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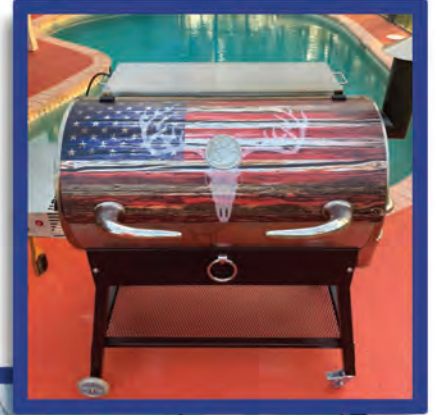
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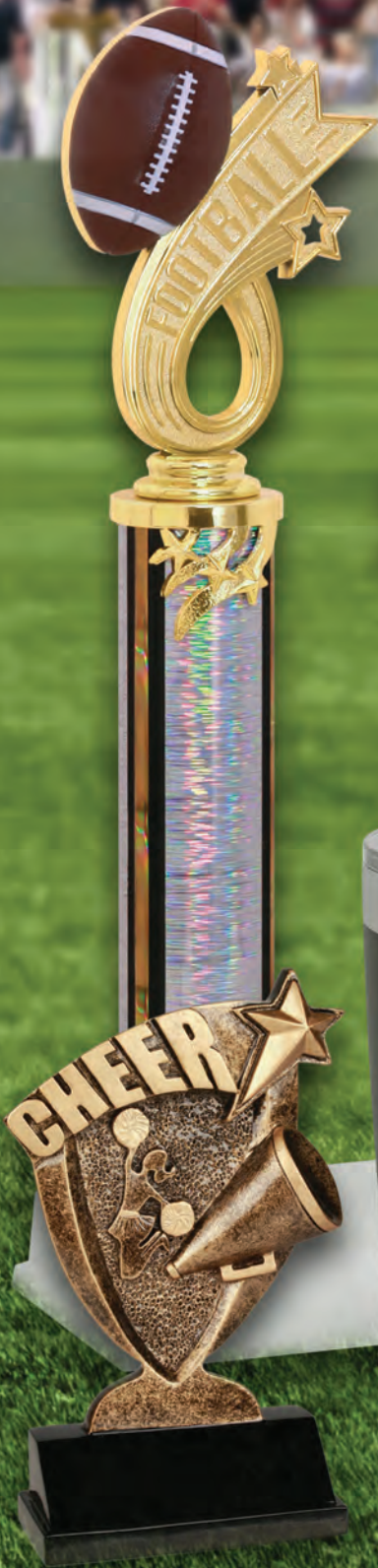
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ON THE COVER: The Book Bus wrap, courtesy of Jamie Mullican, page 33. Check out more outstanding wraps projects by WRAPSCON WRAPSconnect panelists at <https://gpro.link/wrapsprojects>, or scan the QR code. Bottom right: Fleece is perfect for the in-between times when it's too warm for full-on winter gear, but too cool for a windbreaker or shirtsleeves, Page 14. Image courtesy of Kristine Shreve.



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To Buy or to Lease



It's practically a trope now about how many shops begin out of their garage or basement. The location of your business is one of the biggest factors in getting up and running during those early days. People start at home because that's what's affordable.

But growth eventually forces many shops to take the big step of moving out of the garage and into a shop. Not to mention the effect that boxes and boxes of product have on a cramped living situation. So, when that time comes, is it better to lease a spot or purchase?

For many, the option to purchase just isn't in the cards. The higher upfront costs and the commitment to a location may just not be the best move. That's where leasing may be the best option. Obviously, everyone would love to own their own space in a great location where they are free to conform the space as they see fit, but the limited flexibility that comes with leasing a space in terms of what you can do with that space may be offset by the flexibility of finding the right place at an affordable upfront price.

