



XARAXONE.COM TUTORIAL TRANSCRIPT

April 2012

This transcript is not verbatim, but it's what Gary used during the filming of the tutorial.

Hi I'm Gary Bouton, and welcome to the Spring Edition of Xara TV tutorials at Xara Xone.com.

This month, I'm going to take you through something distinctly American: the garage sale, and how to design and print the perfect garage sale sign to hang on telephone poles and other public fixtures, and never take them down after the sale, and they become part of the fossil record.

For those of you outside of the continental United States who aren't familiar with a Garage Sale, okay, it's also called a Yard Sale, a flea sale, a jumble sale and here's a stylized video demonstration of how it goes:

The seller puts all the junk in their basement on the driveway or on folding tables while buyers come and sift through the refuse. They decide on something and pay the seller pennies on the dollar. Then next week, the seller becomes the buyer and goes to a neighbor's garage sale...and does the same thing. It's the way America distributes garbage.

Now the sign you'll design doesn't have to be for a garage sale. It can be for a bake sale, a corner lemonade stand, a sports league sign-up... a garage sale is just a good example. Let's review what's wrong with this garage sale sign, and then build the perfect personal or small business sales sign in Xara.

+++++

In this comedy of errors, first, consider the placement of your ad. It's important because you can't sell something if your audience can't read your sign!

1. Placement of your ad is important- This sign is on the far side of traffic, so no one is going to read it. If the sign was rotated to face the proper lane and the arrow was reversed, then you'd be talking road to success.
2. Choice on fonts is important. The folks who are having this house sale apparently own only a worn-out felt tip marker for creating signage. Fortunately, you own Xara, I'll recommend some typefaces in a moment, and you'll achieve a message that can be read from 3 villages away.
3. Poorly placed text is a bad reflection on the designer's sense of planning. The folks having this sale apparent wanted to re-use the sign, so they scribbled over the original date and scrawled "today" on the sign. Fine. What day is "today", ?

4.

Try to compose all of the physical elements of your sign to withstand the weather. These signs are taking a bruising from the wind and weather more so than necessary. Get some cardboard, some rubber cement from your kid's school supplies, a utility blade, and a metal ruler, and after you print the sign, do the trimming on the garage floor.

Let's begin with a roundup of typefaces you'll want. If you have the physical copy of the Xara install disk, you might have fonts such as Flanders, Focus, Migra Heavy, and Tempest Heavy installed. If you don't, you're really not out of luck because these are all look-alike faces for industry standards such as Futura, Helvetica and Antique Olive. You can substitute any of these, you just need one very bold typeface for this sign, and you own a lighter weight when you installed Windows. You can also do a web search for a bold typeface. I found part of the Futura family for free in less than 5 minutes.

Let me discuss good typography for a moment before we begin. You'll see shortly that I'm mixing Helvetica with Century Gothic and Futura. This is not good typography because the families artistically clash. Ideally, you'd use members of the same font family such as Futura here, so I'm sort of teaching you to slum it here, but only if you can't find or afford the fonts you need. These are all sans serif, gothic typefaces, so they're sort of a good match, and come on, this is an outdoor neighborhood sign.

Let's talk page setup in Xara Designer now: Most personal printers take a standard sheet of paper. In the US, this is 8 and a half by 11". I'll show you how to tile your print of your sign at the end of this tutorial, so I'm thinking a 17" by 22" space is good to define in Xara Designer, four times a standard US page. if you use European standard sizes, four sheets of A4 comes out to 23.38 wide 16.54" high.

To set the page size, Launch Xara Designer, and then press Ctrl+Shift+for Options. Click the Units tab, specify Inches and then click the Page Size. On the Page Size drop-down choose Custom, and then type 22 in the Width field, 17 in the height, or use A4 dimensions here.

Conceptually, the most important thing your sign must communicate is what event is going on, which is Garage Sale in this example. In decreasing order of importance is where the event takes place, and then when, days and hours. Let's begin with the Event.

There's no reason why you can't reverse out the headline Create a black rectangle toward the top center of the page. Use the Rectangle tool. Click the Text tool at the left edge of the rectangle, hold Shift and type Garage Sale. Highlight the text with the Text tool cursor and then choose the boldest sans serif font you have installed. Now click white on the color line.

Switch to the Selector tool and then scale the text to fit within the black rectangle. Let's get the dates going for the garage sale.

