

# A BRIEF GUIDE TO BANNER STANDS

**Whether you're new to exhibiting or have been buying stands for years, some of the jargon that comes with the territory can be mind boggling.**

One of the most portable products and sometimes most confusing is the humble banner stand. It's so easy to create a big impact from such a small package, however not all banner stands are created equally. This is one product where "you get what you pay for".

One of our most asked questions regarding banner stands is 'what's the difference?'

Mirage Display has been sourcing and supplying stands for many years and we've seen the best and the worst of many different systems. So its time to set the record straight, we'll explain what we look for in any system and the differences in our range, without the jargon!

## What is a roller banner stand?

A roller banner stand consists of a base unit which contains a roller mechanism, a support pole, a printed graphic panel, and a carry bag which the complete stand packs away into.

However, despite this simple explanation, there are hundreds of different types of roller banner stands, with a big range in price. Cheap roll up banner stands can be purchased for under £100, or you can spend up to £350 for a premium banner stand.

In this document we'll try to explain the reasons why.



## Where are roller banner stands used?

The simple answer to this, is pretty much anywhere that a company wants to convey a message to passers by.

Originally pull up banner stands, were used primarily at exhibitions and trade fairs. However, over the years the uses have expanded to reception displays, foyer displays, museums, road shows, fund raising events, or simple information points.

Their portability and relative low cost combined with high impact printed graphic panels, makes a banner stand an ideal solution to quickly setting up an advert in seconds at any location.



## Indoor or Outdoors

Most roll up banner stands are designed for indoor use, although it's not uncommon to see them used outside.

They look great used outdoors on a nice summers day, but wind and indoor banner stands are not happy companions.

However, there is a range of banner stands that are specifically designed for outdoor use with weighted bases that can withstand extreme conditions.

[Web-link: Outdoor banners](#)



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## Why such a wide range on price?

As mentioned previously, banner stands can be purchased for under £100, or you can spend up to £350 on a premium banner stand.

There are a number of factors that affect the price of a roller banner stand.

### Quality of the roller mechanism inside the base

There is a massive range in quality and durability of the roller mechanism. This mechanism is the most important part of the workings of the banner stand. A cheap banner stand will definitely have a cheap roller mechanism, where the slightest knock by a courier or user can damage it.

### Grade/thickness of aluminium used in the base

The base unit protects the roller mechanism and graphic panel which it houses. The price of the banner stand within the £100 - £350 price range is a very good indication of the durability of the aluminium used in the base. On the cheaper style banner stands, you can move / dent the base just by pushing it with a finger. So someone dropping in on the floor is likely to damage a cheaper base. More expensive banner stands can withstand a great deal more rough handling.

### Quality of the support pole

A low cost banner stand will come with a lightweight pole in three sections, which are connected together with a bungee. As the price increases the support poles become thicker and more durable. Normally with some mid range and premium banner stands, the pole will be telescopic. Telescopic poles are normally made of a more robust material, and allow for the height of the stand to be adjusted to deal with any unexpected height restrictions. A banner stand with a telescopic pole is a lot easier to set up than one with a fixed height pole. Rather than having to reach the top of the pole, a telescopic one allows the stand to be set up at a comfortable height, and then extended / or retracted without having to be able to reach to the top of panel.



### Quality of the graphic panel

Since we've been talking about the internal workings of a banner stand, which affect the durability and ease of set up, it's the graphic panel that a potential customer will look at and notice first. There are a number of different materials that companies use in the production of a banner stands. These different materials can have a big effect on the overall look of the stand, and also the durability.

The best quality graphic panels are ones that have a laminate on the front and a stop-light backing which sandwich the paper print. The laminate protects the panel against damage when in use, and also stops the print from being worn over time from repeated use. The stop-light adds thickness to the panel, and prevents light from shining through the panel. However, laminating and applying stop-light to a graphic panel requires skilled labour and a lamination machine which costs in the region of £10,000.

Many banner stand producers have therefore cut costs by using a one piece material which stops light from shining through, but doesn't have the laminate on the front.

### Quality of the carry bag

As a rule the cheaper the banner stand, the thinner the carry bag. For some uses the quality of the bag isn't important. But if the stand is being used regularly the bag will protect the stand and increase its life.

### These points will greatly affect the cost of your banner stand!

A cheap banner stand will be fine for some requirements, but not others. A top of the range banner stand is the best option for some uses.