Here are some benefits of both buying or leasing a space for your shop:

Pros of Leasing Shop Space:

- **Lower upfront costs:** Leasing a shop space typically requires a lower upfront investment compared to buying a property, as you don't have to make a large down payment or obtain a mortgage.
- **Flexibility:** Leases generally have shorter terms, allowing you to adjust your space requirements as your business evolves. It provides the flexibility to relocate or upgrade to a larger space more easily.
- **Lower responsibility for maintenance:** In most lease agreements, the landlord is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the property, saving you the time, effort, and costs associated with property upkeep.
- **Access to prime locations:** Leasing allows you to secure a shop space in prime locations that might be cost-prohibitive to purchase. This can be advantageous for attracting customers and benefiting from high foot traffic.

Pros of Buying Shop Space:

- **Ownership and equity:** When you purchase a shop space, you gain ownership and build equity in the property. Over time, your investment can appreciate, and you may benefit from potential capital gains.
- **Control and customization:** Buying a shop space gives you greater control and freedom to customize the property to align with your business requirements. You can make renovations, expansions, or modifications without seeking permission from a landlord.
- **Stability and long-term savings:** Once you own the property, you have more stability and predictability in terms of monthly costs. You don't have to worry about rent increases or lease expirations, which can provide long-term savings for your business.
- **Potential rental income:** If you have extra space in your property, you have the option to lease it to other businesses, generating rental income that can offset your expenses or provide an additional revenue stream.



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TEAM SPORTS:

Don't Ruin a Good Jersey

Match your decoration techniques to highlight your fall team jerseys

BY ADAM MCCAULEY



Adam McCauley is the co-owner of Sandlot Sports, a custom screen printing, embroidery, and promotional company that specializes in sportswear, team uniforms, corporate workwear, and event T-shirts.

When heading down the path of custom team uniforms, it's very important to determine the best decoration style for your particular team. Football jerseys require durable and visually striking decorations that can withstand the physical demands of the sport. On the flip side, soccer uniforms should be lightweight, breathable, and allow for ease of movement. The lighter, the better.

As decorators, we don't have much say in what fabrics and materials uniforms are made from. We purchase them blank and then it's up to us to make sure we provide the best option to embellish them with logos and designs that won't harm the integrity of the piece.

Decorating team uniforms is an essential aspect of creating a cohesive and visually appealing look for sports teams during the fall of 2023. The decoration options can vary depending on the sport, budget, and desired aesthetic. I will help walk you through the ways we look at how to decorate fall team uniforms for teams and clubs this fall.

Most uniforms are created with performance poly or fabrics with wicking properties. Add a dash of spandex or Lyrca, and that usually is all the materials you will come across when selling uniforms. So, what does that mean for you?

If our whole industry is selling from the same manufacturing pot, then the only way to differentiate yourself from your competitors is to make sure you are providing the best decoration to emphasize the durability of the jersey materials.



Football jerseys

Football jerseys require durable and visually striking decorations that can withstand the physical demands of the sport. There are several decoration techniques that are commonly used for football jerseys. The most common techniques involve screen printing, embroidery, or sublimation.

Screen printing is a cost-effective method for large, bold designs on football jerseys. It offers excellent color options and durability. After excessive wear, rough handling, and industrial laundry, this may cause the print to crack or fade over time.

Select the right inks: When you're geared up to print your jerseys keep in mind that you're likely printing on polyester material. That will call for a nicer low-cure poly ink. Keep it low cure to minimize the chance of dye migration on your print.

Another ink choice to think about is using silicon ink. Some



Adidas two-color screen-printed logo on white poly mesh jersey.



Fall ball baseball vest jersey. This is a combination of a screen-printed left-chest logo with custom-cut thermal film name and numbers.



of the higher-end football jerseys have a bit of Lycra/Spandex in the fabric. Silicone prints well and allows for a little more flexibility in the print.

Embroidery provides a premium and professional look for football jerseys. It involves stitching the design directly onto the fabric. Choose a clean block font in the front center then zig zag stitch a twill number on the front and back.

Embroidered logos and text are highly durable, and the stitching can last longer than other decoration methods. Embroidery can be more expensive, especially for intricate designs but most football teams don't have intricate designs on the jersey. Save that stuff for the fan gear. If your school program or team is expecting to make these football jerseys last more than one season you should consider embroidery and twill for your decoration. Don't let the upfront cost scare your client away. Let them know that the cost savings of these jerseys lasting 3-5 years will be worth it.