These elements need to stand out, but also to be subordinate to the "Garage Sale" text. still be legible, but not as punchy as the headline. Click another insertion point on the page: and type Saturday, April 21st, hit return and then type Sunday, April 22nd. Highlight the two lines and then click the Center justify button of the Infobar. With the words still highlighted, choose Ariel Condensed from the font drop-down list and then click the Bold button on the Inforbar.

Now, The words in the date are not of equal importance. "April 21st" and "April 22nd" will resonate with the viewer more than the actual days, so Highlight "April 21st" and make it the same font you used for Garage Sale, and then do the same with "April 22nd".

With the Selector Tool, try to visually center the two lines just below Garage Sale

The Elements that are missing from the sign now are:

The address of the garage sale. This is an important selling point.

The hours for the sale. This is a "throw-away" line in terms of selling importance and can be small in type size on the sign. People are going to come to the sale any darned time they feel like it. It's America.

Seriously consider creating an equal number of signs with left-facing and right-facing arrows, and make the arrows BIG. By doing this, your hired help okay, your kids— can choose which way a sign's arrow is facing when they get to a pole.

Another consideration is to put some text inside the arrow. Why? Two truths:

1. People will read the lettering inside of arrows. So you can make a large arrow for the sign, and put a “selling point” inside the arrow in white text, such as “All sane offers accepted”. This will make bargain hunters feel as though they're on easy turf.
2. Regardless of how small you print it, people can read the words “Free”, “New, and “Save” with both their eyes closed. So without messing up the various weights of text on the sign, you can run “Save \$” about 5 or 6 times across the top of the sign at about 24 points and it will get read.

To create the arrow, drag a rectangle with the Rectangle tool towards the bottom of the sign, press Escape to deselect the rectangle, then choose the QuickShape tool. Set the number of sides to 3 and make sure the Starred Shape button is not depressed. Cheer it up if necessary.

Hold Ctrl to constrain the direction of the shape and then drag left. With the selector tool, put the triangle—the arrowhead, to the left of the rectangle. While holding Shift, click the rectangle and then press Ctrl+G to group the two shapes. Now the arrow can be reversed by clicking the mirror button on the Standard Bar later.

With the Text tool, type a catchy saying, apply Arial Narrow Bold, give it a white fill, and then put it over the arrow and scale it up.

Type the hours for the sale, use the Garage Sale Bold font, and you can smooch the text a little and it's still legible, as you can see here. What you're doing is creativity fitting text to a layout, which is what designers and Desktop publishing people do every day.

Type the address. Now for artistic balance, the address can be large headline, but lighter in weight than the headline. Weight and size are tools to focus an audience on what you, the designer, want the reader to read. Apply Century Gothic bold to the text, and try to keep all the elements centered as you scale and arrange them.

Finally, you can use Ariel Narrow Bold to type Save , dollar sign (or whatever currency your neighborhood uses) followed with a centered period. To make bullets with almost every typeface, you hold Alt, then press 0 one four nine and then release Alt. This is called an extended character. Copy the phrase, put your cursor at the end of the phrase and then paste the copy a few times. Scale and position the text at the top of the sign.

It's probably a good idea to put a thing border around the sign so you can trim it after printing. With the Rectangle tool, drag a rectangle to inside the page border, but outside of the sign text. Give it a 4 point width with no fill.

Choose Edit pages>Duplicate current page. On the duplicate page, reverse the arrow.

If you think you have everything arranged and centered, choose File> Export and then export to Adobe Acrobat PDF file format instead of printing the sign from Xara.

Why do this? Because Acrobat Reader and Acrobat Pro both have print driver options that let you tile a page that's larger than the paper sitting in your tray. In Acrobat, you choose File>Print, make sure you have the printer you want specified and you've loaded up fluorescent or other paper, then choose Tile Large Pages. Give the pages about a quarter inch overlap, and then make sure the size of the overall document is correct, because Acrobat doesn't always scale a page correctly. 80%, not 100% gives me 22 by 17" here. Enable cut marks so you have a guide, and if the preview shows only four tiling pages, you're good to print.

Now that you have the sign of your dreams printed and posted, I think I can safely say that you're going to make a fortune running your sale. See? You got my attention, I'm your first customer, and I already bought this !

Barb: Put it back, Gare.

Gary: It only cost a dollar, hon'.

It's ugly and we need that dollar, put it back.
But I really want it. You'll never see it, I'll put it in...

No.

Transcript Copyright ©2012, Gary David Bouton. The Xara Xone ©Copyright 2012, The Xara Group, Ltd. This document may not be copied in part or in whole without express permission from the creator.