

# Introduction to Wide Format Markets



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# Introduction

The market for wide format documents takes in both Graphic Communications and Technical Document applications. Some market segments use both types, some use just one of the two. So, before we start, let's broadly define those two applications as follows.

**Graphic Communications** applications include any large print giving information to viewers about events, sales, directions, and so on. They're intended to be viewed at some distance, not held in the viewer's hands and read up close. Some may not even include any text at all – they're purely graphic in nature.





### Print Consumers

Think of customers in the wide format market as print consumers – the people who want things printed. They're the real customers and they're the ones who drive this entire market.

They may be those who want to buy wide format products like printers, scanners, and RIPs to produce their own prints in their own in-plant print shop. Or they may be those who buy their wide format prints from commercial printers. Some need graphic communications documents, some just technical documents – and some require both.

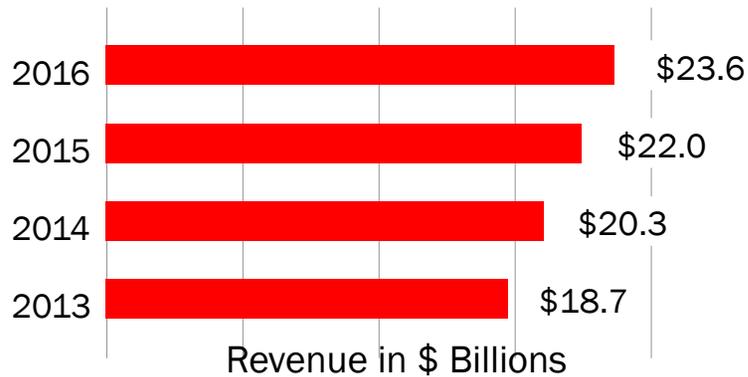
Specifically, we'll take a look at each of these market segments:

- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Trade Shows – Exhibitions – Events
- Government
- Education
- Architectural – Engineering – Construction (AEC)
- Utilities and Telecommunications
- Geographic Information Services (GIS)
- Commercial Printers – the print-for-pay segment

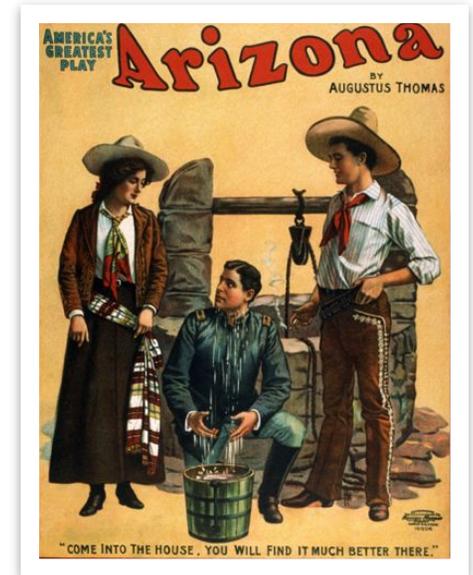


## How Big is the Wide Format Market?

Retail Value of Wide Format Printing



The wide format market offers ample growth and opportunity. [InfoTrends](#) expects the retail value of Wide Format printing in North America to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 7.9% reaching \$23.6 billion by 2016 – that’s the value of the printing. The research firm [Markets and Markets](#) projects the global value of the wide format printer market – that’s for the hardware – to grow at a CAGR of 5.7% to \$12.5 by 2016. Hardly trivial figures.



# Retail

Worldwide, retailers generate almost \$15 trillion in revenue – making it one of the largest markets for wide format products.

Retail covers all the businesses that sell goods and services to consumers for personal, family, household, or even business use. We all use retail outlets every day, including:

- Department stores
- Pharmacies
- Automotive stores and dealerships
- Convenience stores
- Wholesale clubs
- Supermarkets and grocery chains
- Discount stores, and
- Specialty shops selling appliances, electronics, clothing, and so on.

## Typical Applications



As you might expect, it's an extremely competitive market. Because it's so competitive, all retailers need to promote their products to get you to buy. To do that they use advertising – of which we've all seen our share! And wide format printing figures heavily in their advertising strategies and budgets.

These are the most common applications you'll find in the retail market:

- **Posters** – display information to viewers at shorter distances than **billboards**. Commonly printed at about 24" wide x 36" tall (A1), they may be used either indoors or outdoors. The mounting location dictates the media and finishing needed, but you'll often find them on paper, film, vinyl, and fabrics.



- **Banners** – much larger than posters and provide short messages for viewing at distances over about 10 feet (3 meters). You will find them mounted on walls and hanging from the ceilings in stores and malls. Common media choices include: vinyl, fabric, and canvas.

- **Point-of-Purchase** ads – get placed next to the merchandise they're promoting, often right at the cash register. They directly sway customers into making quick purchasing decisions. Unlaminated paper is the most common media used since they're used indoors and usually mounted for short-term use.
- **Decals** or "**Window Clings**" – advertising that gets mounted on store windows and are printed on clear vinyl or films. They may have a light adhesive coating on the mounting surface; some rely on static to hold them in place.

