

Full Color Printing on Vinyl Banners Now Possible

Most of us know what a "banner" is -- not the kind used in web pages -- but the kind used as signs on the sides of buildings, on fences, or across the stage at conferences. Roughly speaking, a banner is a large flexible sign or poster made of a durable material that can be easily folded or rolled. We are used to seeing banners strung across the road at fall fair time, or to promote a worthy cause.

In recent years banners or "banner signs" have become much more versatile than even five or six years ago. Banner signs are now used in all kinds of places where we used to see more permanent signs. Instead of a sign made of wood or plexiglass we now often see a vinyl banner sign that serves the purpose very adequately.

These days, the most common material used to make outdoor banners is smooth, good looking but durable vinyl. A banner printed on vinyl will stand up to the sun and rain for a number of years, so vinyl banners are often used in places where a quick, low cost alternative is needed.

Sometimes vinyl banners serve as a temporary substitute for a more permanent sign which will come later. Other times where the site is only temporary -- such as a construction site, or a special event like a family reunion -- a vinyl banner is the only sign that will ever be used.

The great advantage of banners is that they are made of flexible and lightweight material. That means a vinyl banner can be rolled up or folded when it is time to take it down or move it to a new location. They are also relatively inexpensive when compared to the alternatives.

What has made vinyl banners so versatile is that they can now be printed digitally in beautiful full color. Printing a vinyl banner used to be a fairly crude and laborious process, but the "digital revolution" changed all that. Special printing machines can now print directly onto vinyl that can be used either indoors or outdoors.

The design and printing process is actually quite simple -- as long as you know something about digital printing. Banner designs can include photographs, artwork, fancy backgrounds, company logos. In other words, any graphic image that can be captured in a computer file can be printed on a vinyl banner.

All suppliers do not use the same process

The best place to find a source for vinyl banners is on the internet. A small number of companies specialize in providing low cost, fast-turn-around vinyl banners. A specialty vinyl banner company has mastered the details of banner printing and prints hundreds or even thousands of them every month. They can usually offer the lowest price and fastest delivery too.

But not all vinyl banner suppliers use the same process or the same equipment. Some use silk screening, while others use low end ink jet printers. The best suppliers use higher end solvent digital printers. It is important to know the difference between these processes, and often you cannot tell by looking at the descriptions provided to you on supplier websites.

Silk screening has adapted some digital capabilities, but when it comes to the actual printing, it is still an older "low tech" process. It remains an important method of printing certain things that cannot be done "digitally" -- for instance, for printing on unusual materials, or wherever special inks are required. But setup costs are normally higher, turn around times longer, and printing smaller quantities is often not feasible.

Lower end ink jet printers are sometimes used to print on vinyl. But the bottom line is that these inks are meant for indoor applications and short term outdoor use. They are more quickly faded by UV from the sun, and are also susceptible to scratching and water damage.

When ordering a vinyl banner for outdoor use, or one that you want to last a couple of years without fading, be sure to go with a true solvent ink process. Especially when it does not cost any more.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Rick Hendershot is an expert in Full Color Vinyl Banners -- <http://www.america-banners.com> | Also see Calendar Printing - Order calendar printing online -- <http://www.printpelican.com> | Beautiful Trade Show Display Graphics -- <http://www.canadadisplaygraphics.com>