

# Holden Forests & Gardens Corporate Retainer

Clevelanders have many choices when it comes to enjoying the outdoors, but few greenspaces have the rich history of the Cleveland Botanical Garden. With deep roots in the community dating back to 1930, the Botanical Garden has always been a premier destination for city dwellers and visitors to learn about local flora as well as exotic plant life.

Services:  
Event Branding  
Email Marketing  
Brand Strategy  
Site and Sign Audit  
Exhibit Design  
Internal Communications  
Advertising  
Publication Design  
Social Media Support



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*Dave Lowery, Vice President of Marketing, Holden Forests & Gardens*

## Overview

In 2014, the Botanical Garden’s story entered a new chapter when the facility joined forces with Kirtland, Ohio’s Holden Arboretum — a 3,600-acre outdoor oasis in its own right. The merger created the 12th largest public garden in the United States: Holden Forests & Gardens.

Behind the scenes, Impel Creative kept marketing materials moving forward. Special exhibits were coming, events and fundraisers needed to attract attention, and newsletters needed to go to members — on time and seamlessly.

Impel made sure the “new” Holden had the communications they needed and that the branding was always on-point — a role they’d served with the Garden since 2012.

Today, that relationship remains strong, with Impel working on a retainer basis for Holden, creating event communications, development/fundraising materials, invitations, brochures, annual reports, member magazines, and more.

**Challenge: Special Exhibits**

Like many museums, Holden welcomes special seasonal exhibits — large, interactive experiences that require branding and graphic support. These exhibits arrive at Holden with the pieces/parts of the physical experience; it’s Holden’s responsibility to interpret that experience for its visitors. “There is so much information that we need to convey when we host a special exhibit,” explains Dave Lowery, Vice President of Marketing at Holden. “There may be a dozen different interpretive areas to the exhibit. Our education department determines what needs to be communicated, then Impel brings the entire story to life. They interpret it in a way that makes you want to explore.”

This signage is typically massive in scope and scale. For example, for an outdoor treehouse exhibition, Branch Out, hosted in 2015 and 2016, signage needed to guide visitors through the outdoor space while also educating them on specifics of the locally designed, architecturally innovative treehouses. This signage included a 60-foot curved entryspace wall, 4-foot displays for each of the six treehouses, and marketing support: advertising, social media, digital assets, and more.

Impel Creative has provided event branding and design support for Cleveland Botanical Garden since 2012. Pictured below are just a few samples of large-scale signage for several events including Branch Out, Orchid Mania, and Nature Connects. Impel created a unique look for each of these shows that also worked within the overall branding of the institution.



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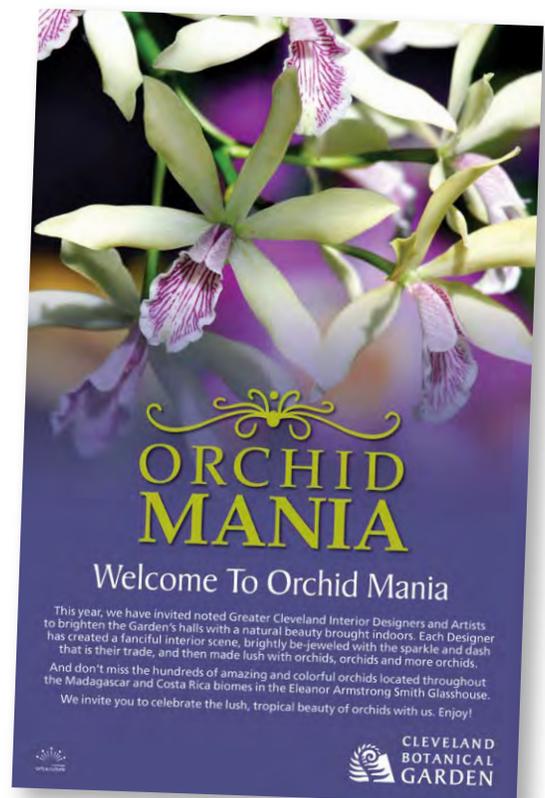
*“They get it. They don’t need a ton of input to really understand what you’re trying to do. They anticipate our needs. They’re a partner, rolling up their sleeves to make things work. That’s the kind of trust and relationship we have.”*

*Dave Lowery, Vice President of Marketing, Holden Forests & Gardens*

“In our business, a great exhibit needs great signage, and Impel makes it interesting and appealing. That’s key. Impel’s work has always been a large part of the show,” Lowery notes. The team has consistently worked on various other special or annual exhibits over the past six years: winter’s Orchid Mania, Big Spring, summer’s Nature Connects Lego show, and the holiday season’s Glow.

