

PLANNING A DISPLAY

9163

(1987)

Any display starts with a plan that is organized around a central theme. It needs a purpose, and the arrangement and content of a good display should relate to that purpose. Effective displays are the result of careful planning all along the line. The following are some suggestions that might help make your display effective:

- Use a central idea. Though it seems wasteful, devote an entire exhibit to only one idea; a conglomeration can only confuse. Notice how "better" store windows display a single idea skillfully.
- Place the exhibit where it can be seen. Keep it out of corners. Get it where there is heavy traffic. If you develop a fire prevention display, don't put it in the fire prevention office.
- Motion attracts attention and makes a display irresistible! A turntable from an old phonograph can make a display mobile and increase your audience. Gasoline stations often use streamers that move in the wind; you could use a concealed fan to produce the same effect.
- Direct attention. Explain with short simple labels why the item is significant--be specific. Use 3" x 5" cards for minor captions and one large label to tie the display elements together. Use the same type lettering for labeling. Do not forget to give credit to contributors or cooperators.
- Provide good lighting. Inadequate lighting has spoiled many good displays. You may use internal lighting to direct attention to important items or produce contrast. A concealed gooseneck lamp can be used for this. Using stage gelatin in front of a small spotlight can produce colored light. Devices for turning lights on and off are easily obtained.
- Introduce sound. Tape recordings that play an hour and a half are common. Tapes will last for several days in continuous replay.
- Use color for impact. Color adds interest and attractiveness and directs attention to the focal point. Color may also be used for purely aesthetic purposes.
- Handout materials such as pamphlets, brochures, and leaflets should be used in conjunction with almost every exhibit, but a great deal of thought must be given to the choice of items. Handouts must conform to the theme depicted. A few pertinent choices of literature, either preprinted or specially designed, are better than a potpourri of inappropriate handouts. Keep in mind that there are certain printed materials that are not designed for giving away at fairs. For example: "Smokey Bear's Story of the Forest" booklets are relatively expensive and are primarily for children's programs; placemats are meant only for distribution through small restaurants; and envelope stuffers are, as the name implies, just for mailing.

- The CDF insignia should be affixed to all displays that we exhibit. The insignia can be a decal, a painted sign, or routed on wood, but must always be an exact reproduction. The sign, in appropriate size, should identify your display as "State of California, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection."
- If you have been given the job of preparing an exhibit, you must allow for sufficient time and money. Plan it to the closest detail possible. There are no explicit formulas or standard patterns for exhibits. There is nothing that says, "This is how you do it." It is your creation. Use your imagination, enlist the assistance of special talents, and go to it. Do not overlook artistic talent available in conservation camps. Reference books, catalogs, and magazines are available in libraries that can help you with basic fundamentals and philosophy of exhibits.

Within standard purchasing limits, materials may be purchased by subpurchase order for displays being built in the unit or conservation camps if funds are available. Each region fire prevention section is prepared to assist you in exhibit budgeting and planning, reserving displays from other regions, or having exhibits of your design constructed by conservation camps. Always allow plenty of time for preparation of special exhibits.

FORMS AND/OR FORMS SAMPLES: RETURN TO CDF LIBRARY HOME PAGE FOR FORMS/FORMS SAMPLES SITE LINK.

[\(see next section\)](#)

[\(see Table of Contents\)](#)