

Whiteboards & Boards

These are the 10 most commonly asked questions about whiteboards & boards for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

Top 10 Questions — Whiteboards & Boards

1

What is the difference between a melamine, porcelain, and glass whiteboard?

Melamine whiteboards are the economy option — the writing surface is a coated melamine sheet over a particleboard or lightweight backer. They are the least expensive but ghost easily (staining from dried markers that cannot be fully erased) and typically have a useful life of 1–3 years in commercial use before ghosting becomes permanent. Porcelain (vitreous enamel) whiteboards are the commercial standard — the surface is a glass-fused porcelain coating on a steel substrate, making it magnetic, highly durable, and ghost-resistant with a life of 20+ years. Porcelain is the correct specification for any commercial environment used daily. Glass boards (tempered glass writing surface) are the premium option — ultra-smooth, non-ghosting, no staining, and modern in appearance, available in clear and tinted options. Glass boards do not require magnetic capability but are often specified in executive conference rooms and design-forward spaces for their aesthetic. For any daily-use commercial conference room or collaborative space, porcelain is the recommended minimum specification.

2

What size whiteboard do I need for a conference room?

Whiteboard size should be matched to the room size and the number of participants who need to read it from the farthest seat. A small huddle room or breakout space (4–6 people) is well served by a 48-inch by 36-inch board. A standard conference room seating 8–12 people should have at minimum a 48-inch by 72-inch board; 48-inch by 96-inch is the most commonly specified size for conference rooms and provides ample writing space for diagrams, brainstorming, and agenda items visible from across the room. Large training rooms and boardrooms (15+ people) benefit from 48-inch by 120-inch or larger boards, or multiple boards on adjacent walls. The farthest viewer should be able to read standard-size handwriting — as a rule of thumb, every 10 feet of viewing distance requires approximately 1 inch of letter height, so text at 20 feet of distance needs 2-inch characters to be readable.

3**Should I get a wall-mounted fixed whiteboard or a mobile/rolling whiteboard?**

Wall-mounted fixed whiteboards are the primary choice for dedicated conference rooms and training rooms where the board will always be used in the same location. They mount flush to the wall, provide the most stable writing surface, and are available in the largest sizes (up to 48 inches by 120 inches and wider in custom sizes). Mobile rolling whiteboards (on casters) are appropriate for multi-use spaces where the board needs to move between rooms, for open-plan offices without dedicated wall space, and as supplemental writing surfaces during large workshops. Rolling boards are typically limited in size (48 inches by 48 inches to 48 inches by 72 inches) due to stability constraints at larger dimensions. Partition-mounted boards attach to cubicle or panel systems — convenient for individual workstations or small team areas without wall mounting options.

4**How do I prevent ghosting on a whiteboard?**

Ghosting is the residual staining that remains after erasing, caused by marker ink penetrating the writing surface. The best prevention is specification: porcelain and glass surfaces are inherently ghost-resistant; melamine surfaces ghost easily and no maintenance routine can fully prevent it on a worn melamine board. For porcelain boards, use only low-odor dry-erase markers (not permanent markers) and erase promptly after each session — allowing marker to dry overnight increases ghosting significantly. Clean porcelain boards weekly with a dedicated whiteboard cleaning solution (not general-purpose cleaners, which can leave a residue that traps marker pigment). For occasional deep cleaning of ghost stains on porcelain, isopropyl alcohol (90%+ concentration) applied with a soft cloth is effective. Never use abrasive cleaners or paper towels, which can scratch even porcelain surfaces and accelerate ghosting over time.

5**How do I mount a whiteboard to a wall properly?**

Proper mounting depends on wall construction and board weight. For boards up to 48 inches by 36 inches weighing under 15 lbs, toggle bolts into drywall are adequate if studs are not available at the correct spacing. For larger boards — the standard 48-inch by 96-inch porcelain board weighs 40–60 lbs — mounting into wall studs with lag bolts is required. Always locate and mark studs before drilling; most standard stud spacing is 16 inches on center. For concrete or masonry walls, use concrete anchors rated for the board weight. Most commercial whiteboards include a Z-bar or French cleat mounting system that allows the board to hang level and be removed for cleaning or repositioning — verify the mounting hardware is included with the board or order it separately. Mount the board so the bottom edge is approximately 36–40 inches from the floor, keeping the writing surface accessible to both seated and standing users.

