

How to Select a Pop Up Display A Tradeshowology[®] White Paper

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About the Author:
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A Pop Up Display is a powerful marketing tool but selecting that display has become more difficult in recent years.

If purchasing a Pop Up Display has become a real challenge, there is a solution in Canadian Made products. These products have passed the tests of time and have benefits that far outweigh most of the Pop Up choices available today.?

You want an exhibit that is light-weight, easy to set up, cost-effective to ship and is durable enough to last you several shows, even several years. You want a warranty on parts and labour that will outlast your display and you do not want to be putting out cash for costly repairs. It must be easily refurbished and give you some flexibility in design.

You are not alone. While this task seems like a simple one, it has gotten more complicated over the past 10 years. In writing this paper, I hope to simplify the process and lead you in the right direction.

This paper’s objective is to guide you in the process of selecting a Pop Up Display that will best suit your needs and your strategic plan and to simplify that selection process by answering some of your questions.

What is a Pop Up Display?

The name “Pop Up” describes the framework of this particular system. With very little effort and 2 hands you can take the frame of your display and gently “pop it up” by first placing the frame in front of you and pulling up in the middle until it stands upright in front of you.

A Pop Up Display is a powerful marketing tool. It is a timeless addition to your trade show promotions, with decades of proven return on investment. Selection was once a fairly easy task but has become more difficult in recent years.



An Historical Overview:

At one time, Canadian Manufacturers took care to produce high quality durable products they could put their name on and warranty for life.

Less than 10 years ago the choices for Canadian Exhibitors were simple. There were a handful of Manufacturers in the U.S. and even less in Canada. Canadian Dealers represented one, occasionally two, manufacturers in their pop up line with exclusive territorial rights. The Manufacturers built their systems with hardwork, attention to detail, and often with their own hands, expanding only when they were assured their new staff would hold to the same ideals.

Not so in today's market. With the difficulty in acquiring patents on their frames, magnetic bars and hanging structures, "copy-cats" have put product into the market place to gain market share and put dollars in their pockets. In most cases, these "copy-cats" have manufactured product without due care and attention to the durability and lifespan of their product; the ease of set up and the flexibility that was once important. Instead of a high quality product, often times one of lesser value was placed into the market as a means to gain dollars, quickly. The customer service once offered soon became second to the cash in hand.

With the introduction of Internationally manufactured product into the North American market, especially from China, and the ease of purchasing on-line as opposed to in-person, businesses wanting to exhibit at trade shows are purchasing products based on immediate purchase price, not realizing all Pop Ups are not created equally. Past purchases have given them products that fit their trade show needs and expectations and they expect the same high quality they are used to.

The "disposable" pop up has now entered our market. Once it is broken, it is broken; there are no warranties. Beware of the ½ price pop up, it is likely a cheap knock-off and may not get your through your trade show season!

Enter the "disposable" pop up, made on an assembly line instead of by the business owner themselves. Instead of care and attention to detail, now the focus is on getting the product out the door quickly, and as cheaply as possible

What is needed?

We need to find manufacturers who still stand behind their product and offer a lifetime warranty, understanding that lifetime means long-life, not 3 or 5 years. We need to find

Where are the manufacturers producing a high quality product and standing behind it with a life-time warranty?

manufacturers who still pride themselves in customer service and support of their dealers. These business men and women will produce a pop up display that will meet and exceed your expectations. This pop up will include a high quality frame, self-aligning magnetic bars, a durable, wheeled case, with handles, a hooking system that stands up to long hours and several uses, as well as a warranty they will stand firmly behind.

The Dealers supported by these one-of-a-kind manufacturers will also provide superior customer service and add something extra to the warranty to add value to you their customer. They will offer an array of high quality products and accessories for your trade shows and will back it up with professionals, ready and willing to train your staff.

