RETRACTABLE BANNER STANDS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/109,139, filed Oct. 28, 2008, which is incorporated herein in its entirety by reference.

This application is also related to U.S. Design application No. 29/346,215, filed Oct. 28, 2009, U.S. Design application No. 29/346,216, filed Oct. 28, 2009, U.S. Design application No. 29/346,217, filed Oct. 28, 2009, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/205,660, filed Jan. 21, 2009, the disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to free standing and readily erectable graphic displays such as those used for trade shows. More particularly, this invention relates to retractable banner stands with accessories.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Displays for trade shows are generally structures that can transported, erected on a convention or show floor for a brief period of show time, then disassembled, transported and stored until the next usage. Such displays can be massive complex multi-story structures or simple single banner displays. The massive displays are typically constructed of metal trusses, metal box frames, and large diameter (greater than two ½ inches) metal tubing providing great flexibility in varying designs and offering many accessories such as shelving, lighting, literature racks, and flat panel electronic displays. Such large displays often require crates to store and transport and require trained crews several hours or more to erect. See, for example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,024,834 assigned to Skyline Displays, Inc., the owner of this invention, illustrating such displays and U.S. Pat. No. 6,951,283 illustrating a crate and such displays.

A common simpler tradeshow display comprises a bundled network of interconnected support rods that expands into a volumetrically substantial three-dimensional space. Such expanded structures are then covered with sheet material capable of supporting graphics on the material. Such structures typically have a curved foot print providing an attractive smooth curved surface for the graphics. Such displays may also have vertical supports that may be utilized for supporting shelving and other accessories. The curved footprint effectively provides stability and allows shelves and other appurtenances such as lighting. See U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,829,869 and 4,658,560 assigned to Skyline Displays, Inc., the owner of the instant application. These displays are simple enough that they may be erected by users of the display but often, especially with accessories, such erection and take down is commonly done by hired contractors.

Perhaps the simplest displays usable in trade shows and other settings where simple graphic banners or signs or any visual information is to be temporarily displayed, are retractable banner stands. Such stands offer the distinct advantage that such displays can be easily transported by, quickly and easily erected by and taken down by the show attendants that will be using the display. Such displays can also divide space and support visual graphical displays for viewing by attendees. These displays are quite simple, comprising a housing with a retractable banner therein, a pole that plugs into the

housing for supporting the screen in an extended position, and one or two stabilizing feet that rotate outwardly.

Such banner stands can be seen in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,571,496, D468,362, U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0050083, and PCT Application Nos. WO 01/91092, WO 01/35381, and WO 00/47508, which are all directed to various aspects of retractable banner stands. These applications and publications are incorporated by reference herein in illustrating conventional retractable banner stand mechanisms and components. Retractable banner stands also provide the advantages protection and storage of the graphic display banner in the housing when the display is not in use. A disadvantage of such displays is that they are not typically as stable as the displays comprising the network of support rods described above and certainly not as stable as the larger displays constructed of trusses, metal box frames, and large diameter tubing. Nor do retractable banner stands have the three dimensional depth associated with the displays comprising the network of support rods, nor do such displays typically have shelves or capabilities of supporting appurtenances such as lighting, brochure racks or bins, display screens, and other electronics due to the lack of structure for attachment of same.

The core in such retractable banner stands comprises a cylindrical tubular base with an attachment point for the end of a banner and the banner windable on the exterior of the tubular base. A first end with an axially extending tab centrally positioned and attached to an inner hub and affixed to one end of a torsion spring, an outer hub rotatable and radially positioned with respect to the inner hub and tab and affixed to the other end of the torsion spring. The outer hub affixed to the cylindrical outer tubular housing. Conventionally, the tab is secured from rotation by insertion through a slot in the housing such that the tab is exteriorly exposed. An axle configured as a round pin extends from the second end of the core and typically extends out of the housing from the end opposite the tab allowing the core to rotate thereabout. Conventionally, the banner width will extend approximately 90 to 95% of the length of the housing.

Such retractable banner stands may be positioned end-to-end, often in a group of three to provide a backwall to an exhibit space. Such exhibit spaces are often sold with typical widths of 10 feet or 3 meters and three banner stands positioned end-to-end with typical banner widths of 32 to 38 inches conveniently provide a relatively inexpensive and easily erectable back wall for such exhibit spaces. Although three identically sized banner stands and banners, with the banners in alignment are suitable for such backwalls, such an arrangement can be visually improved or made more interesting by varying the depths and shapes of the banners. It is always advantageous to provide such variation and shape differentials with minimal expense and ease of erection of such back walls. The improvements and inventions herein provide such advantages to back walls formed of retractable banner stands.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A retractable banner stand, in one embodiment, has a base with a housing containing an extendable and retractable banner, the housing having a slot through which the banner is extended and retracted, a floor engagement portion of the base, such as a pair of feet extending forwardly and rearwardly, on two ends of the housing having sockets for receiving vertical poles, the vertical poles insertable into said sockets and extending upwardly along the banner when the banner is extended. The vertical poles may be utilized to support