6**Are porcelain whiteboards magnetic?**

Yes — porcelain (vitreous enamel) whiteboards have a steel substrate under the porcelain surface, making them magnetic. Standard office magnets, magnetic clips, and magnetic document holders all work on porcelain boards. This is one of the key practical advantages of porcelain over melamine — melamine boards are not magnetic, as they lack the steel backing. Glass boards are also not magnetic unless they are specifically manufactured with a magnetic steel backer (a relatively rare specification). For conference rooms and training rooms where the board serves double duty as a display surface for printed documents, notes, and reference materials held with magnets, porcelain is the correct specification. Confirm that magnetic capability is listed in the product specifications before purchasing, as some economy boards describe themselves as whiteboards without specifying the surface type.

7**What is a combination board and when should I use one?**

A combination board integrates a dry-erase whiteboard surface on one portion of the board and a cork bulletin board surface on another portion — typically split 50/50 or 60/40 horizontally. Combination boards are useful for spaces where both writing and pinned-document display are needed simultaneously — classrooms, team collaboration areas, reception rooms, and small conference rooms. The whiteboard portion should be at minimum a porcelain surface for commercial use; economy combination boards use melamine whiteboard sections that ghost quickly. The cork portion should be at least 1/4-inch natural cork for reliable push-pin retention — thinner cork tears around pin holes and degrades faster. Combination boards are not appropriate as the sole large-format writing surface in an active conference room; use them as supplemental boards or in spaces where the cork portion receives as much use as the writing surface.

8**What accessories should I order with a commercial whiteboard?**

Standard accessories for a commercial whiteboard installation include: a marker tray (attached or wall-mounted below the board to hold markers and erasers — some boards include this, others require a separate purchase), a magnetic eraser (for porcelain boards; felt erasers leave more residue), a set of low-odor dry-erase markers in multiple colors (fine and broad tip), whiteboard cleaning spray, and magnetic clips or document holders for attaching printed materials to porcelain boards. For large conference rooms or training facilities, a marker management station that holds multiple colors and maintains an organized supply near the board reduces the problem of missing or dried-out markers. If the whiteboard replaces printed flip chart pads, order at the same time as the board — having the board installed without markers and an eraser immediately reduces its utility.

9**What is the difference between a whiteboard and a chalkboard — and are chalkboards still used?**

Traditional chalkboards use chalk on a slate or painted surface and produce chalk dust that settles on nearby surfaces and clothing — a significant practical disadvantage in modern offices, healthcare environments, and technology-rich rooms where dust accumulates on equipment. Whiteboards use dry-erase liquid markers that produce no dust and erase cleanly. For virtually all commercial applications, whiteboards have replaced chalkboards entirely. The one exception is food-service and hospitality environments where decorative chalk boards are used for menu and promotional displays — in this context, liquid chalk markers on a smooth painted surface are the modern equivalent, producing vibrant displays without the dust of traditional chalk. For office, healthcare, education, and commercial environments, whiteboards (porcelain or glass) are the correct specification in all cases.

10**How should I plan whiteboard placement in a conference room for maximum effectiveness?**

Mount the whiteboard on the wall that all attendees face — typically the wall opposite the room entrance, or the wall at the head of the conference table where the meeting leader presents. The bottom edge should be at approximately 36–40 inches from the floor so seated attendees can see the bottom portion of the board without being blocked by the table. Avoid mounting whiteboards on walls with direct sunlight or strong overhead lighting at an angle — glare on a reflective whiteboard surface makes it difficult to read from any distance. Ensure the board extends to within 6–12 inches of the corners of the usable wall area so the full board width is accessible to a standing presenter. For rooms with video conferencing cameras, position the board within the camera's field of view so remote participants can see content written on the board — large boards (48 inches by 96 inches or wider) are necessary for text to be legible in video at normal conference room distances.

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