

Sustainable POP Design Basics

Whilst there is a wealth of information available about how to design more sustainable POP displays, here is a concise list of a number of POP design basics to help you head toward more sustainable options:

Re-Usable Designs

Components or complete displays can be designed for ongoing re-use or for multiple uses. This reduces the total number of new displays needed to be produced, and should have an overall reduction in the volume of resources consumed and landfill created.

Ideas for re-usable designs include printing posters double-sided with consecutive campaigns, or producing generic displays where only the campaign specific graphics are changed.



Low Energy Consumption

Displays that require mains power for lighting and movement should be designed using low energy electrical components where possible.

The most common forms of these are Compact Fluorescent and LED lighting. Many people assume 'low voltage' halogen lighting is also 'low energy' – but it isn't.

Movement sensing actuation will also ensure that displays only consume power when a customer approaches or is viewing the display.

Dismantling & De-Construction

It is pointless to specify and use recyclable materials in permanent displays if they are permanently joined (eg glued or welded) to effectively prevent or at least hamper dismantling at end of life.

Alternative, mechanical methods of joining components such as 'christmas tree clips' can greatly increase the chances of display components being placed in the correct bin for recycling.

Material selection also needs to be considered to ensure that recyclable materials are used where possible, and that retailers will have access to proper channels to recycle the various components of the display.

If these channels aren't available, otherwise recyclable components could still end their life as landfill.

Simpler Designs

This can involve reducing both the number of components and the number of different materials used in displays.

Reducing the number of components tends to reduce both manufacturing and assembly costs and the energy required to do so.

Reducing the variety of materials employed has a



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similar effect, and also simplifies the dismantling and recycling process when disposing of displays post-use.

Use less material

Put simply, the aim is to reduce the quantity of each material used in each display or to 'light weight' the design.

Reduced material inputs reduces both material cost and the total resource and energy consumption of the unit.

Any light-weighting initiatives must also take account of performance constraints such as durability and strength, which cannot be compromised.

Designers and manufacturers need to also consider waste minimisation during production. This could include reviewing material sheet sizes and yields, and changes to component dimensions to achieve maximum material yield.

The sourcing of custom sheet sizes to suit a particular component will also reduce sheet wastage.

Move to more permanent displays

Increasing the life-span of displays or at least the majority of the components of a display reduces the need to replace them, and thus decreases resource consumption.

This initiative requires finding a balance between the flexibility offered by using temporary displays, which are 100% disposed of after use, and the relatively less flexible permanent display, which does offer sustainability benefits.

Use of sustainable materials

This is the area that most readily comes to mind when thinking about sustainable POP design and manufacturing.



New, more sustainable materials are being launched every week within the POP industry, and they are rapidly becoming cost-competitive with traditional materials.

Over the coming months POPAI will be providing members with information and links to suppliers offering such alternatives.

Designs that can be updated

Consideration should be given to the future requirements of displays – in particular permanent displays.

Early consideration of likely future trends or needs may allow existing displays to be retro-fitted to meet new requirements rather than being completely replaced.

These considerations could include future pack sizes, new products or new technology.