**So to decide what banner stand is the most suitable, it is important to decide how you will use your stand.**



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## What banner stand is best for me?

Price is a pretty good guide to judge the quality of the stand. Banner stands can be split into budget, mid-range and premium. When choosing how much to spend on your banner stand, it's important to consider a number of factors, to identify how you will use the stand.

### Frequency of use

if the stand is to be used for a one off, short term event, then a low cost stand might be the best option. There is no point paying for the durability and longevity of a premium stand, so a low cost stand would be ideal. However, if the stand is going to be used regularly, it will be more cost effective to purchase a mid range or premium stand, so that the stand lasts for years rather than months. Look for a stand that has a good quality roller mechanism and laminated graphic panel.

### Weight

As a rule the lighter the stand, the lower quality the base unit material and roller mechanism. A budget stand will tend to weigh around 3kg, whereas a premium stand will weigh up to 6kg. The difference isn't particularly noticeable when carrying the stand.

### Ease of use

If the person setting up the stand is 6ft tall, there will be no issue in setting up the stand. However, if a shorter person is setting up the stand, they may struggle with a fixed height support pole. A banner stand with a telescopic pole will make set up a lot easier, and has the added benefit of adjusting the overall height of the stand if required.



## Budget Banners

**Good for:**  
One-off events  
Lightweight  
Price  
Fixed height

**Bad for:**  
Repeated use  
Long term displays  
Updating graphics

## Mid-range Banners

**Good for:**  
Regular Use  
Lightweight  
Update graphics  
Price  
Height adjustable  
5yr guarantee

## Premium Banners

**Good for:**  
Lifetime guarantee  
Update graphics  
Durability  
Height adjustable

**Bad for:**  
Expensive  
Heavier

## How will the stand be transported

If the stand is going to be transported in a car and handled reasonably carefully, then a low cost stand with a budget carry bag will do the job.

However, if the stand is going to be transported by a courier then a low cost stand may not stand up to the heavy hands of a courier company.

Even a premium stand with a good quality padded carry bag may not be strong enough to stand up to the wear and tear inflicted by sending overseas.

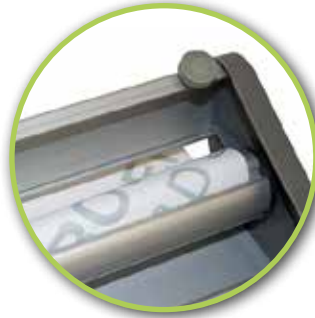
Banner stands normally come in a cardboard box, so it's advisable to keep the box and use this as extra packaging. Or consider having a hard case produced. These cost around £100 but can hold a number of stands, and will withstand any rough handling by courier companies.



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## Changing graphic panels

All banner stands can be sent back to a printer to have the graphic panel removed, and a new printed graphic panel fitted.



This is a painless task if your branding needs updating only occasionally.

However, if the panels need changing regularly, then there are a number of banner stands that have a removable cassette which contains the graphic panel.

New panels can be produced and sent in a new cassette, which slides into the base unit.

[Video-link: Zap D3 Graphic change](#)

[Video-link: Merlin - Graphic cassette replacement](#)

## How to set up a banner stand

One of the main reasons for the popularity of roll up banner stands is their ease of use.

Simply remove the base unit from its bag, extend the pole and fit this into the base. Then pull out the panel from the base and fit it onto the top of the pole.

[Video-link: Zap D3 banner setup](#)



## Foot vs. deep base

There is a big choice of banner stands available, however, they can be split into three different types of bases:

### Bases with two feet

These are the cheaper, lower quality stands. They need to have two feet to support the lower quality base.

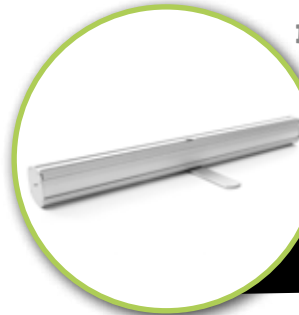
**These shouldn't cost more than £115.00 for a banner stand with two feet.**



### Bases with one foot

These tend to be the mid range, and some premium stands. The feet normally have a good quality finish - often chrome.

**These stands should range from around £140.00 for a mid range stand to £280.00 for a premium stand.**



### Bases without a support foot

These have a deeper footprint, so no support is needed.

**These tend to be premium stands, with a cost of £200 - £350.00.**

These style stands are popular where a protruding foot could be seen as a trip hazard or a more sleek overall look is required.