Sublimation allows for vibrant, all-over prints with excellent color and durability. Sublimated designs are integrated into the fabric, making them resistant to cracking, fading, or peeling. This is the most efficient and customizable way to decorate football jerseys.

Most shops will not have the ability to do this in-house but with a strong network of third-party vendors to assist you, you'd be foolish to shy away from offering this service. They look amazing and are often priced well. The only knock on these is that they are often so customizable you get trapped in a trend you hate after one season, so you may want to purchase a whole new set each season. Great business for us but not a great selling point for schools on tight budgets.

Hockey jerseys

Hockey jerseys also require durable decorations that can withstand the fast-paced and physical nature of the sport, very similar to football. Screen printing, embroidery, and sublimation all have their advantages to help decorate your jersey while on the ice.

Embroidery is a popular choice for hockey jerseys due to its durability and professional look. The stitched designs can



Custom Sublistop team name and number. Perfect method to decorate on sublimated materials, nylon, and Spandex.



Simple silicone ink printed to allow lightweight print along with flexibility on the fabric.



Lightweight performance tee being used as alternative soccer jerseys with DTF decoration on the center chest for comfort.



Combination of screen printing and custom Sublistop numbers. Because of the difficulty matching VersaCAMM printing to poly ink, we custom matched the ink to the Sublistop numbers.

withstand the rough gameplay and maintain their quality over time. Using simple twill patches really add a professional look, but creating custom twill applique logos with a combination of zigzag and satin stitching can turn any logo into a work of art.

Twill appliques involve cutting shapes or letters from twill fabric and applying them to the jersey using heat after stitching. This technique provides a textured, raised look that adds visual appeal to hockey jerseys.

Sublimation is well-suited for hockey jerseys, offering vibrant, all-over prints that won't crack, fade, or peel. Just like we discussed with the football jersey, sublimation for hockey jerseys look amazing. Wild all over prints, custom fonts, design anything you can imagine.

Screen printing again is the most cost-effective way to decorate team jerseys. The only knock to printing is that you will most likely be printing loads of ink on the fronts and backs of the jersey. Just like football, excessive wear, laundry, and hours on the checking line may cause prints to crack or fade.

Anticipatory tip: Use a combination of both printing and heat-press while offering printed jerseys. Screen print the fronts and heat apply thermal film for the names and numbers. It's quick and cost-effective. I don't care what anyone says... no one likes screen printing numbers.

Soccer uniforms

Soccer uniforms should be lightweight, breathable, and allow for ease of movement. The lighter, the better. Sublimation, screen printing, or heat-applied graphics make decorating soccer jerseys a breeze.

Sublimation is a common choice for soccer uniforms as it provides vibrant, all-over prints without adding extra weight or stiffness to the fabric. It allows for customization and detailed designs while maintaining breathability.

Screen printing is suitable for soccer uniforms, especially for larger logos or numbers. It is cost-effective and provides bold, durable prints. But when you want

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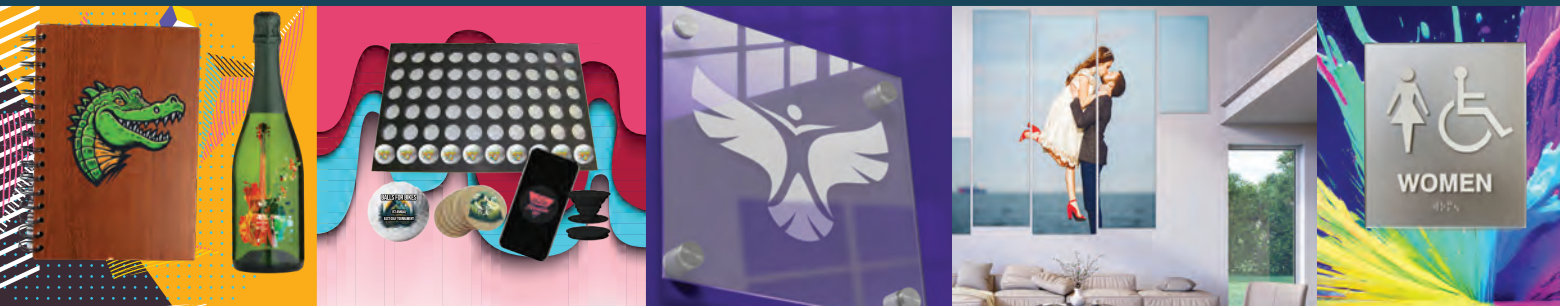
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We used sublimated patches and then embroidered logos onto the stock hockey jersey. This decoration maintains the integrity of the jersey while being able to handle the beating hockey jerseys take on the ice.

