



NAWBO

- ▶ Member Roster
- ▶ 2002 NAWBO Leadership Awards
- ▶ Membership
- ▶ About NAWBO
- ▶ NAWBO News and Events
- ▶ Council News
- ▼ NAWBO Library
- ▶ NAWBO National Awards
- ▶ Communications: The Key to Success in Business
- ▶ Strategic Planning Discussion Boards



Member Articles

GRAPHIC DESIGN : A Visual Punch for Events and Meetings ***by April Adams-Merrill***

Product recognition is critical to maintaining the lead in the competitive race for success. There are hundreds of thousands of logos and designs that are instantly recognized through such creative genius. But most of the creative genius is meant to give a lasting impression for a particular company on an aggregate level. Everyone will recognize Coke or Pepsi, Cadillac or Rolls Royce, but how does the smaller entrepreneur obtain product recognition on a more local scale? Through the use of color and graphics.

As a professional event and conference manager, I have seen many companies that develop special events and meetings and conferences, spend thousands of dollars on the content and venue, but forget a very important aspect of the meeting itself -- its graphics and visual identity.

Recently, we conducted a major forum in Scottsdale for clients of the Panasonic Company. They were flown in for a three-day session of relaxation and brief meetings to announce a new pilot program. From the onset of the program, we encouraged our clients to develop a unique look for the meeting that would be instantly recognizable throughout the invitation and planning process, in addition to on-site in Scottsdale. We developed a beautiful multi-color

invitation with a unique graphic look that incorporated their logo into the overall design. Next we went to work on the meeting's Agenda, Custom Name Tags, Posters, Banners, Welcome Cards, Executive Gifts, and many more elements that guests would recognize immediately as part of the Panasonic program. As they approached food and beverage functions, a banner or poster was there to direct them to the appropriate location. Nametags offered the same high-tech look with personalization of the guest's name, company, and city of origin. Guests' feedback was extremely positive about the signage and collateral material as they could immediately recognize their event and it added a sense of continuity to the program.

Another case for the use of graphics comes from the posters and banners that we create for Compaq Computers' marketing promotions on a local level. Digitized Banners in multiple colors, along with corresponding posters in a high gloss format reinforce the message that the audience is sophisticated, creative, and warrants the time and energy it takes to create such masterpieces. Typically, these graphics are customized to meet a specific theme or objective during the sales or marketing promotion. We simply expand those ideas and include multiple color, design, and style that people notice and remember. These graphics have helped to increase sales by up to \$3-4 Million on a given day when combined with other marketing incentive elements.

The smaller entrepreneur, however, does not need to expect these kinds of complete packages to prove the point. Some charming invitations and matching posters during the event will create the elegance and continuity we seek. Creative signage on the buffet

indicating the type of food served also speaks to everyone when the host's logo or 'look' is an integral part. Even the company's logo on Valet Parking signage for an event easily makes everyone feel at ease by confirming they're in the right place! The graphics can go so much farther when you never miss an opportunity to use them.

The latest opportunity we have found intriguing and useful is the incorporation of 3-D animation in Power Point Presentations and their acceptance in the meetings arena. What was once a milestone in presentations has now moved light-years ahead to the 3-D animation level on the same screen, without the incorporation of VCRs or other video-related equipment. Imagine products or logos sailing through the air, spinning, overcoming the constraints of space and time and literally dancing in its own ballet of sorts on the screen. Memorable?

But whatever the medium, the message remains the same. Offer consistency and continuity through visual arts and graphics. Establish a message through color, design, and style that will reinforce the message. An integral part of the next generation in meetings, conferences, and marketing promotions, these graphics carry that deeper message that the audience is intelligent and desires greater visual and mental stimulation to excite their curiosity. The standard corporate logo no longer captures this interest alone. The look created to enhance the message takes the audience down the appropriate path with natural curiosity.

April Adams-Merrill is a professional event planner and president of Corporate Destination Services of Arizona, and Merrill-Ryder Event Management. Her company designs artistic identity pieces for its special events and marketing promotions. She may be reached at 602-492-9957 or www.corpdestination.com

NAWBO is not responsible for the accuracy of the contents of this article, and opinions expressed are solely those of the author.