displaying a sunset on a beach, perhaps the silhouette of the man and his dog isn't necessary. You can crop that out, or even remove it in Photoshop.

The same image provided in two orientations. Choose the image that works best with your structure shape.



For this example, we select the landscape orientation, then remove the man & dog. For 20ft layouts, choose images that can span your structure as you require it.



**DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT**

Retractable banner stands are the most popular method of displaying content that is recent.



We provide a wide selection of retractable banners, as well as traditional banner stands for all your exhibit needs. Single or double sided, wide or thin, tall or short, we have it!

Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

Generic vs. Specific Design

#7

When planning a design for your next event you should also look into the future. How many events will this design be used for and how long do you hope to use this trade show display?

Is the new widget that gets 25% better MPG still going to be your marketing focal point six months from now? If not, should it be on your layout?

Many trade show displays have multiple graphic locations that can be swapped out. Therefore, when designing the exhibit graphic, if your hardware permits it, you might consider designing something more generic. This will extend the life of your display without having content that is outdated.

Your display hardware will most likely provide you with opportunities for removable or interchangeable graphics that can be used for more "event specific" content that changes show to show.



A retractable banner stand off to one side of your display can be used for time sensitive messages



Modular LITE exhibits can use magnetic backed graphics for a new look!



Xpressions SNAP display kits provide multiple graphic locations that are easy to remove and change on site

**DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT**

Displays do not have to be rectangles and squares!



**Formulate
Funnel Tower**

Use tension fabric to bring exciting shapes to your next exhibit space!

Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

Color Considerations

#8

Trade show display graphics are normally printed using various large format press outputs. Inkjet, Lambda, Dye Sublimation and so on are the tools of the trade, and each of these styles of printing differs greatly from more traditional offset printing used to print your catalogs and brochures. And, each can result in a slightly different appearance even when using the same color!

With that said, color can be an issue as large format output is more art than science. If color is critical, you should be using Pantone Spot Coated swatches in 100% solid form to prepare your layout. Custom CMYK mixes or gradients are not guaranteed to come out as you intend on large format presses. But matching to solid Pantones is normally simple.

Also, avoid creating custom colors by combining two different elements using transparency overlays and masking techniques. Finally, when in doubt, be sure to request printed proofs as part of your order. You do not want that corporate blue to end up being purple on the final exhibit!

What color do you require?
Below we illustrate the difference between a solid Pantone vs. its CMYK value.



Pantone Reflex Blue C CMYK Version of Reflex Blue C

30% transparent white layer on top of solid Pantone next to 70% Pantone. The two may appear the same on your screen, but the final print may be different.



The same graphic can appear slightly different in color depending on the material it is printed on. Always inquire about these possible differences on your displays!



The iPad has arrived at
the exhibit floor!



Multiple iPad solutions

No matter the setting,
we have an iPad
solution!

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information on these
products and 1000's more!

Vector vs. Raster

#9

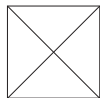
A common concern for all designers when preparing layouts for trade show displays is the extreme size of the file, both in terms of dimensions and file size itself.

The normal print resolution required for raster images at 100% scale is 100ppi. But when you are preparing a layout for a trade show wall that is intended to be 40ft wide by 8ft tall, it can present a real challenge. Working at smaller scales is certainly permitted as long as your resolution only drops to 100ppi at final size, but what about the system resources required on your computer to process such a large file?

With that said, it is recommended that you try to use vector based files over raster whenever possible. Working in a vector based program such as Adobe Illustrator will be easier to manage for these extreme sizes than dealing with multiple large raster files. But, if a raster image is your only option, just be mindful of proper file handling techniques and always view your final layout at 100% zoom in its intended finished size to ensure you are pleased with the visual result.

For more information on dealing with this issue, read the [American Image Displays graphic FAQ](#).

A vector on the left shown in wireframe mode.
A raster on the right. Scalable object
vs. basic pixels that are resolution dependant



When enlarged, the vector is fine,
while the raster may drop in quality if
the resolution isn't high enough.



DISPLAY
HIGHLIGHT

Speaking of the exhibit floor, don't forget the carpet in your display space! Plain or printed!



Full color printed carpet



Hardwood Carpet Tiles

Visit us online for more information on these products and 1000's more!

Hire a Professional Designer

#10

As mentioned earlier, you have 3 seconds to get the attention of your target attendee at your event. If you have no designer on staff, or have never worked on such large displays before, you should consider hiring a professional large format graphic designer.