a lighter fabric that is breathable you may want to avoid screen printing large prints on a thinner soccer jersey. Instead, try small left chest logos or small crests on the front. They will look great, and they are contained to a smaller logo of the jersey.

Heat-applied graphics are perfect for soccer teams and clubs this fall. Typically, logos for clubs have multiple colors and can seem heavy printed on thinner breathable jerseys. Instead, look toward heat-applied emblems or DTF on the left chest or specialty digital decals. Consider the same thing for names and numbers on the front and back. Depending on time and budget, thermal film team/player names and numbers will also work well.

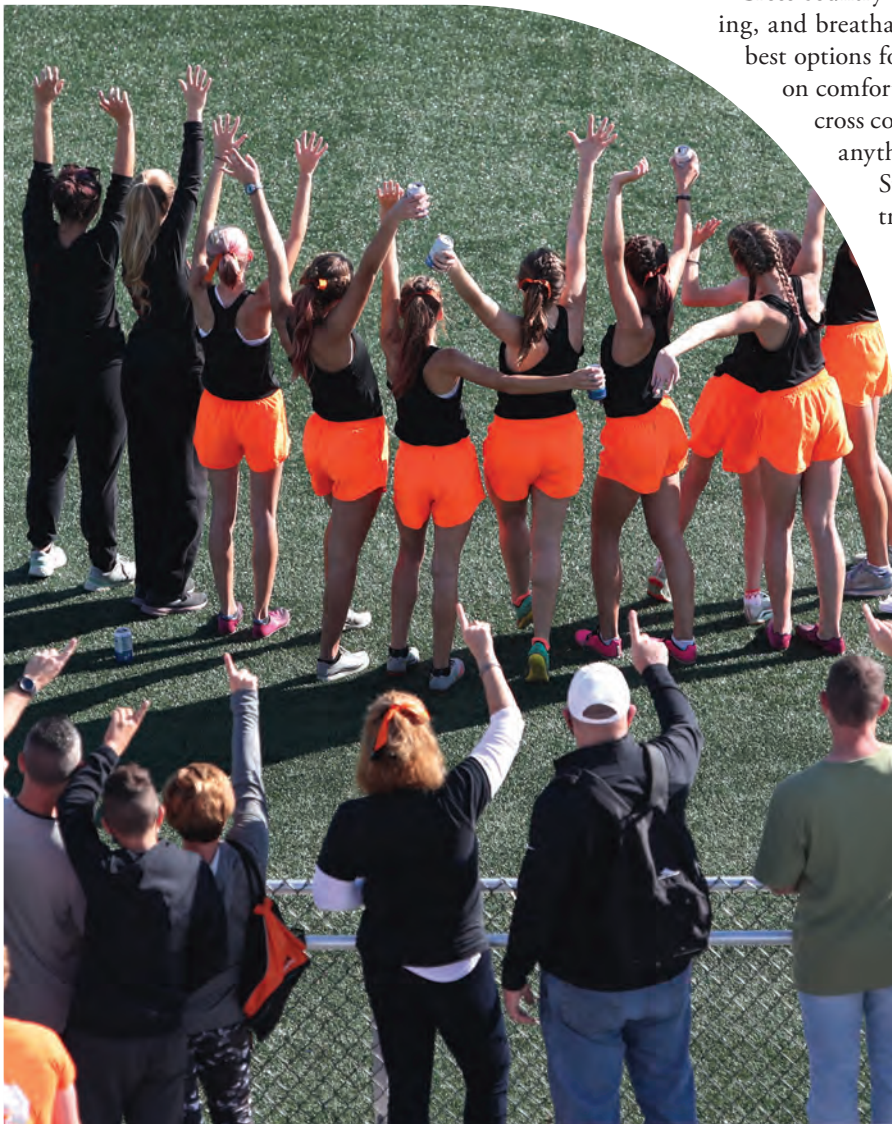
If you really want to add the professional kit look at a local level, choose custom heat-applied emblems. Whether they are PVC or matted embossed emblems, they will ultimately add an exceptional value to your uniform.

