

CREATE
DYNAMIC
DIGITAL
MESSAGES





32x112 columns 20 mm

OBJECTIVE

The effectiveness of your digital display is enhanced by the quality of the content you run on it. This guide will help you create sales-driving messages using Venus® 1500 control software, give you some content ideas, and also cover **important design guidelines** for the following:

- > Layout
- > Font
- > Color
- > Images & videos

Digital display content is different from any other media's content. Most importantly, **messages must be brief**. Traditional signs and advertising have only one chance to reach the customer. Digital signs, on the other hand, display multiple messages.

TIP: CHANGE CONTENT FREQUENTLY TO HOLD YOUR AUDIENCE'S INTEREST.

BRAINSTORM MESSAGES

Take some time to plan your ad campaign. After all, the goal is to drive your return on investment, not just manage a display. Keep your messages fresh by brainstorming what you'd like to promote. Do this on a regular basis.

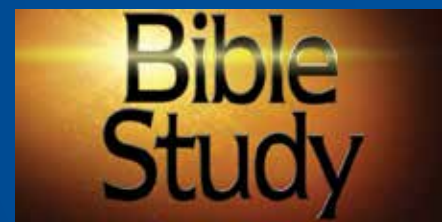
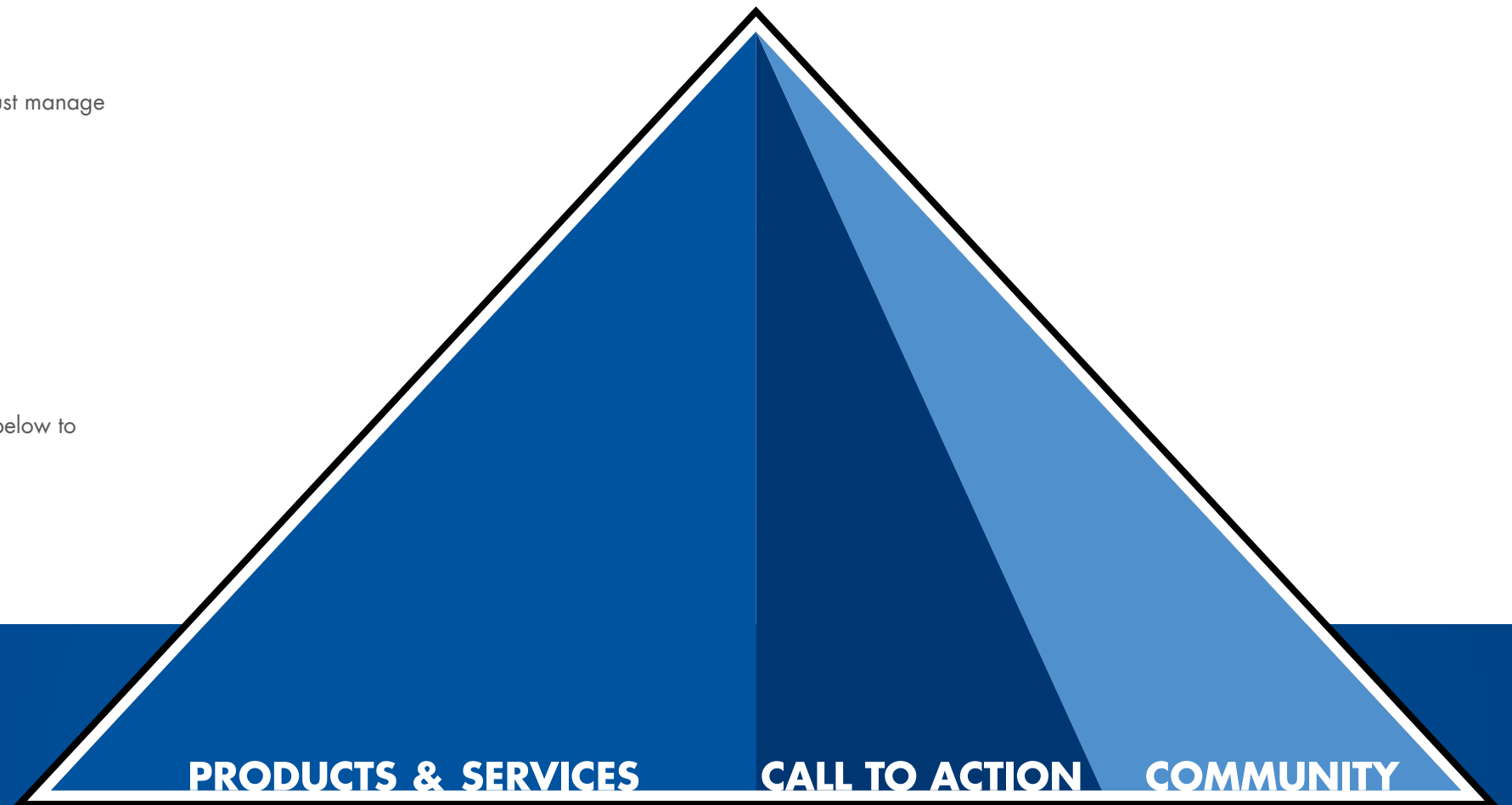
Answering the following questions will help you put together your ad campaign:

