

**Nomadic**  **Display**®

All Eyes on You:  
**graphics**  
**that work**

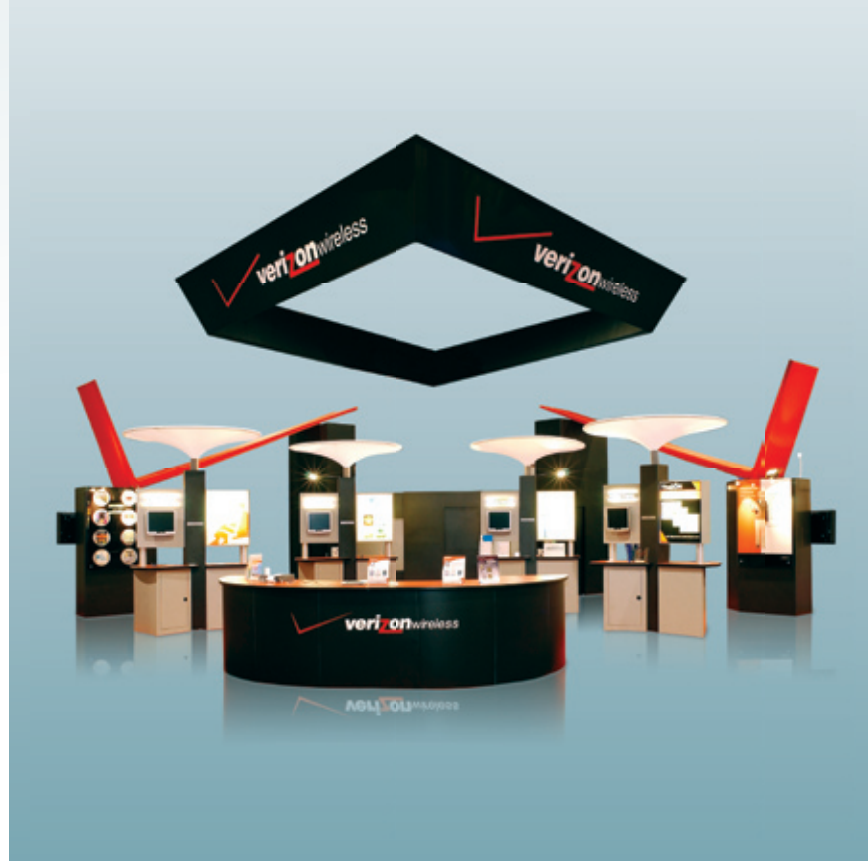


What differentiates an average display from a great display? What single element can capture an attendee's attention, make them stop in the aisle and give your display – which may be one among thousands – a second or even third look? One thing...

## Graphics.

Graphics serve many purposes namely: they communicate who you are, give insight into the way you do business, and help illuminate the benefits your products and services can provide. Often, your graphics act as an oversized business card: identifying your exhibit and acting as a silent ambassador to the crowd.

That's a big job for some design elements. After all, what we're talking about here is color choice, logo design, and other visual elements, skillfully combined to communicate a specific message. What separates a good combination of graphical elements from a bad one?



Here at Nomadic Display, we've worked with thousands of exhibitors who face the same challenges you encounter. Over the years, we've learned a thing or two about design which we want to share with you. In this white paper, we've collected some of that wisdom to help you navigate the sometimes confusing world of graphic design for the display environment. In the next few pages, you'll discover:

- What makes a great graphic
- The benefits of great graphics
- How great graphics reinforce your brand
- Ways to use graphics to attract attention and communicate quickly
- How to create a messaging hierarchy
- The power of appealing to your target audience
- Maximizing visibility — why it is imperative and how to do it

# What Makes a great graphic?

Graphic designers and artists spend years and years studying the many disparate elements that go into creating a great graphic. While we could certainly use the rest of this space sharing just a fraction of what they know, we'll simply touch upon a few highlights.

A great graphic is first and foremost a communication tool. It attracts attention and conveys your message clearly and concisely. Ideally, your graphic is easy to read, and will appeal to your target audience's interest and sense of style.

A number of elements go into designing a great graphic: color choices, contrast, shape selection, size and amount of text, and more. All of these elements must work coherently together to reinforce your brand, as well as fulfill a functional purpose, such as identifying your company exhibit or spotlighting a new product.



# The Benefits of great graphics

To maximize the results of your participation in a display event, such as a tradeshow or convention, it is essential that you capture the attendee's attention, engage with them on multiple levels, and reinforce your brand image.

Graphics play a pivotal role in this task. The better your graphics are, the easier your job as a marketer becomes. Why? Because, in essence, great graphics help in your sales process.