Cross country apparel

Cross country apparel should be lightweight, moisture-wicking, and breathable. Screen printing and sublimation are the best options for cross country uniforms that typically focus on comfort and functionality. Unlike most team jerseys, cross country uniform rarely customizes the tops with anything other than the team's name on the front.

Sublimation is a preferred method for cross country apparel as it allows for lightweight, breathable designs integrated right into the fabrics.

If your team is a premium team, you would more than likely lean toward the custom sublimated option. Cross country, similar to track, pays close attention to the weight



Two-color print. The customer wanted a silver shimmer, so to limit the weight of the print we used a smaller center crest logo instead of a larger full front logo.

and comfortability of jerseys runners may be wearing. Every ounce matters.

Screen printing can be used for bold designs or team logos on cross country uniforms. It is relatively cost-effective and offers durability, but it may not be as breathable as other options. Silicone or a low-cure poly ink will work best. Be careful not to print a bulletproof stiff logo. It will instantly ruin the comfort for the athlete.

Tennis outfits

Tennis uniforms should allow for ease of movement, breathability, and a professional appearance. While the uniforms in this sport vary wildly you see more and more simple performance polos for women and performance tees for men.

Screen printing is a versatile and cost-effective method for tennis uniforms. Keep these logos small and reserved. Unless you are Andre Agassi, subtle designs with country club looks do best. We use small left-chest logos for women and men's apparel. Sometimes we lean toward a simple one-color team name across the front. Again, you want the least amount of ink you can add to the wicking material. Stick to your low-cure or silicone inks again.

Embroidery can add a premium touch to tennis uniforms, such as stitching team logos or player names. However, it may be less commonly used due to potential weight and breathability concerns. If your team logo is a 40,000-stitch left chest, you aren't going to want to stitch that on a 3.4 oz poly polo. It will be stiff and bulletproof. Less is more. Think country club small left-chest logo. If they need to have that larger special logo on the polo, you can lean into a digital decal.

Digital decals can also be a perfect logo for the smaller left-chest logos. Use full-color options while printing the logo on a Sublistop with a Roland VersaCMM or equivalent. DTF (Direct-To-Film) may also be a perfect option.

Swimming attire

Swimming attire requires special considerations due to exposure to chlorine and constant water immersion. Sublimation



Adidas sublimation jersey. Logo and number integrated into the fabric using sublimation.



Heat-applied digital decal for lighter feel on polyester fabrics.

is the preferred decoration technique for swimming uniforms. Sublimated designs seem to provide excellent chlorine resistance. Rarely do we attempt to decorate swimming suits and caps in-house. We prefer sublimation, but occasionally we're asked to personalize them. When that's the case we lean toward heat-applied vinyl or silicon printing.

Heat-applied vinyl can be used for smaller details or personalization on swimming caps or accessories. HTV is durable and water-resistant, ensuring longevity in aquatic environments.

If you are forced into screen printing

them, we lean toward the silicone print because of the stretch allowed with that ink. We also try to minimize the size of the logo to eliminate blocky thick prints on a suit designed for speed and performance.

