

PORTABLE DISPLAY SUCCESS

FOR THE TRADE SHOW, EVENT AND RETAIL MARKETS



DESIGN DONE RIGHT

Bamboo X-Banner, an environmentally-friendly banner display. **p8**



Marge Margulies Pottery goes big and bold. **p6**

FROM THE TOP

Ever seen a poorly-designed portable display? You know the ones: crammed full of tiny text that you can only read from three inches away, decked out in drab colors — or no colors at all — or so generic that you barely even turn your head as you walk by?

Not good.

Beyond quality, affordability, and ease of use, great design plays a huge role in how successful your display will be. In this issue of PDS, we look at everything you need to know when it comes to designing your display: what works, what doesn't, and what will help you stand out from the crowd.

Very good.

— Jon Bell

Editor

Portable Display Success

EDITORIAL

Publisher

Travis Rigby

Editor

Jon Bell

PRODUCTION

Designer

Greg Sorrell

SUBSCRIPTION

Free Subscription E-mail:

subscriptions@portabledisplayssuccess.com

To unsubscribe E-mail:

unsubscribe@portabledisplayssuccess.com

HEADQUARTERS

630 NW 14th Ave • Portland, OR 97209

1-888-333-1845

www.PortableDisplaySuccess.com

Portable Display Success – Fall 2009

Portable Display Success is published four times a year by PosterGarden. All material is Copyright 2009 by PosterGarden unless otherwise noted or attributed. Reproduction or reuse of the content herein requires written permission from Portable Display Success.

How much can you put into — and get out of — a portable displays?

A lot, it seems, especially if you're talking about the all-new Protia Panel Display from PosterGarden.

Available in an array of wall and tower styles, the Protia Panel Display unites simplicity, innovation, and sustainability in an attractive and practical portable display.

Its simple hub and panel design make it easy to set up, and the various custom wall configurations are ideal for full-color graphics, merchandise, and more.

"This portable display is one of the most innovative, best looking, easiest to use and most creative to hit the market in a long, long time," says Michael Rigby, PosterGarden's director of product development. "It's just so easy to use and set up, but the end product, no matter what design you go with, really just makes for a stunning display."

In addition to their ease of use and head-turning appearance, Protia displays come with carrying cases and can be outfitted with optional — and sustainable — LED Lights.

And speaking of sustainability, the Protia's even got a little bit of that going for it too: it graphics are printed on Duraplast®, a durable foam board that's 100% biodegradable and 100% recyclable.

"There's not much else you could ask for in a portable display," says Rigby. "Innovation. Simplicity. Creativity. Sustainability. The Protia's got all that and more."



The limitless variations of the Protia display.

DESIGN DONE RIGHT

For real success at trade shows and events, portable displays need to be designed right.

By Jon Bell, Portable Display Success

It's a classic trade show rule: you have just about three seconds to catch the attention of the average passerby.

Three seconds. That's not very long. So the best portable displays need to work fast, and they do that with bright colors, unique shapes and styles, and, most importantly, great design.

"Design can make all the difference in the world when it comes to whether a portable display really ends up doing what it's supposed to or not," says Greg Sorrell, a graphic designer with PosterGarden. "It can play a major role in getting people to stop by your booth — or passing it by."

Good design encompasses not only the graphics, signage, and collateral that make up a portable display, but also the display itself. A sharp-looking, well-designed display with a unique shape or style can help differentiate a booth from its neighbors. It can also help grab attention in retail settings, at outdoor events, and just about anywhere else portable displays are found.

THE BASICS

Before you even begin to think about the design of your portable display, it's best to consider a few questions and ideas about what it is you want to accomplish.

Like effective billboards, the best portable displays answer a few key questions in a simple glance: Who are you? What do you do? Why should a customer choose you over someone else?

Come up with answers to those questions to help guide the primary design of your display graphics. Think also about how best to convey the right image of your company and its brand through the use of colors, logos, fonts, and other design elements.

Alex Selby, sales and marketing director for the outdoor apparel maker Icebreaker, says the company designed its Event Tent from PosterGarden with its brand in mind.

[Continued on pg 4](#)



ICEBREAKER used a large image with a simple tag line for their Fabric Counter.

“Instead of just picking a base color and a color to print with, we were able to design a tent based on our brand guidelines and give it the Icebreaker look and feel,” he says. The company also carried those design elements through in an Event Flag and a Fabric Counter.

“By speaking to the product,” he adds, “the tent invites future customers to come check us out.”

Once you’ve determined the message you want to share, consider the display options before you. With portable displays like banner stands and fabric pop-ups, it’s simple to get creative because their graphics can usually be swapped out relatively easily. That feature comes in handy, for example, when you have a new product you’re releasing at a show and you want to direct focus to it.

J. Dowell, administrative director for NeuroScience Associates, a scientific firm in Knoxville, Tenn., took flexibility into account when designing the company’s three Endeavor Banner Stands.