Getting visitors in the door for these exhibits also requires specialized external communication, and Impel has helped Holden promote their story via advertising, email marketing and more. Impel works closely with Holden’s internal team to keep all of these materials on-brand and in-budget. “There is always the challenge of making things seem creatively different but part of our brand,” Lowery says. “Impel brings continuity to the table, along with variety and high-quality design.”

In addition to onsite signage and interpretive displays, Impel helps promote events with design for advertising, social media, email marketing, and print materials.



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**Challenge: On-Going Communications**

In addition to the unique communication elements Impel creates for exhibits, they've also served Holden in many other ways. Prior to the 2014 merger, Impel created development/fundraising materials and annual reports for the Cleveland Botanical Garden. After the merger — which took two years to fully complete — this work continued and expanded. For example, the Impel team created a new quarterly magazine to communicate event and program news with members. Impel designed the marquee piece so that Holden's creative staff could cost effectively produce it.

"When we introduced the umbrella brand for our merged organization, Impel collaborated closely with our in-house art director to apply it to many, many situations." They've been invaluable in creating continuity," Lowery notes. "This is who they are. They're part of our everyday. On a week-to-week basis there is always a creative challenge they're giving us guidance on."



After the merger of Holden Arboretum and Cleveland Botanical Garden, Impel designed the new membership magazine for the combined organization, Holden Forests & Gardens.

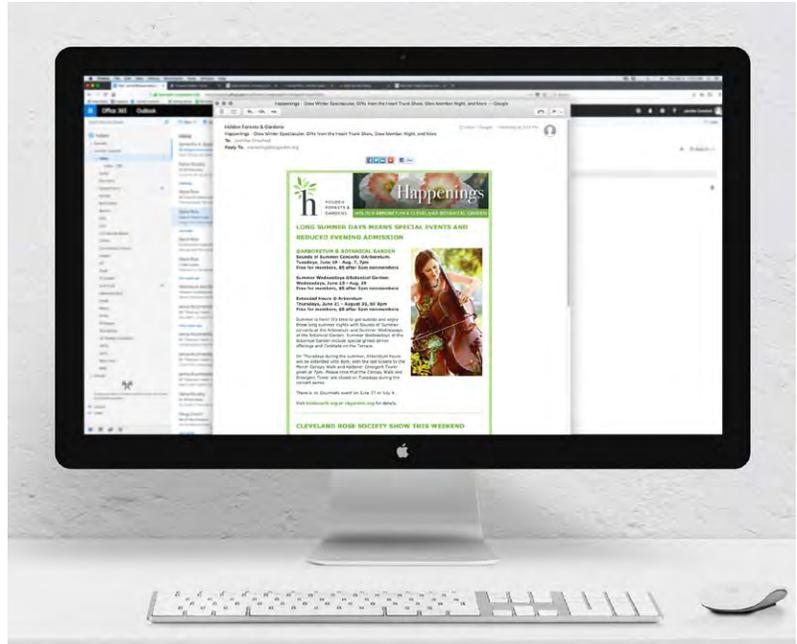


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Continuity has always been a critical role for Impel within Holden. When Lowery became the VP of Marketing in 2015, he inherited Impel from his predecessor. Yet he was happy to keep the relationship intact: "They had an important history with the brand and knew it better than I did. You could tell right away that the quality of the work was good. It's not just good design for design sake; it's smart."

Lowery also appreciates that Impel delivers solutions without a lot of hand-holding or revisions. "They get it. They don't need a ton of input to really understand what you're trying to do. They anticipate our needs. They're a partner, rolling up their sleeves to make things work. That's the kind of trust and relationship we have."

Creating a strong recognizable look that included both institutions under the umbrella brand of Holden Forests & Gardens was a challenge Impel helped the internal team work through. Together, we developed cohesive templates for brochures, rack cards, events, email newsletters, advertising, onsite signage, and more.



Impel Creative is a graphic design and brand management company. We connect our clients with their audience using smart design and innovative solutions for impelling results.

Let us show you how we can help! Contact Doug Crouch at 216.496.8505 or [doug@impelcreative.com](mailto:doug@impelcreative.com).



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