Decorating team uniforms for the fall 2023 season requires consideration of the specific requirements of each sport. Proper selection and execution of decoration techniques will ensure that team uniforms are visually appealing and able to withstand the rigors of the respective sports throughout the fall 2023 season. Separate yourself from the competition by focusing on the details. **GP**

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Decorating FLEECE

BY KRISTINE SHREVE

Detailing the different types of fleece and decoration techniques



Kristine Shreve is the founder and CEO of Kristine Shreve Consulting, which offers writing, marketing, and business development services. The company can be found at KristineShreve.com. Kristine is also the creator and host of the Business + Women podcast and the director of marketing and outreach for Applique Getaway. Kristine was the director of marketing for Ensign Emblem and EnMart from 2006 to April 2020.

If you live in a climate where it gets cool or cold at certain times, then you already know the value of a good fleece jacket, ear-warmers, or scarf. Fleece is perfect for the in-between times when it's too warm for full-on winter gear, but too cool for a wind-breaker or shirtsleeves.

This sort of outerwear is popular, and the market is only expected to grow. According to Marketwatch, the global outlook for fleece jackets and vests is expected to grow by a compound annual growth rate of 7.1% until 2030. The market was valued in 2021-2022 at roughly 48 million dollars.

Keep in mind that fleece is just a segment of the overall outerwear market, which is valued in the billions of dollars. So, clearly, this is a market segment that has a lot of potential and opportunity for growth.

Fleece outerwear is also popular with almost every demographic. Corporations use fleece outerwear as logowear. Kids wear fleeces on the playground or while playing sports. Fleece is also popular as workout gear or is worn when playing winter sports. And, as noted above, fleece is also a great choice when the temperature is hovering between cool and cold. Clearly, capturing a segment of the fleece outerwear marketing could be lucrative for a garment decoration business. Here's what you need to know to get a piece of the fleece ...

Defining fleece

First things first: what exactly is fleece? Often, fleece is a synthetic, an insulating fabric made from a type of polyester

Image courtesy of Citadel Brands.



called polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or another type of synthetic fiber. Not all fleece is entirely synthetic; some may be made with a cotton/polyester blend, and some may be made from recycled materials.

What really matters is that the fabric is a knit and that it's plush. That, rather than what's used to make it, is what allows it to be designated a fleece. If you're dealing with sweatpants or sweatshirts, you're most likely dealing with cotton or cotton blended fleece.

Lycra spandex fleece is essentially performance-wear fleece and has a majority of cotton with just a bit of Lycra for stretch. Microfleece is very thin and soft, and works well to wick away moisture, which makes it a popular option for performance garments as well. Polar fleece is, as the name implies, designed to keep the wearer warm and is thicker than other fleeces. All



Image courtesy of MV Sport.