First, great graphics attract audience attention. Visually engaging your target audience involves using carefully selected colors and design elements, to spark curiosity about a new company or to serve as familiar signposts to a friendly face.

Because great graphics clearly communicate not only who your company is, but how you do business and what products and services you're offering, they attract more qualified prospects to your display.

For example, a buyer for a line of stores specializing in novelty products will take one look at the graphics for a high-end jewelry supplier and realize that they don't need to visit them. Meanwhile, the buyer

for a line of luxury boutiques will hone in on the message given and be attracted to the display. This increases your potential sales. Your graphics act as a reminder for attendees who are familiar with your company to visit you, and they introduce your products and services to completely new prospects.

Great graphics are also one of the most efficient ways to communicate with your target audience. Since your graphics can be seen by a number of people at once, you're projecting your marketing message in a very cost-effective manner. Well-designed graphics convey essential information about your company to event attendees, maximizing the amount of data that can be conveyed during the average attendee's split-second attention span.



All Eyes on You: graphics that work

# How to Use Great Graphics to reinforce your brand

Brand is one of the most important and yet least understood assets that a company owns. Because it is intangible, many people have a difficult time pinpointing exactly what goes into creating an effective brand. Yet creating a strong, effective brand is one of the most essential elements of business success.

A brand can be defined as all of those factors that contribute to your company's image. Brand communicates your corporate personality: for example, take a look at Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. Their distinctive 'counter-culture' brand has helped them develop a unique position in the competitive frozen treat marketplace.

Key to creating an effective brand is consistency. It is vital that all company communications, up to and including your display, must reinforce the desired company image and personality at all times.

The easiest way to accomplish this at display events is to revisit the road you've already traveled. Take stock of the other brand messages your target audience has already been exposed to. Sources of these brand messages include all types of advertising, collateral material, web site graphics, and product packaging. You'll find a gold mine of images and messages that can be used and adapted for graphics to use in the display environment.

There are two ways to go about this: **literally** and **figuratively**.

**Literally** means taking existing graphics and adapting them to be used in your display. This might mean altering the size and format of existing graphics. There are some clear advantages to this option: It's easier and generally takes less time than custom designed graphics since you don't have to reinvent the wheel. It also allows the display to capitalize on already established graphics that resonate with the public. Witness the "Time to Make the Donuts" campaign successfully used by Dunkin Donuts for years.

The other option is to **figuratively** use existing graphics. In this option, designers create new graphics for your display, making liberal use of existing branding elements. For example, existing color schemes, font treatments, copy or other design elements can be 'carried over' into the new graphics. For example, McDonald's golden arches have famously shown up in an almost endless number of marketing campaigns throughout the years, an immutable element set against a constantly dynamic background of time-sensitive efforts.

Whether you choose to use your existing graphics in a literal or figurative fashion, your goal is to ensure that all of your graphics remain true to your brand. Consistency is key. All of your marketing communications look like they belong to one big, happy, successful family.

# using graphics

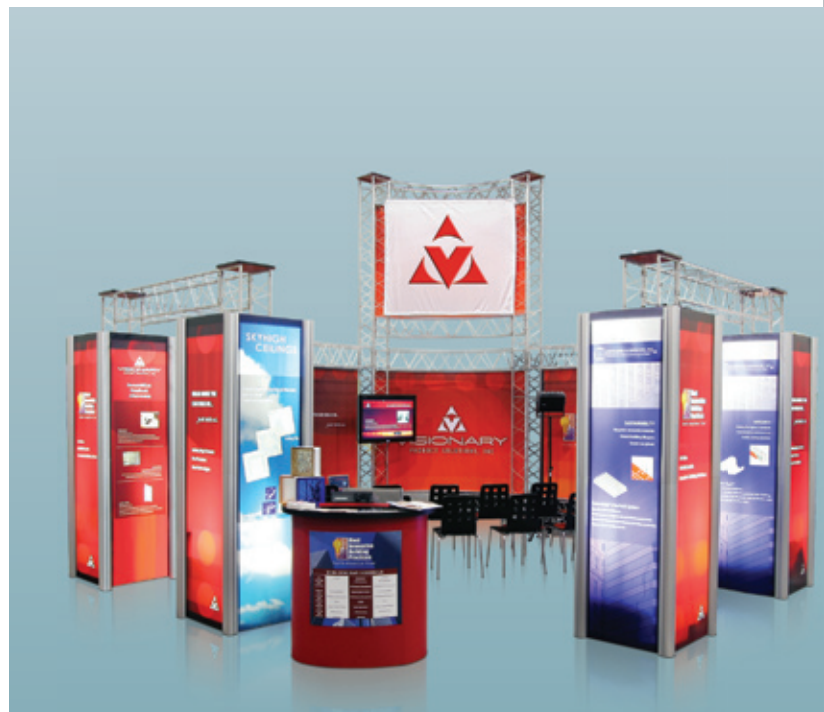
## to Attract Attention and Communicate Quickly

According to recent tradeshow industry research, the average attendee spends less than a day at an event. During that time, there are literally hundreds of exhibits, each vying for the most precious commodity going: the attendee's time and attention. From high-tech interactive displays to scantily-clad models working the show floor, there are countless vivid stimuli to catch the eye, entice the ear, or even tantalize the nose.