“Because our trade shows vary in floor plan size and topic, it was important to make the display flexible yet consistent,” she says.

Two of the banner stands have graphics



NeuroScience Associates designed their Endeavors with flexibility in mind.

that provide a general overview of the company and its services. They can either stand together as one display or be used to flank additional banner stands on either side. For example, NeuroScience Associates may insert a topic-specific banner stand in between the two end stands should such a show call for it.

Portable displays also offer a lot of different accessory options, such as tables, chairs, counters and podiums, brochure holders, and more to help you design a display that works for you. And price-wise, they can help you stretch your dollars way more than large custom displays.



GOOD GRAPHICS

The easiest way to design the most effective portable display graphics? Keep it simple.

“There’s a tendency for people to try and pack as much as they can onto a banner or fabric popup,” says Sorrell. “What works best, though, are bold colors, a central image, and very limited verbiage that boils down the company message.”

This comes back to the three-second rule, because if a prospect isn’t able to figure out what it is your company does and why he should care without reading a full-on dissertation, he’s probably not going to bother.

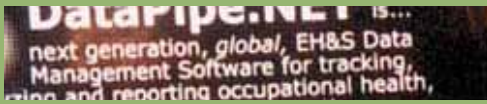
Go for bright primary colors that represent your company. Use an eye-catching headline to create a stir, and focus on one strong image that’s not only aesthetically pleasing, but that reinforces your company, your message, and your products and services. The best displays, like the old saying for writers goes, show, don’t tell, so don’t pack a visual display full of text and bullet points. [\(See sidebar for more tips.\)](#)

Once you’ve got your display designed, make sure people at a show see it by lighting it up with halogen or, even better, earth-friendly LED lights. [Continued on pg 5](#)

Graphic Design 101

It's not tough to get your portable display off to a great start. Here are a few common graphic mistakes – and how you can avoid them.

Wordiness – You've got mere seconds to capture attention at a trade show. "Keeping it simple and clean makes it a lot easier for attendees to see," says PosterGarden customer Lori Halsey, the production manager and art director for Moose River Publishing.



Fancy Fonts – Sure, a decorative Old English font may look great on a wedding invitation, but when it comes to portable display graphics, clarity is key. Stick to sans serif and serif styles, which are easy to distinguish and read.

HAND TO HAND

HELPING HANDS

Sound like more than you're up for? Consider enlisting a professional graphic designer for help. But not just anyone. Large format trade show graphics are an art form of their own. Go with a firm that specializes in graphics for trade shows and portable displays.

The same goes for having your graphics printed out. You'll be disappointed if you invest a lot of time and money in your design and then cut corners with a printer who has no expertise in trade show graphics. Instead, look for someone with a good track record who prints on high-quality materials like Lexan, EcoKnit or EcoWeave, not PVC or flimsy vinyl.

Line of sight – Put key text near the top of your display. The two-foot area across the top of the back wall is what show attendees will see most during a crowded show. Whenever possible, keep the rest of your text as close to eye-level as you can.



Picture Perfect – The real focus of your display should be your main image, so make it a good one. That means professional quality, high resolution and in line with what your display company needs for top-notch reproduction.



Low-resolution images will appear pixelated when printed out.

"There's an obvious difference in displays that have been done right from start to finish and those that haven't," Sorrell says. "Take the time and effort to do it right and you'll notice a world of difference."



STANDING OUT

Cool displays

COMPANY

Metalfrío Solutions, Boerne, TX

A nice-looking catalog from PosterGarden first prompted Metalfrío Solutions to order some new portable displays. But Linda Sanders, a sales and marketing specialist for the commercial refrigeration company, says the end results of the Metalfrío's order — two Flora Retractable Banner Stands and two Headers — would bring the company back to PosterGarden again.

“It was easy to work with the people at PosterGarden and the end results were very professional,” she says. “I would use them again.”

Metalfrío, one of the largest commercial refrigeration companies in the world, uses the custom-printed headers and Flora Retractable Banner Stands at industry trade shows. And when they're not out in the field, they're on display at the company's headquarters in Boerne, Texas.



Metalfrío went with Flora Retractable Banner Stands, which feature sturdy aluminum frames and an easy packing system.

Artistic touch

COMPANY

Marge Margulies Pottery, Guerneville, CA

Ceramic artist Marge Margulies wanted a big, bold, and colorful picture backdrop for her pottery display booth so that she and her unique pottery would stand out.

She found it in a full-color header from PosterGarden.

“I think big is the ticket for a picture backdrop, otherwise you get lost in the crowd,” says Margulies, who's used her header at art shows in Washington, Colorado and Illinois. “I chose this because of the ability to choose the particular dimensions that I wanted, and because I wanted it to be indestructible, easy to pack, and look good even after being rolled up.”

PosterGarden headers achieve all that because they're printed on durable Lexan or Scrim Vinyl, both of which can be rolled up for storage or transport without creasing or damaging the image.