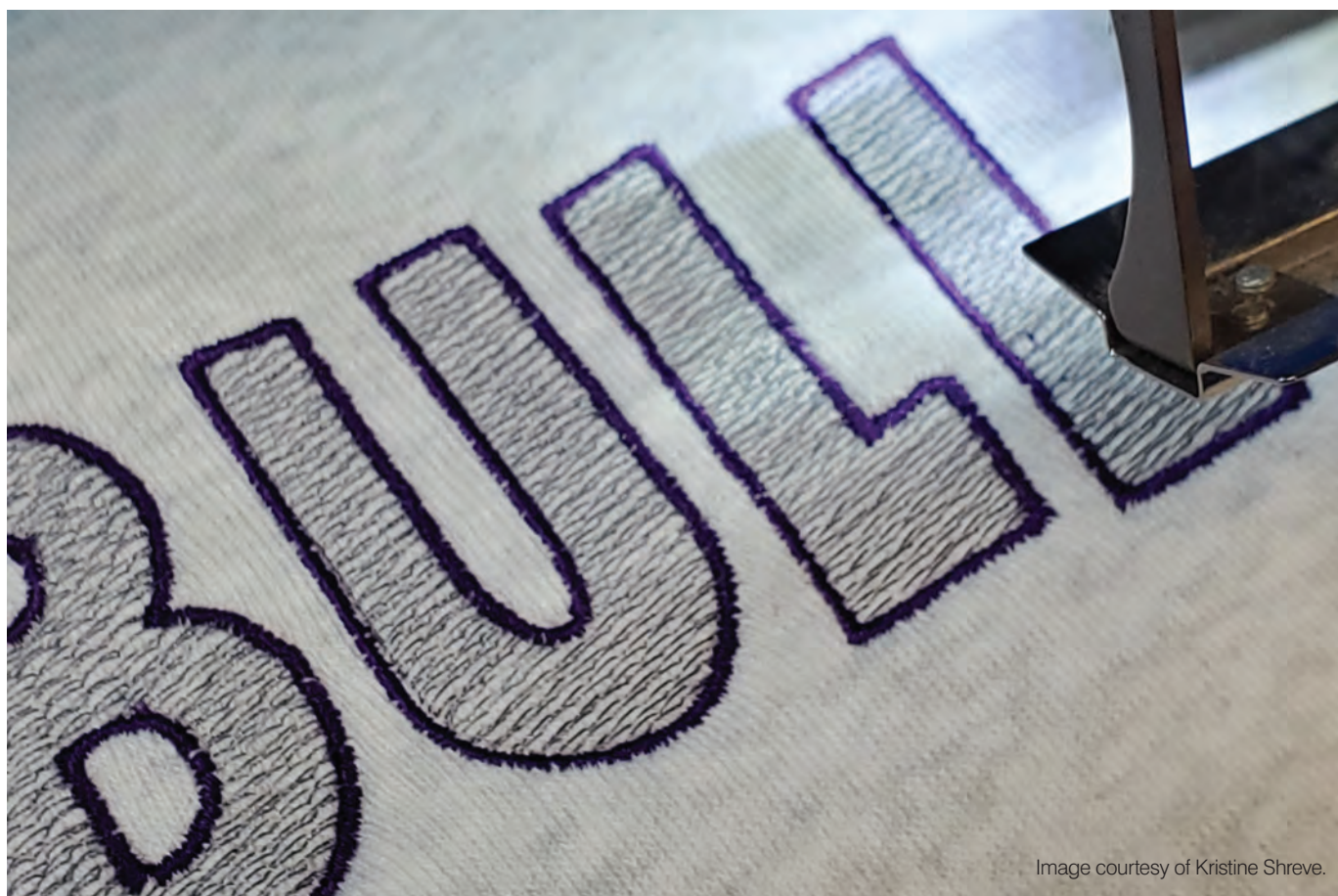


Image courtesy of Kristine Shreve.



Image courtesy of Kristine Shreve.



Image courtesy of Citadel Brands.

of these may just be called, generically, fleece, but knowing what type you have and from what materials it is made can help you in deciding how the garment in question can best be decorated.

If one of your marketing pillars is the use of eco-friendly fabrics or being ecologically responsible, you should know that fleece is not generally considered to be a sustainable fabric. It is often made from resources that are chemical or non-renewable.

Fleece may also be coated with chemicals to make it water resistant or wind-proof, which isn't considered ideal when it comes to reducing harm to the environment. Even eco-fleece, which is made with recycled PET, is not considered an eco-friendly option. Since fleece, even eco-fleece, is often made with at least some synthetic fibers it does not biodegrade, which is another black mark in the eco-friendly column.

Fleece also tends to release lint and fibers, which can end up in the water supply, creating another ecological problem. For those who are looking to be conscious consumers and to create closets that are Earth-friendly, fleece is probably not a viable clothing option. So, if your company is dedicated to being ecologically aware, keep that in mind.

Even though fleece isn't always considered the best option from an environmental point of view, it is a popular material for use in outdoor wear. It's seen in jackets, boots, hats, scarves, ear warmers, mittens and gloves, and certainly in performance wear.

