OPPORTUNITY POCKET GUIDE:
Graphics/Sign

THE GRAPHICS/SIGN OPPORTUNITY

Sign and display graphics is a broad category of print products that are always in high demand. This print application is significant across many organizations because it is used to promote and sell products, capture attention, educate, provide directions, and build brand equity.

MARKET SIZE

Because sign and display graphics is a broad category, there are many ways to gauge its size and growth. One measure is annual spending on out-of-home (OOH) advertising — a key application area. The Out of Home Advertising Association of America (OAAA) estimates annual spending on OOH is $8.6 billion.

Insights from current sign and display graphics providers offer another indication of the upward trajectory of these applications. In the recent NAPCO Research report "Who Buys Wide-Format Display Graphics: How, from Whom, and Why" 88% of sign and display graphic providers surveyed expected sales growth.

MANY APPLICATIONS

Sign and display graphic applications can be found everywhere. Here are examples of common applications:

- Banners
- Posters
- Signs
- Window graphics
- Soft signs
- Floor graphics
- Point-of-purchase displays
- Vehicle wraps

KEY USER MARKETS

Sign and display graphics are used across several industries and are commonly found in these markets: retail, hospitality, events, and education.

ENTRY INTO THE SEGMENT

The oversized print work that is common in sign and display production is often produced on digital wide-format devices — typically in print widths greater than 36".

For print service providers that already have small-format digital printing capabilities, adding wide-format printing equipment is a logical extension, as they will already have knowledge of the digital printing workflow.

DIGITAL PRINTING

Digital wide-format printers can be roll-fed devices, flatbed printers, or a combination of both (hybrid). Table 1 summarizes the types of inks used in wide-format printing, their key applications, and strengths/weaknesses.

Table 1: Digital Wide-Format Printers by Ink Type

Technology	Applications	Strengths/Weaknesses
Aqueous (water-based)	Fine art, photography, posters (indoor)	▌Strong image quality ▌Low system cost ▌Limited to indoor use
Dye-sublimation	Fabric, t-shirts, wall hangings	▌High quality ▌Very durable ▌Specialized focus
Latex	Indoor & outdoor graphics, textiles	▌Low system cost ▌Application variety
Solvent	Outdoor graphics	▌Low operating costs ▌Image durability ▌Environmental concerns
Eco-solvent	Indoor & outdoor graphics	▌Low initial investment ▌Image durability
UV-curable	Indoor & outdoor graphics	▌Image durability ▌Substrate flexibility ▌High system cost

SUBSTRATES

A core factor driving the creativity and diversity of applications is that digital wide-format printing devices can print on an extensive collection of media and substrates. Here is a sampling of common substrates used in producing signs and graphics:

- Paper and paperboard
- Vinyl
- Acrylic
- PVC

- Fabric
- Window film
- Foamcore
- Adhesive sheeting

FINISHING

Finishing is an essential component in the production of most sign and display graphic applications. Here is a list of common finishing options:

- Laminating and coating
- Mounting
- Sewing
- Grommeting: punching holes in a print and reinforcing with metal or plastic rings through which string or other material can be threaded and used to mount or secure a sign
- Cutting: options include diecutting with a shaped steel die that cuts the print into a shape, or laser cutting, which can create more elaborate and complex shapes or effects
- Routing: automates the cutting process and enables the creation of more elaborate patterns, grooves, and shapes
- Tiling: divides a large image into smaller pieces or tiles which are assembled like a giant jigsaw puzzle

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

- Assess the opportunity to sell graphics and signs to current customers.
- Before investing in equipment, decide what products make sense for your business and your customers.
- Do not overlook an investment in finishing.
- Use the resources of associations serving producers of sign and display graphics.
- Read industry publications, including *Wide-format Impressions* (www.wideformatimpressions.com).
- Visit sign and display graphic suppliers at the PRINTING United Expo.

LEARN MORE ON THE SHOW FLOOR*

*List may not include all related exhibitors. For a full list, download the PRINTING United Expo mobile app.

About Wide-format
- PDAA Wide-Format Zone — B8110
- Wide-Format & Digital Textile Community Hub — C3409

Digital Wide-Format Printers
- Agfa — B2832
- Canon USA — B15083, B4033
- CET Color — C2103
- Digitech — C2247
- Direct Color Systems — C2536
- Diversified Printing Techniques — C1246
- Durst Image Technology — B11033
- EFI — C2646
- Epson America — C2847
- Flora/Shenzhen Digital Equipment Co. — B7063
- Fluid Color — B2818
- FUJIFILM — B2506
- Glantz — C1912
- Grimco — C665, C2619
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- HP — B13013
- Kelly Spicers — B9013
- Mimaki USA — C2831
- Mutoh America — C2047
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- OMSO North America, Inc. — B7099
- Optimum Digital USA — B12073
- Roland DGA — B13071
- SCG Digital America Inc — C515
- Stratojet USA — B4023
- swissQprint America — C2447
- Tubelite Denco — C2764
- Vanguard Digital Printing Systems (Durst Group) — B11049

Substrates/Media
- Beaver Paper & Graphic Media Inc — C3147
- Calsak Plastics — B13105
- Drytac — B13119
- Fellers — C1565
- GPA – Specialty Substrates — B9079
- Greentex America — C2607
- Grimco Inc. — C2619, C665
- Keder Solutions — B14094
- Kelly Spicers — B9013
- Laird Plastics — B10119
- Laminacorr Industries — C2361
- Mac Papers — B15071
- Mactac — B9113
- Millcraft Paper Company — C3329
- Nekoosa — B8073
- NuCoat — C565
- Quality Media & Laminating Solutions Inc — C3029
- TVF — C2905
- Ultraflex — B10019

Finishing
- AGL (Advanced Greig Laminators) — B10033
- Colex — B11113
- Digitech — C2247
- Elitron America Inc. — C2303
- Grant Graphics — C3134
- Grimco — C665, C2619
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- Kala Finishing Systems — B7011
- Matik Sei Laser — C2811
- MultiCam/Kongsberg Precision Cutting Systems — B7033
- Mutoh America — C2047
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- OMSO North America, Inc. — B7099
- Sakurai — B1605
- Summa America — C3135
- Trotec Laser — C1932
- Tubelite Denco — C2764
- Zünd — C2627