

SHARE Display Training 19th March 2010 Luton

LABELS

Typefaces should be selected for their readability.

Generally accepted that sans serif typefaces are clearer - Arial, Helvetica, Univers but also try Trebuchet, Franklin Gothic.

You can use more distinctive typefaces for headings where you want to echo the period or style of the display but don't use them for the body text. It is unwise to use them for permanent displays as they will date very quickly, so keep them for temporary exhibitions.

Point sizes

Absolute minimum is 14pt for body text.

Remember that the leading - ie spacing between lines can aid legibility.

Justify on the left margin only.

It is easier to read because it allows more even spacing of words. Does not lead to hyphenation. Never justify on the right only or centred. And don't try to fit your text into an unusual shape, such as a shield outline. Just because the technology enables you to do it, it doesn't mean you should.

Upper and Lower case. Don't use all upper case letters because people get their reading clues from the peaks and troughs of the letters.

Bold Use Bold sparingly as it can be too solid and letters can run too close together.

Italics Keep for quotations or when you want to indicate a secondary level of information eg medium of a painting.

Colours

Keep a clear contrast between type and background. Use black or dark colours on a pale colour, off white or cream.

There is much controversy about whether white text on black background is very legible. I think it's OK as long as there's not a lot of it and the type is not too small.

Avoid grey on blue etc - if it looks very tasteful it's probably not clear enough.

Avoid a glossy finish- it will be too reflective of nearby lights etc

Use of Graphics

Some argue that the use of background graphics underneath text is acceptable if the difference is at least 70%.

But remember that people are reading it in less comfortable conditions than when reading a book or magazine and getting the information across is of primary importance rather than just creating a feel for the subject which might be the case in a magazine spread.

Where to put labels.

Much will depend on type of objects, how many in a case and how much text for each object.

1. A single label beside each object.

Good if you have not got too many objects. Not good if you have loads or they're very small and the labels are bigger than the objects. Label text has to be kept fairly short.

2. A number beside each object corresponding to a panel inside the case with the information on it.

Not so good if the case is big and can be a bit awkward to view back and forth.

3. An outline key drawing of the display with the information on it.

Someone has to produce the drawing and if something is changed either as you are setting up the display or at a later date then its more difficult to change it.

4. A number system with the text on a laminated board or paddle outside the case.

Good if you want to say a lot of extra information which people can then choose whether to read or not.

Avoid the museum dance - where the objects are numbered and a panel is mounted on a nearby wall.

EXHIBITION PANELS

Typestyles

Many of the previous rules for labels apply but type sizes can vary according to how far away the visitor is from the panel - whether they are behind a barrier with objects in front or very close to it.

Headings should be between 50pt and 72pt

Body text between 28pt and 40pt.

Mounting heights.

Panels should be placed between 1200mm and 1700mm from the floor centred at 1400mm.

Layout tips

If you have a lot of text it can be split up. Sections can be placed in tinted boxes.

Photographs

A lot of social history displays have photographs of groups which all seem to look the same! Pick out a few individuals and enlarge details of their faces, and vary the scale of the images.

Documents

If you've got lots of period documents, ration books for example, and you can't or don't want to display all of them, use them as graphic decoration on your panels.