- > Which products and/or services should you promote?
- > What products should you offer at certain times of the day, month, year?
- > What messages would interest your customers?
- > Which demographic groups do you want to reach?
- > How are you different from your competitors?
- > How can the display serve your community?

Use the Daktronics Content Pyramid to generate message ideas. To understand how it works, review the content below to see how a house of worship could plan to reach its community.

HOUSE OF WORSHIP CONTENT PYRAMID

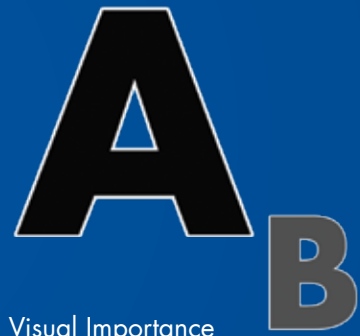
According to the pyramid, half of the church's content should be promoting products and services, one-fourth of the messages should feature a call to action, and one-fourth of a display's content should support a charity or be a community announcement:



ARRANGE ELEMENTS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE



Visual Clutter



Visual Importance

CONTENT MUST BE SIMPLE. BOLD. LEGIBLE. BRIEF.



LAYOUT

After you brainstorm for content using the pyramid on the previous page, it's time to lay out your first message. Observe the following design principles to make your messages memorable and attractive.

Ask yourself what the customer absolutely needs to know. Remember to keep your message as brief as possible, using only **two or three elements** (graphics, logos, pricing, and tag lines are all examples of individual elements).

Arrange the elements on the display in order of importance. Remember that **people read in chunks**, moving their eyes across the display and then down. With this in mind, place the most important element toward the top of the display face, and make it larger and brighter.



GOOD = VISUAL IMPORTANCE

Why is this message clear?

- > Few elements
- > Most important element is big and bright
- > Effective color, good color contrast
- > Text is large—uses all the available space
- > Graphic supports the message



BAD = VISUAL CLUTTER

Why is this message confusing?

- > Too many elements that overlap
- > Too much information
- > Too much color
- > Elements all the same size
- > Text doesn't flow naturally

USE SIMPLE, CONCISE TEXT

Word choice is very important to enhance readability and comprehension of your message.

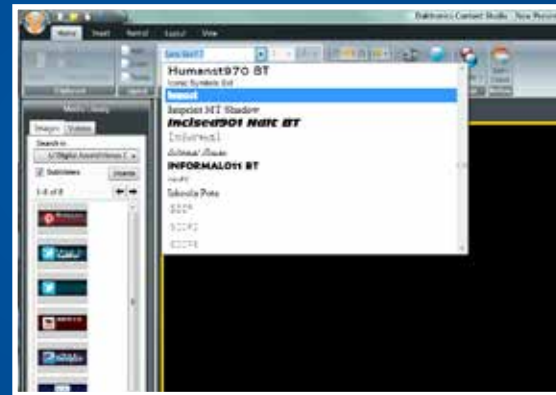
Digital copy changes on LED displays are easier to make than on printed materials, such as newspaper ads. While printed ads must have all the essential information in place, digital content can be more concise and flexible. LED signs can show the same information in a series of messages.

