Minelli Design

Image System Designer Uses Adobe PageMaker to Create Conceptual Framework for Exhibits, Publications and Advertising

Adobe™ PageMaker™

Key Benefits Summary

• Provides an intuitive interface that is ideal for concept development.
• Produces reliable, trouble-free output.
• Easily imports and arranges various file formats.

Although Minelli Design uses Adobe PageMaker for publications, its principal application for the program is atypical. "Our firm uses PageMaker software as a tool for concept development through final production for a range of communications materials for our clients," says principal Mark Minelli. "We bring together a diverse set of images, exhibit elements and messages, and then develop a system that gives them a unified look. PageMaker is the ideal tool for that because it makes importing files from a variety of applications and manipulating them in endless ways easy and intuitive."

Creating a Global Look

Minelli Design is a five-person firm based in Boston. The company's clients include Fidelity Investments; the Decordova Museum; the Art Institute of Boston; and DAKA International, a food-service provider. The firm's specialty is analyzing, designing and implementing comprehensive image systems for clients in business, education and the public sector.

A system typically takes more than six months to create, and when finished, it may include catalogs, promotional mailers, signage, annual reports, brochures, exhibits and billboards—all of which are designed in Adobe PageMaker.

Minelli describes the process of developing an image system: "We talk to a company about their approach to marketing a cluster of services, as we're currently doing for Fidelity Investments and their national conference," he says. "Next, we gather material, including text, images, video grabs and floor plans; import it all into PageMaker; and work with it to design a unified system that works across the board for a range of divisions and a range of materials. At

that point, we show the company 'gestures,' or roughs, of how the system can be applied everywhere, refine the roughs based on their feedback, and proceed to implement the look."

Designing Exhibits with Adobe PageMaker

For Fidelity's national conference, Minelli "frames" the exhibit design, print materials and slide formats in Adobe PageMaker. Some of these conference elements go through production with Minelli Design while others become blueprints to be given to vendors that produce individual pieces of the exhibit. For example, custom fabricators enlarge designs created in PageMaker and transfer them to fabric to serve as flag-size banners in the exhibit. Other vendors enlarge type from PageMaker files to create vinyl die-cut lettering to be applied to exhibit plating material. Slide vendors also use PageMaker files to create slide presentations that have a common visual identity for all of the speakers at the conference.

"We send service bureaus and printers a variety of documents, including books," says Minelli, "and they tell us the files are trouble-free to produce using PageMaker." For more complex files, service bureaus process their PageMaker files using the Adobe TrapWise™ program. Feedback from a range of customers confirms that the PageMaker files are also easy to output with post-processing tools such as TrapWise.

In designing the 7,000-square-foot conference exhibit, Minelli used PageMaker to develop the look of the exhibit's "building blocks," including their shape and how they will be connected. The building blocks include basic orientation graphics, which are color-coded legends that guide visitors

Adobe

to different departments and presentations; type several feet tall identifying departments; and panels displaying floor-to-ceiling images created in the Adobe Photoshop™ program. Also part of the exhibit are "surface graphics," such as bar charts showing the performance of a fund.

"PageMaker is the perfect tool for this conceptual stage," says Minelli, "because it has an intuitive interface that lets you focus on what you want to do instead of how to do it. Other programs make you type in coordinates to move elements and force you to think too much about the technical aspects of using the program. PageMaker has plenty of features for being precise and for fine-tuning layouts for output, but you can wait to use them until you—and your layout—are ready."

PageMaker at the Conceptual Stage
Among the features in PageMaker 6.0 Minelli finds valuable at the concept stage is Object Masking, which gives him the flexibility to experiment with cropping different shapes. For example, he may frame a photo panel in a circle or in a shape other than a square. Minelli also makes extensive use of the Grouping and Ungrouping feature. "We often establish that a cluster of things works well together and we want to keep them together," he says. "For example, on an orientation panel, we may have type that's a foot high and five feet long sitting on a color photo we've manipulated in Adobe Photoshop. With Grouping, we can lock them together and move them around easily within the layout."

Minelli creates templates of the exhibit space in PageMaker, prints them and gives them to the departments that will be using the space. The templates let the different departments indicate the elements that will make up their exhibit. Minelli then imports the elements requested—such as photos from Adobe Photoshop, graphs from

Adobe Illustrator™ and text—and creates a "proof" of the overall exhibit layout. "You don't get a blueline with an exhibit," he says, "so we use the PageMaker file to 'proof' the work done by the fabricators producing exhibit materials and graphics to ensure that the work matches what we requested."

"We send service bureaus and printers a variety of documents, including books, and they tell us the files are trouble-free to produce using PageMaker."

—*Mark Minelli,*
principal,
Minelli Design

The Multiple Master Pages feature in PageMaker 6.0 lets Minelli create a single file that incorporates several page formats. He finds the feature useful in setting up a file containing templates—each a master page—that incorporate different plans a department may choose for its exhibit space.

A Tool That Solves Problems
The principal reason Minelli uses PageMaker at the concept stage—where layouts change drastically and often— is that it's easier to make changes in PageMaker than in any other page layout program. "We continuously change the color palette, the size and orientation of a page, the elements in a file, the page formats in a file, the groupings of elements and dozens of other variables," he says. "We can do all that quickly and intuitively in PageMaker."

Minelli also takes advantage of the ability to print files directly to the Adobe Portable

Document Format (PDF). "The *Create Adobe PDF* option provides us with one easy step for preparing files for electronic distribution while still preserving the investment of time we made formatting the printed piece," he says. He sends PDF files to reviewers so they can proof the exhibit layout but not modify it.

His firm is designing its own home page for the World Wide Web in Adobe PageMaker, which it will then convert to a PDF file using Adobe Acrobat™ software. Minelli takes advantage of the hypertext linking ability of Adobe Acrobat software to create links from his on-line documents to other documents on the Web in PDF or HTML format. "The linking is really what separates Web documents from printed documents and makes them dynamic and powerful," he says.

Although Minelli Design's uses for Adobe PageMaker go beyond those of the typical design firm, they nonetheless take advantage of the program's wide range of strengths. "We're less focused on output than many firms," says Minelli, "but that doesn't make PageMaker any less valuable for us. Clients don't hire us to do film separations; they hire us to solve their communications problems. Adobe PageMaker is the software tool we use to do that."

Minelli Design
Systems at-a-Glance

Hardware
Apple® Power Macintosh® 8100
Apple Power Macintosh 7100
Apple Macintosh Quadra® 950 computer with PowerPC™ upgrade card
Apple LaserWriter® printer
Tektronix® phase-change color printer

Software
Adobe PageMaker
Adobe Acrobat
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Premiere™
Adobe TrapWise

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Acrobat, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere, PageMaker and TrapWise are trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated or its subsidiaries and may be registered in certain jurisdictions. Apple, LaserWriter, Macintosh Quadra and Power Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. PowerPC is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. Tektronix is a registered trademark of Tektronix, Inc. All other brand or product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.