Top 10 Considerations:

1. Visit the Dealership whenever possible:

- a. Do they listen to your needs or are they selling you the store before you have given them any information about you?
- b. Do they ask questions?
- c. If you cannot visit, do they have a website you can navigate together?
- d. Who do they do work for? Do you recognize high profile clientele in the mix?

Find a dealer you can build a relationship, not one who is more interested in making a fast dollar, but one who will stand Behind their product and listen To your needs.

2. The Display Framework:

- a. The preferred material for the framework is aluminum. **Aluminum is light-weight and recyclable.** It should be of a diameter, thick enough to give durability and longevity to your hardware.
- b. If the frame is advertised as weight-bearing then you know the frame is not only durable and will withstand many uses but it will also give you some flexibility in design. A weight-bearing frame will allow you to add interior shelving, and will should support a TV and other accessories.
- c. The rivets should not crimp the aluminum and should make the “popping-up” of the frame easy.

A connector at every hub should be an indication of an instable frame.

- d. The hubs should be of a durable material that will not readily crack when dropped into the case.
- e. The connectors should be easily replaceable, by you or your staff if need be. There should not be a need for connectors at every hub if your frame is built to high standards.
- f. Panel “pegs” should be well aligned for panel alignment and should be made of a material that is hookset-friendly. Panel hooksets will show wear faster on thin metal/aluminum hanging pegs than they will on plastic or softer material pegs.

3. The Magnetic Bars

- a. The magnetic bars should again be made of either aluminum or plastic to be considered recyclable and green.
- b. **The bars should be self-aligning.** This means the panels will adhere at just the right spot for good panel alignment.
- c. If the bars are hinged or joined together, the cost of replacement should they break or be lost will be considerably higher than if the magnetic bars are single units. The time to put hinged or single magnetic bars on your display is the same, and so is the stability.

Hinged or joined magnetic bars are costly to replace if broken or lost.

4. The Panels

- a. Some systems will accommodate panels without visible hanging strips and bottom stiffeners. The **invisible hooksets/hanging strips and invisible stiffeners are preferred** as they do not interfere with your image and the overall look of your Pop Up.
- b. Velcro-Receptive fabric, should be just that, Velcro receptive. Test the fabric to ensure good grip, and to see how much of the fabric pulls out

Look for invisible panel hooksets. Hooksets that show above and below your panel create a framework that may take away from your image. They are also harder to match down the road when you replace a panel or two.

Mural panels add a professional look to your Pop Up display.

when the graphic is removed. Can this be fixed? The best brand of Velcro Receptive Fabric is Frontrunner and comes in a variety of colours. Velcro-Receptive fabric allows for flexibility and change of graphics.

- c. Mural panels are an excellent choice for a professional corporate look. The large format graphic can be composed of one large image or a number of images blended together. Mural panels should be designed to be read in 3-7 seconds and should be eye catching, not busy or complicated. **Mural panels should also have some weight to them. Stay away from too-thin mural panels.** They may be less expensive but they also kink faster, and you will have trouble lining up the panels to create that seamless look, as thinner panels can stretch out of shape easily. So, while a thinner panel may be less expensive you will be replacing them a lot sooner.
- d. A combination of Velcro-receptive fabric and mural panels allows your business to have a clean corporate look and also incorporate a portion of the display face for graphic changes if your shows have different focuses or if you want to promote a new product at a specific show.

5. End Panels

- a. The most durable end panel is a Frontrunner panel; watch that the hooksets are not too stiff, as forming around the end is important for good magnet adhesion. A fabric panel will also allow you to join two systems together.
- b. Hard Plastic end panels are subject to cold weather travel and are expensive to replace should one of the hooks break or if one part should crack. You are limited to black which can sometimes shorten the look of your display width. (never paint the black hard end panels, they are subject to scratching and chipping, thereby making you look less professional).

Hard shell end panels cannot be used to join two systems together.

