



Create a Display

Presentations are a method for providing information to predetermined groups of attendees but displays are a method for providing information to a large number of people over an extended period of time, without your direct involvement.

When you plan a display, consider:

- ◆ **What is the topic, does it lend itself to a display?**
- ◆ **Where will the display be placed?**
You need to know where the display will be placed before you begin as the location may determine what materials can be used. Know whether it will be near your office, in a different municipal or public building, or in an outdoor setting.
- ◆ **How much space do you have for the display?**
The display area determines how much you can present. For example, if the space is within a cabinet or display case, you may have to choose smaller objects and photos. A large wall space will lend itself to larger images and text.
- ◆ **How long will it be on display?**
The location of the display may determine how long it can be displayed. If it commemorates an event or span of time, you may want to have it ready on the anniversary date and leave it up for the length of the event or beyond.
- ◆ **Will it contain objects that need to be protected from theft?**
If the display includes objects, for example Native American artifacts, you'll need to protect them from theft. That can be done by placing them in a lockable cabinet; either a floor cabinet or a wall-hanging cabinet.
- ◆ **Is there sufficient light for easy viewing?**
If the lighting is poor at the display location, consider adding a lamp or light that can highlight the display.
- ◆ **Are there any light restrictions?**
Some objects such as photos and fabrics should not be exposed to direct sunlight or harsh lights. Background materials could also fade during a lengthy display.
- ◆ **Who is the audience for the display?**
The audience will determine the viewing access. For example, if it will be viewed by children, it should be at a comfortable viewing height for the age or there should be sturdy, safe stepstools available for them to use.

Displays—2

- ◆ **How much will it cost to produce the display?**
Some display materials can be expensive. Plan the materials you will need and price them out. Look for ways to minimize costs where possible...especially if it is short-term display.
- ◆ **Do you have the supplies required or money to buy them?**
Do you already have materials left from another display that can be used? Does your municipality have access to materials sold at a lower price through a NYS contract such as Staples Advantage? These contracts significantly reduce the cost of many supplies. Grants are another possible source.
- ◆ **Is it a temporary or permanent display?**
You may want to economize for temporary displays, reserving funds for permanent displays that may need higher quality materials.
- ◆ **Could it be used at another location after you remove or replace it?**
Displays can be used at more than one location. If you have a museum that requests using the display when you take it down, you may want to consider using materials that will hold up better for longer periods of time.
- ◆ **Where will you store the display?**
If you choose to keep the display, plan where you will store it. If portions can be recycled into another display or returned to your collection the problem of storage is not an issue.
- ◆ **How much research is required to create the display?**
Consider the amount of time you have to research and prepare the display. Does it need to be ready for an anniversary or event. If the “display by” date is open-ended, you’ll have more time to research the topic, gather items, and create the display.
- ◆ **Will it hang on the wall or sit on a table, or both?**
Knowing this will help you develop a design and choose appropriate materials.
- ◆ **How long do you estimate it will take to create the display?**
Once you have done the research and gathered the items, you’ll still need to write the label text, print and trim labels, and compose the total display. This phase can take time and space.
- ◆ **Do you have anyone to help with construction and installation?**
Depending upon size and type of the display (hanging vs. cabinet or table) you may need someone to help you build a frame or install sturdy hangers. Enlist the person before beginning the project.

Displays—3

Select a Topic that:

- ◆ **Relates to an anniversary**
This can be the anniversary of the municipal fire department, the town's establishment, or the opening of a school, church, or municipal building.
- ◆ **Commemorates a local, state, or national event**
You may want to recognize the anniversary of a local landmark, a state-wide event in which residents of your municipality participated, or highlight the residents from your community who played a part in national a event such as a war, government entity, Olympic game, etc.
- ◆ **Relates to your municipality**
It could be a display of Supervisors or mayors of your municipality. The display may feature a timeline of events in the muni or feature the parks or public spaces.
- ◆ **Has adequate information and graphics**
If the display space is small, you can feature one or two key pieces of information or a couple of photos on a topic. If the space to fill is large, choose a broader topic.

Create a Display that:

- ◆ Tells a story
- ◆ Has a primary target audience
- ◆ Reveals new or different information, if possible
- ◆ Includes graphics
- ◆ Is attractive; colorful, well organized, easy to see and read.

Incorporate these Good Design Characteristics:

- ◆ Sturdiness; not easily tipped over or apt to collapse
- ◆ Has items glued or securely attached
- ◆ Has small blocks of text (labels) explaining items and photos
- ◆ Has the text keyed to the object or photo if mounted separately
- ◆ Incorporates audio and/or video, if appropriate
- ◆ Protects (or doesn't include) objects easily stolen.

Displays—4

Display Examples:

- ◆ A commemoration of those from your muni who joined the armed services during WWI. List their names, branch of service, their unit, where they fought (if known), and whether they were war casualties. Depending on space, you could select 6 or more to feature a photo and brief biography, etc.
- ◆ History of one-room school districts in your municipality.
- ◆ A “Then and Now” of downtown “yourtown”.
- ◆ Major event such as a centennial, sesquicentennial or bicentennial of your town.
- ◆ Landmarks in the municipality.
- ◆ A former business such as a wheelwright shop or general store.
- ◆ A timeline of major events within the municipality.
- ◆ Aerial photographs of a portion of the municipality.
- ◆ A diorama of an area of the muni such as Main Street.
- ◆ The history of a prominent farm with photos, milk bottles, newspaper ads, etc.

Note: Photograph the display for reference and to use in your Monthly or Annual Report and Registered Historian application.