In this highly competitive environment, you have approximately 2–3 seconds to grab an attendee's attention. If you miss this critical window of opportunity, you miss everything. The attendees are already past you, on their way down the aisle to the next exhibit.

### What can you do?

There are two graphical elements you can use to attract attention and capitalize on the two second window open to you. These elements are **headline copy** and **product graphics**.



## Headline Copy

Headline copy is the text used in your graphic. Brevity counts: you want to limit your text to a few words. The more clear and concise your text, the more likely the attendee is to actually read it. Remember, in the chaotic environment of a tradeshow or other display event, no one is going to take the time to read great blocks of text.

Instead, you want to aim for clarity. You want your audience to understand instantaneously, almost intuitively, the message you're attempting to convey. Reduce your message to its simplest elements: a few words and simple to understand imagery.

At the same time, you want your headline copy to be visually compelling. This means an emphasis on bold and simple. Forgo fancy fonts that are difficult to read, or small text that cannot be perceived at a distance. In addition, highly contrasting color schemes are desirable, interesting and inviting.



## Product Graphics

The conventional wisdom says: "One picture is worth a thousand words." We'd even take it a step farther, and say that "one picture should replace a thousand words."

There's often a great temptation to add secondary copy to display graphics, further enriching the content and adding detail to the display. However, yielding to this temptation results in a cluttered, busy display which can, more often than not, visually alienate your viewer.

Embracing the 'Less is More' approach gives you room for images or logos, which can communicate your message just as effectively and often more efficiently than text. Make sure that any imagery used reinforces both your brand and your marketing message. Again, simplicity carries the day. Clean, easy to understand design makes your exhibit easy to understand at a distance.

Remember, attendees will be encountering your display for the first time from a dozen feet away. Test run your display, and assess readability. Can you clearly understand the message the display conveys or are you squinting to read the text? Remember, show attendees won't bother to squint — they'll just walk on by.



# Creating a message hierarchy

Every graphic element of your display has a job. This job may be to direct attendee's attention to your display. It may be to identify your company. It may be to spotlight a new product or service.

Just as every employee in a company has a place in the organizational chart, clearly delineating what their duties are, each graphical element in a display should have a role in the messaging hierarchy. Every message communicated via your graphics is important, however, they're not all equally important. Make sure that one message doesn't compete with another. Instead, graphics should work together as a team, complementing each other and presenting a unified, cohesive message.

Graphics become progressively more complex as visitors work their way deeper into your exhibit and message. Initial contact should be bold, bright and simple, while interior pieces detailing technical specifications, for example, will necessarily be more complex. Yet a unifying theme — color scheme, company logos, and design elements — should tie these graphic 'levels' together. The number of levels required at any given event will depend on the size and complexity of the exhibit, as well as the number of product groupings and products.

Moving from the simplest to the most involved, we encounter the following levels:

## Company ID Graphics

These are your highest and largest signs, and typically they are the simplest. You need these graphics to be visible from outside the exhibit, possibly at different height levels, easy to read, visually bold and uncluttered.

## Directional Graphics

Smaller, and used to direct visitors to specific product groupings or within a complex exhibit, directional graphics must be easy to locate, readable at an appropriate distance, and clearly worded. Additionally, care must be taken that directional graphics do not detract attention from the products or other messaging.

## Product Graphics

These are your bite-sized graphics: just enough for one individual to interact with at a time. Location and scale are critical. This is the place to put your detailed information, formatted in such a way to reinforce your branding and marketing message. These graphics are often used to complement product samples or demonstrations.

## The Power of Appealing to Your

# target audience

Given enough market research, it's probably safe to assume that you know who comprises your target audience. The question is: do they know who you are?

Great graphics will ensure that even if your target audience isn't familiar with you, they'll want to find out. Every attendee at a display event shares a common concern. They want to know: "What's in it for me?"

Great graphics answer that question. By the choices you make, from color to font style, images to shape selection, you've got a chance to communicate directly with your target audience on a number of levels.

- Show them you understand the challenges they're facing.
- Communicate the benefits you can provide.
- Speak their language.

For example, shipping giant UPS often use graphics illustrating their ability to ship



packages internationally. Their distinctive brown trucks are shown traversing middle America, Parisian streets, the Australian outback. This appeals to their target customers: people who need to ship packages to many varied locations.