Keep in mind that readers scan across and then down, reading text in blocks and not letter by letter or word by word. So for **quick comprehension**, use a graphic and very limited text—no more than two or three elements.

CHOOSE SIMPLE FONTS

Select large, bold fonts easily read from different viewing distances. If the text in your message is longer, use both upper- and lower-case characters. Reading text in all caps takes a long time. Don't use all caps except one or two words for emphasis.

If you use a serif font, bold it so the little strokes will be visible. Outlining the letters and using drop shadows also increase readability.



Selecting font in Venus 1500 software

GOOD FONT EXAMPLES

- > Simple design
- > Thick stroke
- > Easy to read

SANS SERIF FONTS

Arial Black	Arial Bold	Eras Bold ITC	Franklin Gothic Heavy
Impact	Tahoma	Verdana	

SERIF FONTS

Palatino	Rockwell Extra Bold	Times New Roman
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SCRIPT FONTS

<i>Bradley Hand ITC</i>	<i>Brush Script</i>	<i>Edwardian Script ITC</i>
<i>Forte</i>	<i>Mistral</i>	

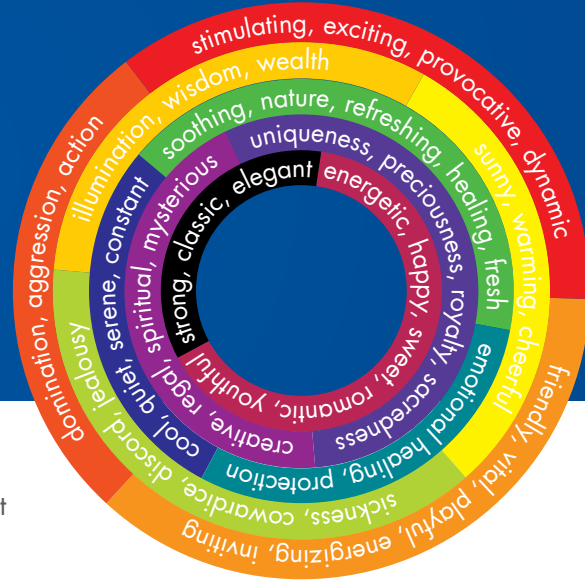
ORNAMENTAL OR NOVELTY FONTS

Comic Sans	Courier New	Curly M
Jokerman	Papyrus	

BAD FONT EXAMPLES

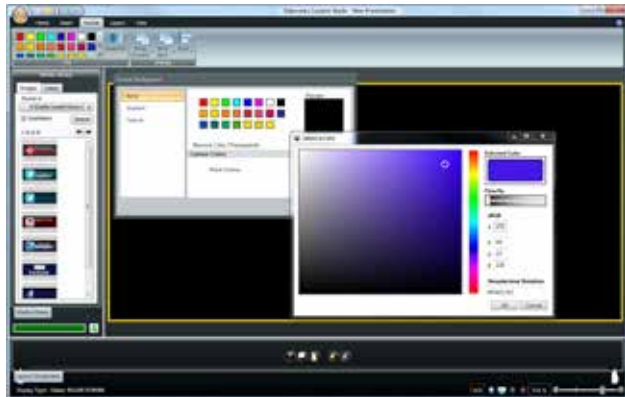
- > Too ornate
- > Thin stroke
- > Unreadable letter forms

