

SEG Graphic Display Systems Buyer's Guide

What to Know Before Choosing an SEG Display System

SEG displays can look relatively simple when they're finished: a fabric graphic stretched cleanly across a frame.

But there are quite a few decisions behind that finished display.

Frame size, lighting, graphic material, viewing environment, mounting method, installation, access for graphic changes, and whether the display is permanent or regularly updated can all influence how the system should be designed.

And not every project needs the same solution.

A small Frontlit wall display has very different requirements from a large Backlit feature wall, freestanding display, suspended graphic, or custom architectural installation.

This guide covers the major things we recommend considering before choosing an SEG graphic display system.

What Is an SEG Graphic Display System?

SEG stands for Silicone Edge Graphics.

The graphic is finished with a thin silicone strip sewn around its perimeter. That silicone edge is inserted into a channel in the frame, creating tension across the fabric and producing a clean, finished appearance.

One of the advantages of the system is that the graphic itself can be removed and replaced without replacing the entire display structure.

SEG systems can be used for both **Front lit** “non illuminated” **and Backlit displays** and can be manufactured in Custom Sizes for a wide range of commercial environments.

The concept is straightforward.

Getting the **frame, graphic, lighting, fit, and installation** working together is what creates the finished result.

1. Start With the Space

Before deciding on a frame, start with where the display is going.

Is it:

Wall mounted?

Freestanding?

Suspended from a ceiling?

Integrated into an existing structure?

Wrapping a column or architectural feature?

Single-sided or double-sided?

The surrounding environment can affect nearly every other decision.

A display designed for a large open retail environment may not make sense in a narrow corporate hallway. A freestanding display needs different structural considerations from a frame mounted directly to a wall.

Start with the space, then design the display around it.

2. Frontlit or Backlit?

This is one of the first decisions to make.

Frontlit SEG

A Frontlit system relies on the ambient or external lighting in the environment rather than illumination from inside the frame.

Frontlit displays can be a good choice when you're looking for a clean fabric graphic presentation without the added requirements of an illuminated display.

They can work well for branding, wall graphics, environmental graphics, informational displays, and other applications where internal illumination isn't necessary.

Backlit SEG

A Backlit display incorporates lighting behind the graphic.

The light passes through the printed fabric, creating a brighter and often more visually prominent presentation.

Backlit systems can be particularly effective for feature walls, retail environments, exhibits, branded spaces, and other areas where the display is intended to attract attention.

Neither is automatically better.

The question is **what you're trying to accomplish in the space.**

3. Determine the Right Size

One of the major advantages of SEG is the ability to create displays in **Custom Sizes**.

That doesn't mean bigger is always better.

Consider:

Available wall or floor space

Viewing distance

Ceiling height

Surrounding architecture

Graphic content

Installation access

How close people will be to the display

A graphic that looks great from 30 feet away may need to be designed differently from one that people will view from only a few feet.

Rather than starting with an arbitrary frame dimension, determine what size works for the environment.

4. Think About the Graphic and Frame Together

This is important.

An SEG display isn't just a frame with a piece of fabric attached to it.

The graphic has to be produced and finished specifically to fit the frame.

Proper sizing and sewing help create the tension required for a smooth finished appearance.

Too much or too little tension can affect fitment.

That's why we recommend treating the **graphic and frame as one complete display system** rather than two unrelated purchases.

5. Consider the Graphic Material

The fabric used for a Frontlit application may have different requirements from fabric intended for Backlit use.

Backlit graphics need to interact properly with the lighting system behind them. The material, print, and illumination all contribute to the final appearance.

Other factors can include:

Color reproduction

Opacity or light transmission

Stretch characteristics

Finished appearance

Application environment

Expected graphic life

Don't select a fabric based only on how it looks as an uninstalled sample.

The important question is how it performs **inside the finished display**.

6. Understand Dye-Sublimated Graphics

Dye sublimation is commonly used to produce SEG graphics.

The process uses heat to transfer printed sublimation inks into compatible fabric. Rather than simply placing ink on the surface, the process creates a durable, vibrant graphic suitable for fabric display applications.

For the buyer, you don't necessarily need to understand every technical detail of the printing and transfer process.

What matters is the finished result.

Consider color expectations, image resolution, viewing distance, fabric selection, and whether the graphic will be Frontlit or Backlit when preparing artwork for production.

7. Think About Lighting Early

For a Backlit display, lighting shouldn't be an afterthought.

Frame depth, light source, spacing, graphic material, and display dimensions can all influence the finished appearance.

The objective is **consistent illumination across the graphic**.

Visible bright spots, dark areas, or uneven illumination can distract from an otherwise excellent graphic.

This becomes particularly important with larger displays.

8. Single-Sided or Double-Sided?

Wall-mounted displays are often single-sided because only one face is visible.

Freestanding or suspended applications may need graphics on both sides.

A **double-sided SEG display** can be particularly useful in open spaces where people approach from multiple directions.

Examples might include:

Trade shows

Retail environments

Showrooms

Lobbies

Large commercial spaces

Events

Again, start with how people will actually interact with the display.

If the back of the structure will never be visible, there may be little reason to design around a second graphic.

9. How Often Will the Graphic Change?

One of the useful characteristics of an SEG system is the ability to replace the fabric graphic while continuing to use the frame.