At the same time, it is imperative that your graphics be visually appealing to your target audience. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so it is crucial to understand what your audience finds aesthetically pleasing. The attendee who is looking for products and services for a young, edgy teenaged demographic will want something markedly different from the attendee seeking products and services for the over-65 set. Be careful to avoid anything that your target audience might find insulting, including cultural taboos, or images and language that might be perceived as discriminatory or demeaning.



# maximizing visibility

## Why it is Imperative and How to Do It

To have great graphics, you have to have visible graphics. Even the best design in the world won't work if no one can see it.

There are two primary considerations that relate to visibility: **Size** and **Placement**

**Size** covers the physical dimensions of your graphic, any copy and images used in it, and proportion to the exhibit as a whole. For example, a graphic the size of a standard postcard will be lost in a standard-sized display booth. An extreme example perhaps, but yet one you'll want keep it in mind when selecting graphics.

Consider how far away viewers will be from your graphics.

- Are the graphics easily seen from this distance?
- Can the copy be read?
- Are the images easily understood?

If you've answered "No" to any of these three questions, you need to work with your designer to improve matters.

**Placement** involves the location of your graphics. Too often, graphics are blocked from view by other elements, such as people walking by or through the exhibit or informational displays.

Again, take the time to consider your display in use. Ask yourself what can interfere with an attendee's view of the graphics.

- Are they too high or too low?
- Will they be obscured by crowds of visitors, furnishings, product displays, or your staff?

Bad graphic placement is often a result of graphics designed on a computer screen by someone who isn't aware of the physical environment or the unique circumstances of the average display event. Help your designer do a better job by providing a floor plan of the entire hall where you'll be exhibiting, highlighting columns and other barriers to view. Ask your supplier to place the graphics on a 3-D rendering of the exhibit for review, before you commit to something that won't work for you.



# Nomadic graphics evaluator

We developed this checklist to help you evaluate whether your graphic designs are working for you. Use it yourself and ask your colleagues to complete it. Then share the resulting scores. You may not always agree but this checklist will help you build consensus internally and help you to communicate any concerns with your graphic designers. Good luck!

## Brand and Corporate Image

Consistent with other brand messages in advertising, web site and collateral the audience may have seen.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Reinforces/reflects/expresses the brand in terms of image and quality.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Has a look and feel consistent with the brand image.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Does not distract from product or other messaging.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

## Noticeability

Quickly grabs the attendee's eye.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Is attractive in the eyes of the attendee.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

## Simplicity

Has brief, clear copy.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Visuals are easy to understand.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Visuals make the message easier to understand.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Message can be understood almost instantaneously.

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

## Visibility

Attendees can see the graphic (placed at the right height, no part of the message too high or low or blocked from view).

- Extremely Effective     Effective
- Not Effective

Easy to read/understand from its functional distance (size, font, colors, copy amount, etc.)

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

## Relevance of Messaging

Message speaks to the target audience.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

## Communicate Company Name

Highly visible from outside the exhibit.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Is easy to read/boldy visual/uncluttered

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Fits appropriately in the messaging hierarchy.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

## Direction/Product Groupings

Easy to locate.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Readable at an appropriate distance.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Clear in purpose.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Does not distract from other graphics/displays.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Fits appropriately in the messaging hierarchy.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

## Provide Product Specific Information

Easily seen and read at the appropriate distance.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Does not distract from products or other messaging.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Fits appropriately in the messaging hierarchy.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Visuals are simple and support the copy.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

Minimal copy.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

## Overall

The graphic work/ fit in with the other messaging and booth elements.

- Extremely Effective
- Effective
- Not Effective

# About nomadic display



Selecting the right graphics for your display can be tricky. So much rests upon choosing the right combination of text, color, images and more. Nomadic Display can help. With over 30 years of experience in the display industry, we know what works and what doesn't — and we're more than happy to share that experience with you. We're committed to making your display event the most positive, profitable experience possible. Your success is our success!

**Nomadic Display** revolutionized the display industry 30 years ago with the invention of pop-up technology. Today, we are a leading producer of portable and modular exhibit systems with manufacturing facilities in suburban Washington, DC and Ireland. Nomadic products are sold through 200 showrooms worldwide.

Visit [www.nomadicdisplay.com](http://www.nomadicdisplay.com) for fast, easy access to Nomadic Display's wide array of solutions and tools. Our searchable databases of hundreds of display designs and rental properties make it easy to find display options that meet your needs without ever having to leave your desk. Nomadic Display's Solutions Design Studio is available to create custom renderings that integrate your brand image and functional needs with a cost effective custom modular display solution.





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