USE VIBRANT COLOR

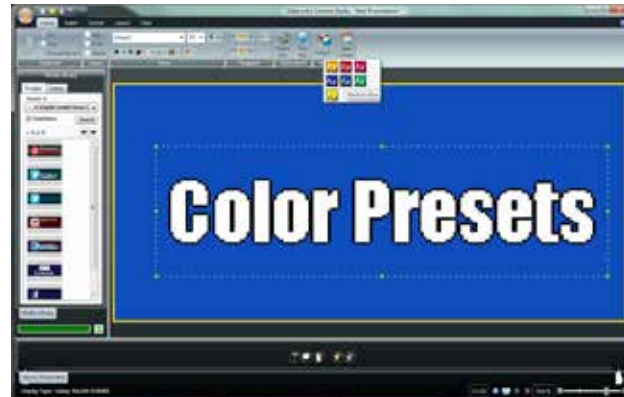


Take advantage of your display's color capability. Use rich, vibrant, saturated colors. Colors with white in them such as pastels are great, but don't attract attention like bright colors.

Be aware that certain colors evoke certain emotions. For example, red is stimulating and exciting, while blue is cool, quiet, and serene (see chart). You can influence your audience by selecting background colors with this information in mind.



Venus 1500 software allows you to create any custom color for exact brand representation.



Use color presets in Venus 1500 software for easy selection of saturated colors with good contrast.

BACKGROUND COLORS

A good general tip to follow when choosing colors for your messages is to use a black background and avoid using a white background.

Dark backgrounds are a good choice because they are easy on the eye and look great, especially at night. White backgrounds on the other hand, use more light than black and can actually repel the viewer's eye at night.

GOOD



BAD



OUTLINE TEXT

When using a colored background, outline the text in black for greatest readability. A two-pixel outline is a good starting point.

GOOD

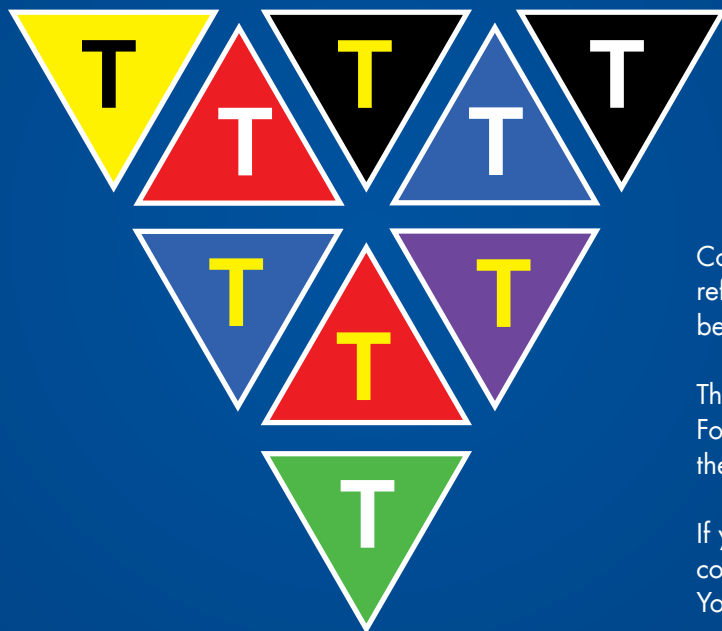


BAD



{ TIP: CHOOSE A COLOR OR GRAPHIC THAT SUPPORTS YOUR ESSENTIAL MESSAGE. }

CONTRASTING COLORS



Contrasting colors make messages easy to read. Contrast refers to the use of opposing colors or the difference between light and dark areas of an image.

