

EXPOCENTRIC.COM: PLANNING AIDS FOR ON-LINE EXHIBITIONS



Expocentric created a range of exhibition stands for On-line. A set of planning aids had to be written and produced in pdf format to help client marketing teams upload graphics, e-commerce facilities and other relevant information onto their stand. A series of examples follows:



BUILDING AND DRESSING YOUR STAND USING THE STAND WIZARD®

Stand Wizard® is the tool that is used to build and dress your stand. This section explains how to log in to the system, use the navigation controls and create your stand.

In order to use the Stand Wizard®, you must first ensure that you have the correct software installed onto your PC.

CONTENTS (click to view)	Important:
Logging in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan your stand carefully using the Guide-sheets and Planning Aids to help you position your graphics and links. Work within the graphics tolerances of your stand - number of graphic imports, number of graphics positions, total graphics size, ratio and file format. Ensure that your graphics have been produced to the correct ratio to avoid 'force fitting' and subsequent distortion. All graphics must be in RGB and saved as GIF files (min. 9 colours) prior to importing onto your stand. Check all web and database links before uploading your stand. Always save your work before leaving the Stand Wizard®. If you have limited knowledge of graphics manipulation for the web, use the services of a graphic designer who has web experience. Create a special Exhibition Folder on your hard drive and store all related files for your stand in it.
Use Graphics	
Graphics	
Stree & Virtual Functions	
Help, Next & Previous Functions	
Save Stand	
Adjust Stand	
Paint Stand	
Add Texture	
Import Graphics	
Stand Assistant	
Custom Stand Assistant	
Add Links	
Backlog	
Preview and Upload	

HELP PAGE

On-line Guide-sheets available include:

GS 1	Building and dressing your stand using the Stand Wizard®
GS 2	Planning, creating and formatting your stand graphics and links.
GS 3	Company details and stand text.
GS 4	Planning, building and loading your information and e-commerce database.
GS 5	How your virtual stand works and additional help.

On-line Data Planning Spreadsheets available include:

PA-XLS-Base	Database spreadsheet
PA-XLS-ecom	E-commerce spreadsheet

On-line Stand Planning Aids available include:

PA 1	Canoe	PA 6	Fortress	PA 15	Symulux
PA 2	Canoe	PA 9	Gallery	PA 16	Straight or curve
PA 3	Complex	PA 10	Hemisphere	PA 17	Terrace
PA 4	Corner	PA 11	Island	PA 18	Throne
PA 5	Display Case	PA 12	Island	PA 19	Twin Towers
PA 6	Eclipse	PA 13	Pop-up		
PA 7	Flagship	PA 14	Slope		

Select your stand



This will display your pre-selected stand. If not, please contact your show organiser. Should you wish to upgrade you should also contact your show organiser.

Adjust your stand



This option allows you to make small changes to the layout of your stand, removing objects that are not required (e.g. walls and plinths, etc.). When 'adjust' is selected, the whole stand is greyed out. Using the cross-hair cursor, select the parts of the stand that are not wanted (they will turn a translucent red). To cancel, click again on the red sections. Use the 'revert' button to return to the previously saved setting if you want to experiment. To confirm deletion press the 'save' button.

Paint your stand



The paint option provides 224 pre-determined colours from which you can choose a colour scheme for your stand. When 'paint' is selected the cursor arrow will change to a paint bucket icon when passed over areas available for painting. Pressing the 'save' button will confirm the changes. You can also paint over previously painted areas should you wish.

The 'new colour' button allows you to build and create your own dedicated palette using a range of standard colours or by creating colours to match as closely as possible to your own on-line corporate colours. The 'delete colour' button lets you remove colours from your palette.

Add texture to your stand



This option allows you to change the look of certain areas of your stand. When 'texture' is selected, the target areas available for texture are indicated in green and can be filled to your specification. To confirm these changes press the 'save' button. Use this function sparingly to avoid conflict with your graphics. You can remove previously applied textures by clicking on 'none'.



PLANNING, CREATING & FORMATTING YOUR GRAPHICS & LINKS

Used in conjunction with the relevant planning aid, this section will help you organise the graphics, information and hyperlinks that you want to include in your stand.

It will also show you how to scale and format your images for the virtual exhibition environment.

CONTENTS (click to view)	Important:
Stand types and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan your stand carefully using the Guide-sheets and Planning Aids to help you position your graphics and links. Keep graphic messages simple and easy to read. Work within the graphics tolerances of your stand - number of graphic imports, number of graphics positions, total graphics size, ratio and file format. Ensure that your graphics have been produced to the correct ratio to avoid "force fitting" and subsequent distortion. All graphics must be in RGB and saved as GIF files (min. 9 colours) prior to importing onto your stand. Check all web and database links before uploading your stand. Always save your work before leaving the Stand Wizard. If you have limited knowledge of graphics manipulation for the web, use the services of a graphic designer who has web experience. Create a special Exhibition Folder on your hard drive and store all related files for your stand in it.
Stand graphics planner	
Graphics placement	
A web links table	
Graphic position info	
Graphics selection	
Visibility and interest	
Sourcing and converting graphics	
Image graphics	
Product recreation	
Interactive graphics	
Text graphics	
Text U.T. graphics	
Graphics with transparent backgrounds	
Custom stand assistant	
3D objects	

— HELP —

On-line Guide-sheets available include:

GS 1	Building and dressing your stand using the Stand Wizard*
GS 2	Planning, creating and formatting your stand graphics and links.
GS 3	Company details and stand text.
GS 4	Planning, building and loading your information and e-commerce database.
GS 5	How your virtual stand works and additional help.