American Image Displays has a staff of designers that are experts at preparing layouts specifically for these types of applications. They know all of the tricks of the trade to get your graphic to communicate effectively on the event floor and the cost of hiring a professional can be quite reasonable.

Contact us today for a free design consultation over the phone. We can quickly determine what sort of design elements will be necessary for your new exhibit and provide you with instructions on what you will need to provide us with to begin the job.

Our goal is your satisfaction.

Benefits to hiring American Image Displays:

- Designers that have a unique insight into what graphics work best for events.
- Fast and friendly service; you will work directly with a designer from start to finish.
- All designs are completed using the latest version of Adobe Creative Suite.
- Your design files are supplied to you upon completion of the project so you can have the material on file for other design projects if necessary.
- All artwork is archived should you need it in the future.

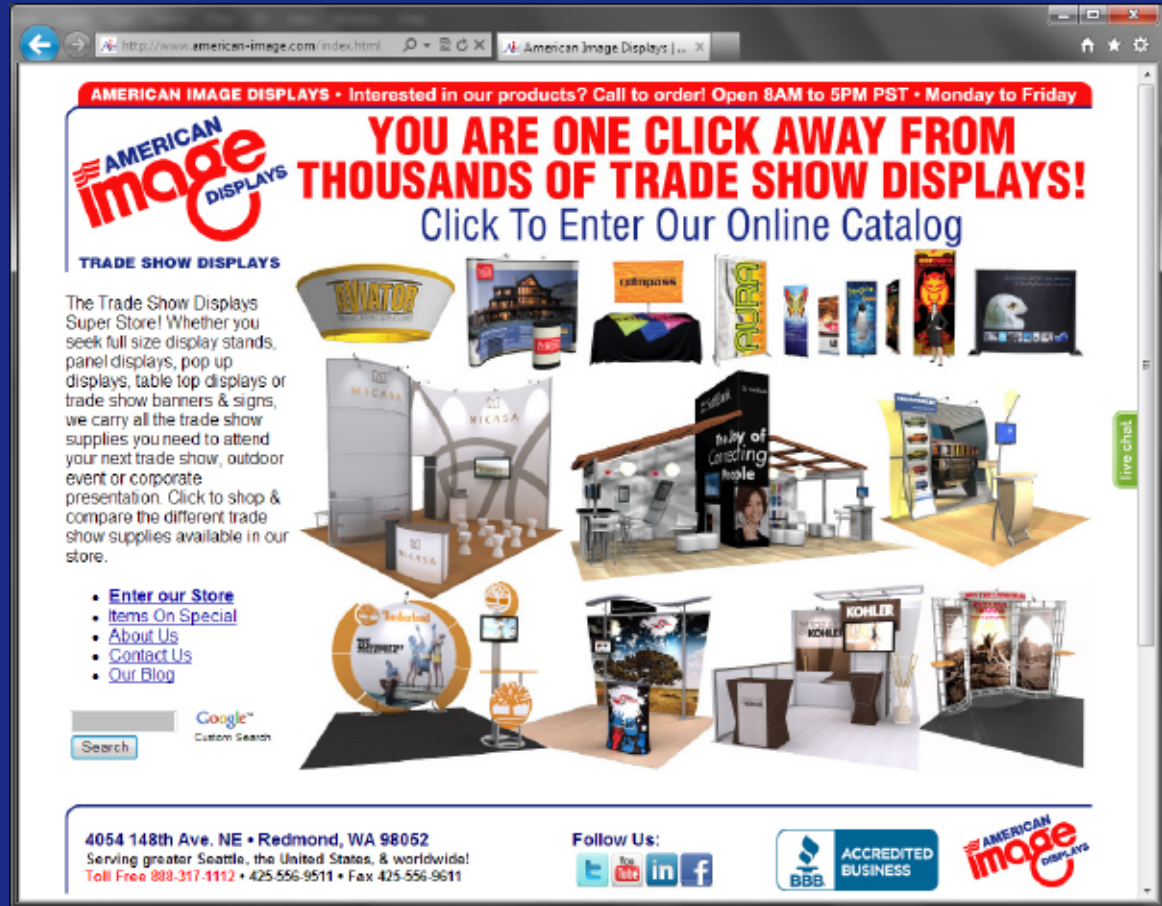


10 GRAPHIC Design TIPS

Prepared by: Jacob Norris
Fonts: Helvetica
Colors: Reflex Blue C & 485C
Software: Illustrator, Acrobat

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