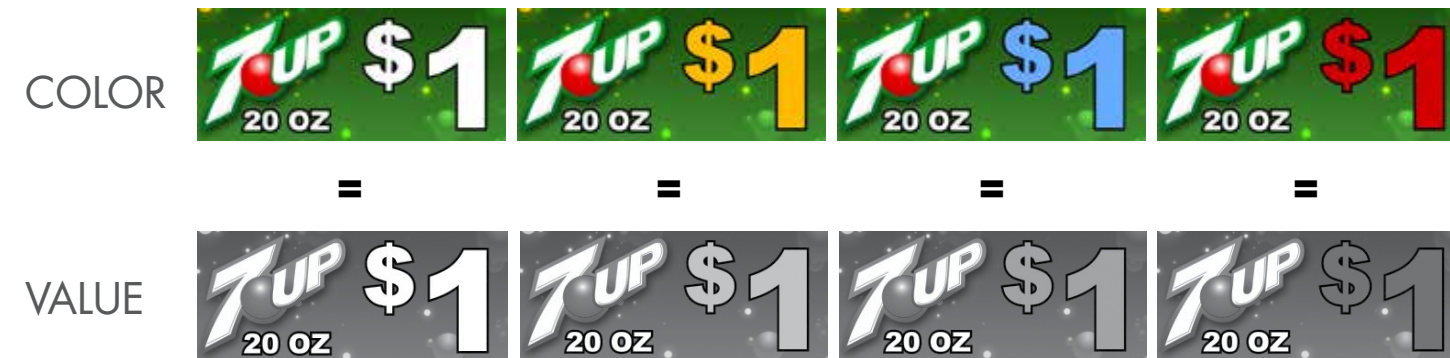
The color combinations, to the left, have high contrast. For example, yellow is bright and purple is dark. Using these colors together make a message pop.

If you must use colors with low contrast, increase the contrast by choosing a darker value of one of the colors. You can also add a black outline to help create contrast.



Warning: Using blue and black makes a message difficult to read because of low contrast.

The full-color examples were turned to grayscale value to show the difference in contrast between the color chosen for the \$1 and the green background. Note that as you move from left to right, the contrast between the \$1 and the background gets less, but because a black outline was applied to the \$1, it is still easily read.



This example shows that although the white text has the highest contrast against the fire background, the yellow and orange text still produces a nice result that will be easily read. However, the red text matches too closely to the fire background and has poor contrast.



TIP: RED AND YELLOW TEXT OR BACKGROUND LOOKS GOOD AT ALMOST ANY TIME OF DAY. ADD A BLACK OUTLINE TO TEXT TO INCREASE CONTRAST.

ONE PICTURE IS WORTH...

Use Venus® 1500 control software to easily add graphics and videos to your messages.

And whenever possible, let the images do the talking. Why?

- › Graphics and video cut through other distractions better than text.
- › “Reading” graphics takes less concentration than reading text.
- › Graphics minimize language barriers.
- › Customers remember messages with text and a graphic longer than just text.

GRAPHICS AND VIDEO TIPS

- › Don't just look at your computer screen; check the message on the display itself.
- › Import photos with smooth gradients without a lot of details.
- › Only show a portion or focal point of the image.
- › Change the size of an image or video to fit your display, and then crop it to look better.
- › Save final images at 72 dpi or greater.

IMPORTABLE FILE TYPES

Video file types	.avi, .mpg, .mp4, .mov
Image file types	.png, .bmp, .gif, .jpg, .tif, .tiff, .psd
Data feed types	time, temp, RSS*, Atom*, XML*

*Only on data capable displays.

Multiple training options are available to help create effective content using Venus 1500 software. Visit www.daktronics.com/venus1500training to choose the right training option for you.



CONTENT AND VIEWING DISTANCES

The secret to digital display content is to keep the message as brief as possible. When you can, let the image do the talking. Unlike traditional signage and advertising, a display can run multiple messages.

The following information will help guide your choice of content elements as you consider your message from the customer's view point:

≥500 FEET:

Your message attracts the customer's attention with color (and possible motion if sign codes allow), but cannot yet be recognized.