On-line Data Planning Spreadsheets available include:

PA-XLS-ibase	Database spreadsheet
PA-XLS-ecom	E-commerce spreadsheet

On-line Stand Planning Aids available include:

PA.1	Carousel	PA.8	Fortress	PA.15	Spinner
PA.2	Canwalk	PA.9	Gallery	PA.16	Straight n' curve
PA.3	Compass	PA.10	Hemisphere	PA.17	Terrace
PA.4	Corner	PA.11	Interlink	PA.18	Theatre
PA.5	Display Case	PA.12	Island	PA.19	Train Tables
PA.6	Eclipse	PA.13	Pop-up		
PA.7	Flipflip	PA.14	Sage		

Formatting your graphics for the on-line environment

All graphics must be in RGB and converted into GIF files prior to uploading. Whilst some graphics will convert readily into gif files that will reproduce easily in the virtual environment, others may cause you a little more trouble and you should be prepared to try a number of options before you find the optimum selection.

There are three main factors to take into account when formatting your graphics for uploading onto your stand - the pixel dimensions of your graphic, the number of colours included in your gif file and the overall file size.

Pixel dimensions:

The pixel dimensions of your graphic affect its total file size. Use the recommended pixel dimensions given in the graphics placement table for your stand as a target size for your final graphic.

Colour palette:

When creating the GIF file, aim for the minimum palette of colours that will achieve a satisfactory graphic. Use an "adaptive" palette of not less than 9 colours. Simple text messages and logos will require a smaller palette of colours than a half-tone image. Some graphics software programmes have options that allow you to optimize quality against file size when producing a GIF file for web use.

File size:

In order to remain within the maximum permitted total graphics size for your stand you must watch your individual graphic file sizes. As a guide, try to limit half-tone image files to less than 150k and logo/text files to under 70k - the smaller the file sizes, the quicker your stand will load. Repeated images affect the total file size only once.



As you upload your graphics onto your stand, a screen counter will feedback information confirming total graphics allowance for your stand and an estimate of allowance still available/unused. As all graphics are subject to internal picture compression, it is important to be aware that file sizes calculated may differ from those of the files you imported.

Text graphics

- Make Your Point
- Don't use small text
- Large text is better
- Link to your website
- Give your text space

To ensure clarity, text only graphics should be limited to a few lines of large (perhaps bulleted) text. Very small text is likely to reproduce poorly or require a very high resolution (and hence a much larger file) to ensure clarity.

Text on images



When adding text to an image, please ensure that the text is kept as large as possible and is in an easily read typeface.



Adding a drop shadow can often enhance the graphic and make the text more legible in the virtual environment.



NON-STANDARD GRAPHIC POSITIONS

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Most of the graphics slots on the virtual stands are of "regular" shape and, assuming that you have used the correct ratios, are unlikely to suffer distortion. However, a few graphic slots are of an unusual shape – e.g. wedge shaped, circular or wrapped around a pillar.

In order to ensure that the images inserted into these slots do not lose any important information, you should create the graphic "squared up" but ensure that you make an allowance for system cropping when creating your graphic.

Handy hints

- Create a special Exhibition Folder on your hard drive and store all related files for your stand in it
- Use the Planning Aids to help you with your graphics.
- Start with a larger file and scale-down.
- If there is not enough image area to allow you to crop the image to the correct ratio, increase the canvas area and colour it to suit.
- If you have limited knowledge of graphics manipulation for the web, use the services of a graphic designer who has web experience.

HELP

On-line Guide-sheets available include:

- GS 1 Building and dressing your stand using the Stand Wizard
- GS 2 Scaling your graphics.
- GS 3 Formatting your graphics.
- GS 4 Non-standard graphic positions
- GS 5 "Vase U" graphics and transparent backgrounds.
- GS 6 Planning your stand graphics and links.
- GS 7 Company details and stand text.
- GS 8 How your virtual stand works.
- GS 9 Planning your information database.
- GS 10 Planning for e-commerce.
- GS 11 Loading your information database.
- GS 12 Some further help and assistance.
- GS 13 Glossary of terms

On-line Data Planning Spreadsheets available include:

- PA.XLS-Base Database spreadsheet
- PA.XLS-ecom E-commerce spreadsheet

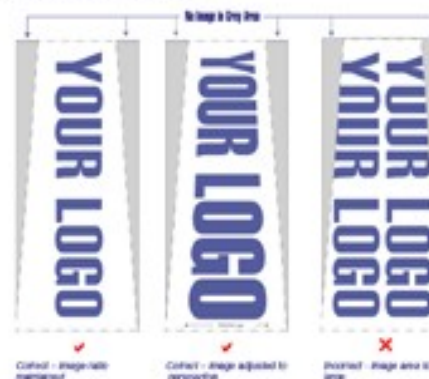
On-line Stand Planning Aids available include:

- PA 1 Carousel
- PA 2 Cotswalk
- PA 3 Complex
- PA 4 Corner
- PA 5 Display Case
- PA 6 Ecliptic
- PA 7 Flagship
- PA 8 Fortress
- PA 9 Gallery
- PA 10 Hemisphere
- PA 11 Hotlink
- PA 12 Island
- PA 13 Pop-up
- PA 14 Slope
- PA 15 Speaker
- PA 16 Straight n' curve
- PA 17 Terrace
- PA 18 Theatre
- PA 19 Twin Towers

NON-STANDARD GRAPHIC SLOTS

Adapting images to fit into non-standard graphic slots

Outer wedge shape slot on "Cotswalk" stand



Centre wedge shape slot on "Cotswalk" stand





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"FACE U" IMAGES & TRANSPARENT BACKGROUNDS

At this time it is not possible to include fully interactive 3D objects on the virtual stand. However, some stands carry graphic positions that will allow you to display an image that will always face towards the visitor from whichever direction they approach the stand.

Whilst this "face you" image is not a true 3D rendering of the subject, it will certainly add impact and a further dimension to your stand.

There are also a number of stands that will allow you to display an image with a transparent background.

Handy hints

- Create a special Exhibition Folder on your hard-drive and store all related files for your stand in it
- Use the Planning Aids to help you with your graphics.
- Switch off "anti-aliasing" when creating transparent graphics.
- Transparent .gifs cannot be used on virtual stands.
- If you have limited knowledge of graphics manipulation for the web, use the services of a graphic designer who has web experience.
- Consider linking to a web-site carrying a true 3D rendering of your product.

HELP

On-line Guide-sheets available include:

- GS 1 Building and dressing your stand using the Stand Wizard
- GS 2 Sorting your graphics
- GS 3 Formatting your graphics
- GS 4 Non-standard graphic positions
- GS 5 "Face U" graphics and transparent backgrounds
- GS 6 Planning your stand graphics and links
- GS 7 Company details and stand text
- GS 8 How your virtual stand works
- GS 9 Planning your information database
- GS 10 Planning for e-commerce
- GS 11 Loading your information database
- GS 12 Some further help and assistance
- GS 13 Glossary of terms

On-line Data Planning Spreadsheets available include:

- PA-XLS-dbase Database spreadsheet
- PA-XLS-ecom E-commerce spreadsheet

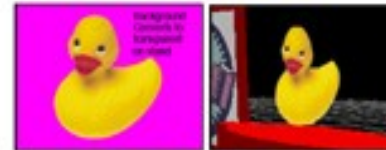
On-line Stand Planning Aids available include:

- PA 1 Carousel
- PA 2 Catech
- PA 3 Compass
- PA 4 Corner
- PA 5 Display Case
- PA 6 Eclipse
- PA 7 Flagship
- PA 8 Fortress
- PA 9 Gallery
- PA 10 Hemisphere
- PA 11 Interlink
- PA 12 Island
- PA 13 Pop-up
- PA 14 Scope
- PA 15 Spinner
- PA 16 Straight 'n' curve
- PA 17 Terrace
- PA 18 Theatre
- PA 19 Twin Towers

"FACE U" IMAGES & TRANSPARENT BACKGROUNDS

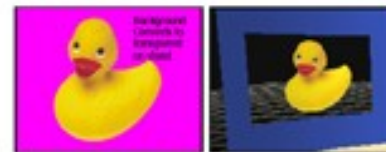
The "face U" image

On selected stands, there are special display positions that always turn to face the viewer, whatever their position on the stand. These can be used with an ordinary "solid" image or with an image using a transparent background to give more of a "3D" effect.



Transparencies

Although designed to add maximum impact to "Face you" display positions, the same "transparent" graphic can, on some stands, be placed into a standard display position. Here the background will become transparent but without the "face you" effect. Results can vary, so by experimenting to see what visual effects you can achieve. Some kinds of images may not be suitable for this approach – especially isobutans.



For the best results in achieving this transparent appearance follow these steps: Produce a cut-out image. Convert to RGB (if needed). Convert to Indexed Colour (adaptive). Crop/resize image as necessary. Convert back to RGB. Select area that you wish to be transparent. Fill this area with R-255/G-255 (FFFFFF). Save as an optimised PNG-8 or GIF file.

Note:

Anti-aliasing should be switched off when producing an image with a transparent background.

Important:

The graphic with transparent background should not be confused with transparent GIF files which cannot be used on the virtual stand.

3D objects

In some instances, it may be possible to link an display position to a web site carrying a "photo realistic" or "panoramic" 3D representation of your product. This requires specialist knowledge of 3D graphics production and should be undertaken by a specialist in that field. We can, on your behalf, brief one of our associate companies to produce your 3D object in an optimum format for web reproduction.