“My old ones were big and gorgeous, but they were photos on foam core and started to get very messed up looking on the edges, retained scratches, and buckled when they got damp,” Margulies says. “This thing can be hosed off!” She also says the print quality and colors on her header turned out great — and that other people have noticed.

“I get lots of comments,” she says, “especially from other artists.”



Marge Margulies ordered a full-color header from PosterGarden to draw attention to her colorful pottery.

Keeping it simple

COMPANY

RCSB Protein Data Bank, Piscataway, NJ

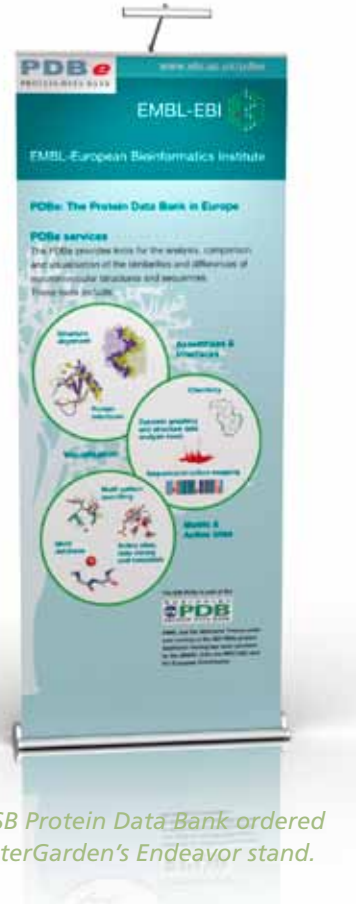
If you want to know what the RCSB Protein Data Bank does, you could visit its web site (www.pdb.org) and read about how it serves as a resource for researchers and students studying biological macromolecules and their relationships to sequence, function, and disease.

Or, you could go the easier route and take a quick gander at the PDB's Endeavor Retractable Banner Stands for a colorful look at DNA, hemoglobin, and other biological structures.

"We created a graphic that gets incorporated into our discussions at the booth . . . so we can quickly demonstrate the types of information we have," says Christine Zardecki, a researcher at the PDB. "The image also shows the experimental path of how these structures are determined, so we also use the banner as a teaching aid."

Zardecki says the PDB's displays have traveled to scientific meetings all over the world. Researchers appreciate how the stands nicely fill a 10'x10' booth yet still leave room for a table.

"We definitely appreciate its ease of assembly after years of using a more complicated stand," she says.



RCSB Protein Data Bank ordered PosterGarden's Endeavor stand.

Drawing them in

COMPANY

The PSI-Nature Structural Genomics Knowledgebase, Piscataway, NJ

When the PSI-Nature Structural Genomics Knowledgebase sets up at various scientific conferences across the country, attendees usually are walking too far away from their booth to see what's sitting on their tables. (Information on biological proteins and what-not.)

So Margaret Gabayi, a research associate with the Protein Data Bank (see related story above), was glad to find a display that would catch people's attention and make them come over for a closer look.

"We chose the Lonicera 24" with the TerraPro Graphic," she says. "I like its shape (tall but narrow, like a sail), portability with the nice case, and ease of assembly. Once assembled, it's extremely lightweight and easy to maneuver, but the overall presentation is amazing with the brilliant colors and additional spotlight that makes the graphics stand out. This banner is eye-catching and draws people in."



The PSI-Nature Structural Genomics Knowledgebase uses a Lonicera Banner Stand because the graphics are vibrant and colorful.

Ask Anything

Q. THE VENUES WHERE I USE PORTABLE DISPLAYS ARE USUALLY PRETTY SMALL, THE EVENTS ARE LOW-KEY, AND THERE ARE NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE. SO, I LIKE TO GET IN QUICK AND SET UP EASILY AND THEN BE ABLE TO TAKE IT ALL DOWN THE SAME WAY. WHAT'S MY BEST BET?



TrickAir ordered a Tabletop Retractable, which literally sets up in seconds.

A: A. For starters, find some better events to attend! Just kidding. Even small events merit great-looking portable displays so you can really make an impact on people. One of the easiest routes to go? A folding table, custom-printed table throw, and a Tabletop Retractable from PosterGarden. The table's easy to set up, the throw can be printed in whatever color you want with your logo, and the retractable, which literally sets up in seconds, has your custom graphics printed in full-color.

Q. HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR PORTABLE DISPLAYS THAT STAND OUT IN A RETAIL ENVIRONMENT?

A: A. It's not easy to catch attention these days, what with all the information and signage and audio and video options all around. PosterGarden offers a whole line of in-store displays designed just for the retail environment, including an In-Store Rollup Display and an In-Store Display Flag. One of the most unique, however, is the Bamboo X-Banner, a quick and easy environmentally-friendly banner display that really catches the eye. Give it a try and let us know what you think.



PosterGarden's Bamboo X-Banner, a quick and easy environmentally-friendly banner display that really catches the eye.