250 FEET:

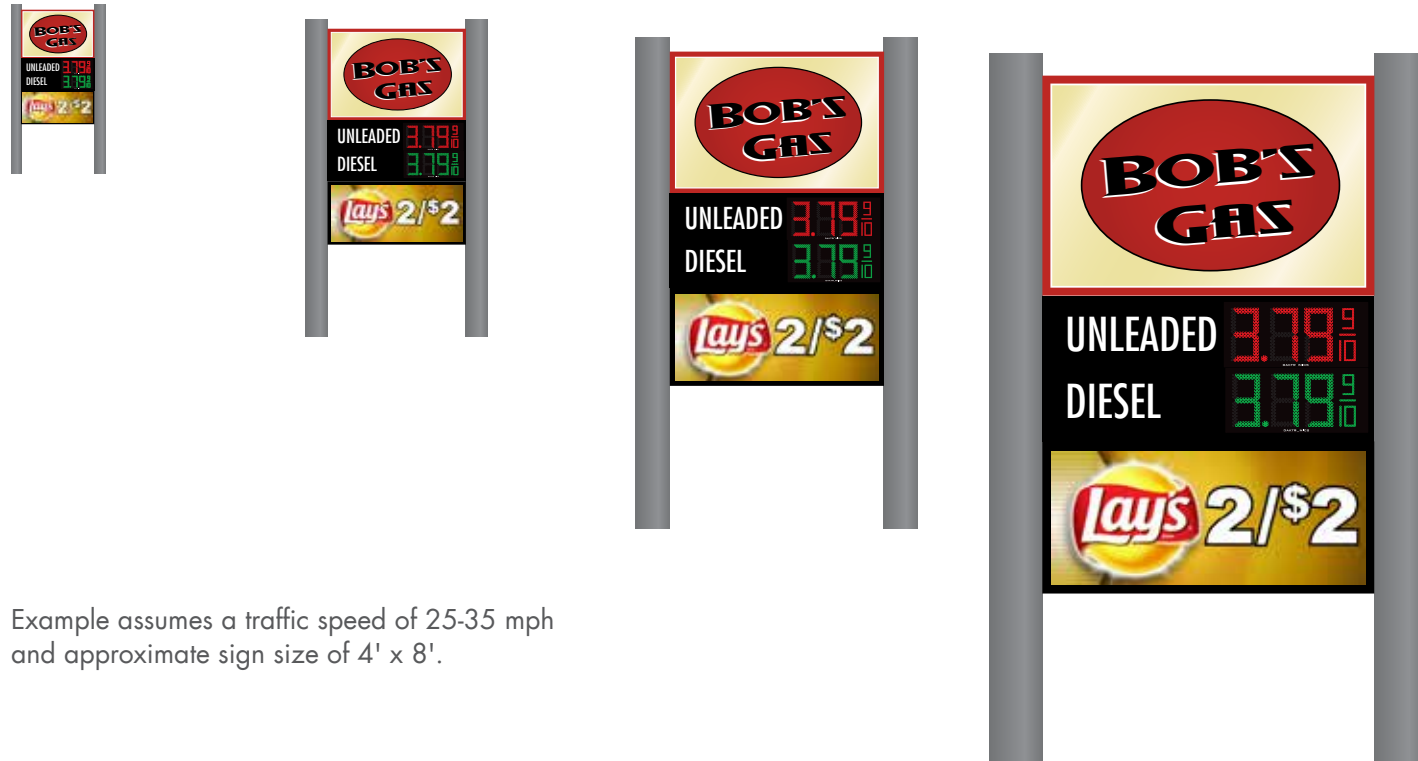
The customer can easily read and interpret your message.

100 FEET:

The customer clearly understands your message, and has started to disregard it to look for a point of entry.

75 FEET:

The customer is no longer looking at the display, but is focused on turning into your parking lot.

