



Designing Signs and Banners for Impact

1. **Determine the best size for your banner, poster or sign.** There are several factors to consider. First, think about your message and your audience. Do you want to shout or subtly remind?
2. **Carefully review where the piece will be placed.** While bigger is usually better, it is also possible to overpower an area. Use paper mock-ups to gauge what size will work best. In determining where to place a banner, poster or sign, consider how people will move past the item and where to best capture their attention. To maximize exposure, the message can be conveyed in more than one location. Also, make it easy for customers to act on your message. Once you have their attention, what do you want them to do? Sign up? Ask questions? Request a brochure?
3. **Determine what colors you will use to attract attention.** In public places, with lots of competition, bright and bold colors also help you break through the “clutter,” whereas subdued hues may get lost. Color choices should be consistent with existing marketing materials. At the same time, make sure color selections for a large display complement the mood and environment.
4. **Say it in Pictures.** The old adage, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” is magnified when it comes to banners, posters and signs. Seldom are these formats used with words only. You have only a few seconds to capture someone’s attention. Visuals, whether photos or other graphics, are essential. The best visuals are those that contain a strong central focal point as opposed to many elements that may not convey a clear message at a glance.
5. **Words must be large enough to read at a distance.** Stand back at least five feet from your banner, poster or sign. If you cannot read it, increase the type size. Also, choose simple, easy-to-read typestyles and avoid those that are ornamental or in script.
6. **Consult with an Expert.** New digital color printing technology has created a long list of new materials and techniques for producing signs, posters and banners. This list can be daunting, but by asking a few simple questions, your print professional will make your decisions easy:
 1. How long will your piece be used?
 2. Where will the piece be displayed – inside or outside?
 3. What is your budget?
7. **Determine where the piece will be displayed and length of use to help dictate the material on which it will be printed.** Outdoor banners are almost always created on vinyl and adhered to painted plywood or aluminum. Most indoor signs are produced on paper and mounted on foam core for short-term use. However, some indoor signs need extra protection or added durability. Signs created on vinyl or canvas can usually be mounted directly on a wall. Any sign that will be exposed to direct sunlight will need to be protected with an ultra violet (UV) laminate. Plastic framing or laminating preserves signs that will be used for a long time or will be subject to fingerprints, spills (which will cause the ink to run), or being written on. Of course, your budget will also determine the nature of your sign, poster or banner. Costs are typically calculated per square foot, but will vary based on material, lamination and mounting. The range would be from \$5 to \$15 per square foot.