

Dynamic Library Atmospheres:

What we can learn from theater, museums, retail, and the Container Store

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Have an idea?

Pause—think—before you go one step further.

- What's your goal?
- What catches your eye outside the library—in stores, for example? Can you adapt someone else's great idea to the reality of your situation?
- Look around to understand what will be competing for attention with your display.
- Who is your intended audience?
- Is your display going to be composed of two dimensions, or can you find a way to work in a third?
- Somewhere in your building is more artistic talent than you realize—seek it out!

Keep it simple.

- Use a modest number of colors in most cases. The focus should be on the materials you're promoting.
- Choose no more than three fonts to use for all signs created in-house: choose one of the three for decorative headlines, and one very readable font as the standard for the body of all messages. Share this information with everyone who might ever have occasion to make a sign.

Do it!

- Look at what you are doing: are lines straight, edges neat, colors related, shapes enhancing the message and words readable?
- The first job of a sign is to convey a message—decoration is secondary
- The only appropriate use of a hand-written sign is to say "Power is out."
- Is tape showing? Double stick tape is cheap, but not as cheap as visible tape looks.
- Ask yourself—would I leave the house looking like that?

Sources for ideas and materials:

- Underhill, Paco: *Why We Buy*
- Search Worldcat for "display of merchandise" – there is a treasure trove of information out there, some possibly near you!
- Smart Furniture—Retail shelving, infinitely configurable. www.smartfurniture.com
- The Container Store—shelving, containers, you name it. www.containerstore.com
- Those fabulous baskets: www.fixturepronto.com/suppbaskets.htm