That can be particularly valuable for environments where messaging changes regularly.

Consider:

Seasonal promotions

New product launches

Events

Brand campaigns

Sponsorships

Menu or promotional changes

Temporary messaging

If graphics will be changed frequently, make sure the display is positioned and designed so the graphic can be reasonably accessed.

A replaceable graphic isn't very useful if changing it requires dismantling half the room.

10. Think About Installation Before Manufacturing

Installation requirements should be considered early in the project.

A small wall-mounted display may be relatively straightforward.

A very large frame, suspended display, curved structure, or custom installation can require considerably more planning.

Consider:

How will the frame reach the installation area?

Can it fit through doors, elevators, and hallways?

Will the frame ship assembled or in sections?

What is it mounting to?

Is electrical access available for a Backlit display?

How high is the installation?

How will installers access the area?

These questions are much easier to solve during design than on installation day.

The goal should be a **seamless installation**, not figuring out the project once everything arrives.

11. Consider Shipping and Assembly

Custom displays can become large very quickly.

That means shipping needs to be considered alongside manufacturing.

Depending on the size and design, a frame may need to be manufactured in sections and assembled at its destination.

The objective is to balance:

Structural requirements

Finished appearance

Shipping efficiency

Installation practicality

A frame shouldn't be designed in a way that makes it unnecessarily difficult or expensive to get to the customer.

12. What About Very Large Displays?

SEG systems aren't limited to conventional poster-sized graphics.

Large-format fabric displays can be used to create feature walls, oversized branding, environmental graphics, and architectural visual elements.

As size increases, however, additional considerations become important.

Frame construction.

Graphic production.

Seaming, when applicable.

Structural support.

Lighting consistency.

Shipping.

Installation.

Graphic fitment.

Large SEG projects should be approached as **complete display projects**, not simply oversized versions of small frames.

13. Standard Display or Custom Solution?

Many projects can be handled with relatively straightforward rectangular frames.

Others can't.

Custom applications may involve:

Custom Sizes

Freestanding structures

Suspended displays

Double-sided systems

Large-format feature walls

Displays integrated into architectural elements

If a standard configuration accomplishes what the project requires, there's no reason to overcomplicate it.

But the physical space shouldn't necessarily be forced around a standard display either.

Sometimes the better solution is designing the display around the environment.

14. Consider the Entire Project, Not Just the Frame Price

When comparing SEG systems, it's tempting to compare only the cost of the frame.

But that doesn't necessarily tell you the cost of the completed project.

Consider:

Frame material/appearance

Graphic production

Lighting

Shipping

Assembly

Installation

Electrical requirements

Replacement graphics

A lower frame price doesn't necessarily mean a lower completed-project cost if several additional pieces need to be sourced separately.

Evaluate the **finished display**, not just one component.

15. Who Is Responsible for What?

This becomes especially important with larger projects.

One supplier may manufacture the frame.

Another may print the graphic.

Another may handle lighting.

Someone else may install it.

That can work perfectly well, but responsibilities should be clear.

If something doesn't fit during installation, who owns the problem?

If you're sourcing multiple parts of the project separately, make sure everyone is working from the same dimensions and requirements.

There can be an advantage to having the **graphic and display system produced together**, particularly when fitment can be checked before shipment.

Questions to Answer Before Requesting a Quote

Before contacting an SEG display supplier, try to have answers to these questions:

Where will the display be installed?

What approximate size do you need?

Frontlit or Backlit?

Wall mounted, freestanding, suspended, or something custom?

Single-sided or double-sided?

How far away will people typically view it?

Will the graphic change regularly?

Do you already have finished artwork?

Are there electrical requirements?

Who will install the display?

Do you need the graphic, frame, or both?

Is this one display or multiple locations?

You don't need every detail figured out before contacting a manufacturer.

For custom projects, photos, measurements, renderings, drawings, or even a basic description of what you're trying to accomplish can be enough to start the conversation.

Common Mistakes When Choosing an SEG Display System

One common mistake is treating the frame and graphic as completely separate decisions.

Another is choosing a display based only on dimensions without considering **how it will actually look in the environment**.

For Backlit systems, waiting until late in the project to think about lighting or electrical requirements can also create unnecessary problems.

And with large custom displays, shipping and installation should never be left until the end.

The best SEG system isn't necessarily the largest, deepest, brightest, or most complicated.

It's the system that makes the graphic look right, fits the environment, and can be manufactured, delivered, installed, and maintained practically.

Choosing the Right SEG Graphic Display System

Start with the space and what you're trying to accomplish visually.

Then determine the size, Frontlit or Backlit configuration, mounting method, graphic requirements, lighting, installation needs, and how often the display will change.

Once those questions are answered, the actual frame configuration becomes much easier to determine.

At **Advanced Innovative Technologies**, we manufacture both **dye-sublimated SEG graphics and fabric_frame® display systems** at our Ball Ground, Georgia facility. Our capabilities include Frontlit, Backlit, Custom Sizes, and custom display solutions for projects that require something beyond a standard configuration.

By working with both the graphic and the frame, AIT can approach the project as a complete display system and verify graphic fitment before the finished project leaves our facility.

If you're planning an SEG display and aren't sure where to start, show us the space and tell us what you're trying to accomplish.

We'll help you determine what makes sense for the application.

AIT Buyer Guide

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