- c. Mural end panels can add to your continuous large image. Remember not to include important information on the curve. Also watch your supplier does not use a stiff lamination on these end panels, especially if your frame has a narrow footprint. Mural end panels will also allow you to join two systems together.

6. Cases

- a. Your case should have wheels and at least one handle. A top handle along with a handle on the back or side is preferred for good handling when hoisting it into your vehicle or up stairs.
- b. What do you want to use your case for? If you want to use it for carrying, then a simple case with wheels will do. If you want to use your case as a podium (lead station) within your booth space, then consider the shape of your case, and how the podium wrap is assembled and placed. This is an awesome addition to your booth space but it should fit your needs.

Cases can be converted to podiums or lead stations, allowing you to keep your cases in the booth with you.

7. Accessories

- a. Lights – your most important accessory. Unless you exhibit only in low ceiling rooms (such as hotel meeting rooms), you need to consider lights.
- b. Good lighting will require only 2 or 3 lights per 10' of booth space.
- c. Check the standards, approvals and requirements for the shows you attend and purchase accordingly. Clip-on lights purchased at department stores may not meet those standards and may become a liability to you.
- d. Do you want spot lighting or flood lighting? Both are available and both are used for different purposes. Spot lighting can highlight your name and identity or a specific product, whereas flood

Lights are always a good option.

lighting can add clarity and draw attention to your large image.

8. Flexibility

- a. **Consider the future.** Will this pop up allow you to expand? Can you add another 10' and have it connected without breaks?
- b. Will you be able to add interior shelving to the existing hardware or will you need to purchase new?
- c. If towers and bridges are in your future plans, can they be added down the road with this existing structure?
- d. Is this frame weight-bearing and will it hold a television or monitor should the need arise?

9. Warranties

- a. Examine the warranties on each pop up, ask the question, what does that mean to me if I purchase, what are your responsibilities, what are the responsibilities of the manufacturer and what are the responsibilities of the seller?
- b. If you are told this pop up has a lifetime warranty ask what that means in years. Do not be fooled by the 3 year lifetime warranty or in some cases the 6 month lifetime warranty. Do not settle for less than a 15-20 year warranty on certain parts, especially the framework and magnetic bars. You may not need your display to last that long but at least you know it will last as long as you need it or be repaired without hassle.
- c. **What does the warranty cover?** While shipping to the manufacturer should be your responsibility, any warranted repairs should be covered in full including parts and labour unless otherwise stated.

*Check the warranty twice!
When the seller says "lifetime",
ask them for clarification. A 30
or 60 days on parts will not get
you through too many trade
shows.*

10. Investment

- a. Your Pop Up Display purchase should be an investment; one you are sure to manage a return on in the immediate future.

- b. Purchasing a cheap disposable pop up can be a liability at your next show. Broken parts, kinked panels do not show you off to the show attendee as a professional they want to do business with.
- c. Costly repairs on non-warrantied parts and labour will certainly push the original cost of your purchase up.

Checklist Solutions for the Ideal Pop Up

- Lifetime warranty greater than or equal to 20 years
- Recyclable, durable, aluminum frame
- Frame connectors, fewer than 5
- Weight-bearing frame
- Will support tv's and monitors
- Will support interior shelving
- Self-aligning magnetic bars
- Magnetic bars covered under long term warranty or in 3 parts, not hinged
- End panels in Velcro receptive fabric or mural, no hard shell
- Fabric panels of Frontrunner fabric or equal quality
- Mural panels of substance, no thin panels
- Invisible hooksets and invisible bottom stiffeners
- Durable case with wheels and at least one handle, preferably two
- Flexibility to expand and grow your display using the existing hardware
- Expansion units are available and will include towers, bridges, shelving, lighting, side walls, back panels and various size connecting panels
- Optional lights
- Optional podium wrap for case(s)
- Varied configurations for your 8' or 10' Pop Up are available; system is not limited

It is your purchase. Ask the questions and get the answers.



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