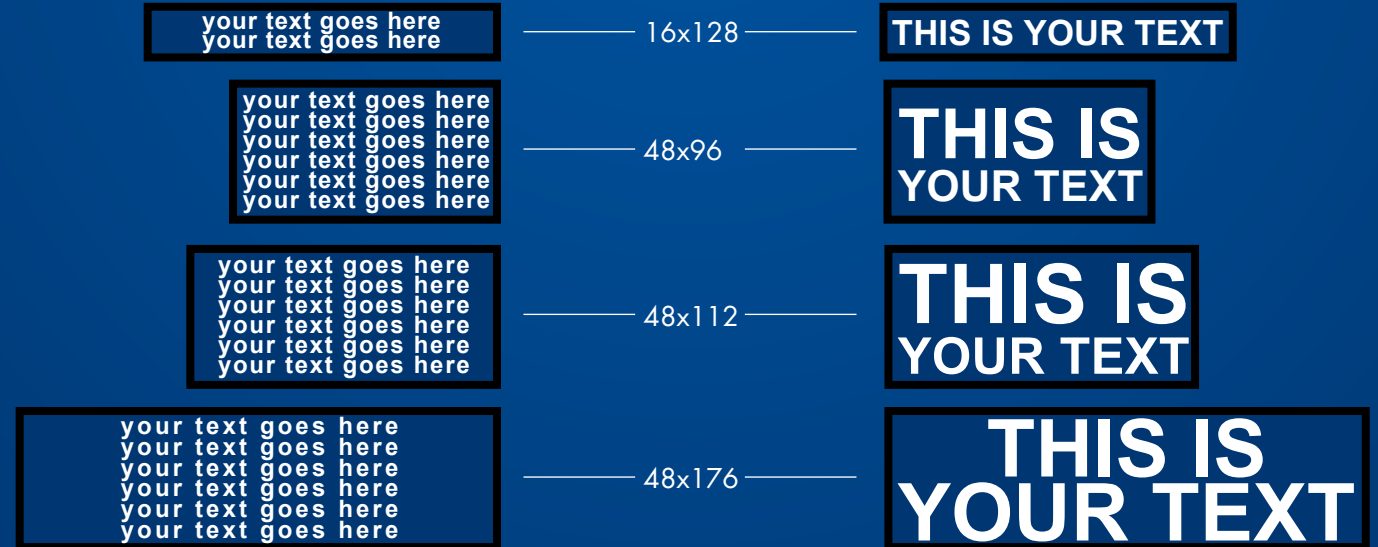


Example assumes a traffic speed of 25-35 mph and approximate sign size of 4' x 8'.

WHAT'S POSSIBLE

vs.

WHAT LOOKS BEST



LED displays are often compared to changeable copy boards. Both communicate services or products to potential customers, but that's where the similarities end.

Changeable copy boards use plastic letters ranging from 6"-12" fonts. Its message typically remains on the board for extended time periods. An LED display can show a variety of font sizes with messages changing every few seconds.

Daktronics LED displays are technically capable of showing

the maximum number of line(s) of similarly sized text as on a changeable copy board. However, **technical capabilities do not necessarily result in the most effective content**, as shown in the "what's possible" column above. Instead, create brief messages in a font size that fills the display, as the examples in the "**what looks best**" column.

Whenever possible, view your display from the route your customers take. You should be able to understand each message in less than two seconds.

NEED HELP CREATING COMPELLING CONTENT?

A display needs fresh messages that drive sales. Use content from Daktronics Creative Services to see the return on investment you anticipated when you installed your digital display.

See how one free media kit background can be used to create several different messages.



BLUE FIRE MEDIA KIT BACKGROUND



FREE MEDIA KIT

The media kit **comes with every Galaxy® and GalaxyPro® display**. With approximately 400 professionally created pieces, you can start creating effective messages immediately. Simply download the entire kit through your Venus® 1500 software. The blue fire background, in the example at the left, is just one example of the media kit's versatility.

CONTENT PACKAGES

Access affordable content packages at buy.daktronics.com to **expand your content library**. Each package contains 5 to 7 pieces. Many catalogs are free, such as the *Charitable Offerings 2* package, shown below. It is filled with logo treatments of non-profit organizations. Just shop, click, download, and use.



Free Charitable Offerings 2 package

CUSTOM CONTENT

We also offer professionally created custom logo treatments, animations, and text. Find out more at daktronics.com/commercialcustomcontent

USE AWARD-WINNING CONTENT

Trust the industry leaders. Four consecutive years, the Communicator Awards has honored Daktronics content. The Communicator Awards is a program rewarding creative excellence among communications professionals. It receives thousands of entries worldwide each year. View the winning content at daktronics.com/commercialcreativeservicesawards

Contact Commercial Creative Services via email: commercialcreativeservices@daktronics.com

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