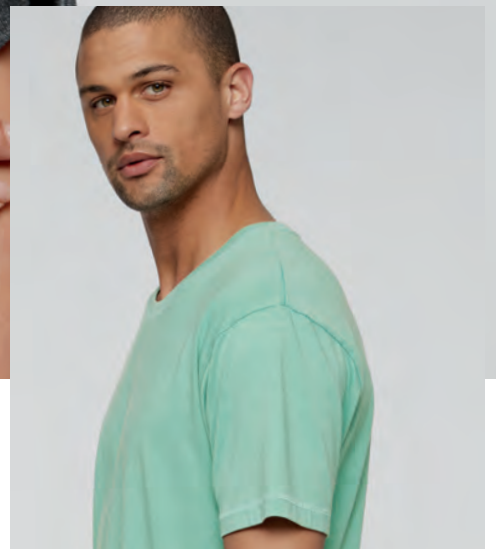
Many people find fleece to be a versatile fabric that can keep them warm during a variety of activities, so it's safe to say that fleece isn't likely to be going anywhere. Since it seems set to be with us for the long haul, it's logical for shops to try and secure some of this potentially lucrative market for themselves. Whether it's a left chest logo on a corporate fleece, putting a monogram on a cozy fleece scarf, or adding an emboss to a fleece beanie, there are a lot of options for decorating fleece.



THE

VINTAGE WASH

DEFINITION OF SOFT



- 
WASHED
BASIL
- 
WASHED
BLACK
- 
WASHED
COYOTE
BROWN
- 
WASHED
GRAY
- 
WASHED
MAUVELOUS
- 
WASHED
NATURAL
- 
WASHED
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- 
WASHED
ROUGE
- 
WASHED
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- 
WASHED
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3502 LADIES' RELAXED VINTAGE WASH TEE

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Fit: Relaxed - Slightly oversized. Our ultimate comfort fit.

The LAT Vintage Wash assortment achieves its authentic look and feels through special dye and mineral wash processes, which create unique and natural variances in texture, distress, and shade. These are intentional and are NOT considered defective.

6902 ADULT VINTAGE WASH TEE

5.3 oz. 52% Cotton/48% Polyester Vintage Washed Jersey. Coverstitched Hems. Coverstitched Side Seams. Self Fabric Back Necktape. EasyTear™ label.

Fit: Adult Unisex - A true-to-size fit.



Images courtesy of MV Sport.



Decorating fleece

Part of the fun of fleece is deciding which decoration option you will choose. Since some fleece is made of polyester, it can lend itself well to sublimation. The caveat there is that sublimation is best suited to light-colored fabrics, and you'll also need to test the material to see how it responds to the temperatures generally used to sublimate fabric.

Keep in mind that fleece is also not going to offer a smooth surface for sublimation, so you may have to deal with issues like crushed fibers from the weight of the press or slightly pixelated images since each fiber will be dyed to create part of the whole.

Another method for decorating fleece which creates a tone-on-tone sort of look is debossing or embossing. This might be less common than some other methods, but it does create a more high-end look. Both embossing and debossing use a combination of time, temperature, and a metal die to either create a puffed or raised look (embossing) or a design that is pressed

into the fabric (debossing). Both debossed and embossed logos will not wash out over time, and the designs created using these methods can offer a unique and luxurious look for the garment.

If you would prefer to go with a more traditional method of adding a logo or image to fleece, screen printing may be your answer. Screen printing fleece is not for everyone, as it does offer some unique challenges, but if you're up to taking those challenges on, there are some things you should know.

First, make sure you plan out your design carefully. Since fleece is often used in things like hoodies or jackets, you may have to deal with pockets, zippers, or extra seams, so you need to carefully plan where your design will go.

Make sure you test the fleece for dye migration and shrinkage before you start a print run. One way to combat shrinkage is to add a flash cure station before the first color station, or by running the entire lot you're printing through the dryer before you print anything at all. Shrinkage can

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Images courtesy of Kristine Shreve.

throw off registration, so it's best to avoid it by preparing the garments ahead of time.

Another issue with fleece can be fabric movement, so make sure you tack down the garment securely so it can't shift during printing. Make sure the distance between the screen and the fleece, the off-contact, is far enough that the ink can come through easily and not stick to the fleece. You may also want to de-lint the garment before printing, as fleece is traditionally known to produce a lot of lint and fibers, which may interfere with a smooth print.

As for which ink to use for your print, that's mostly a matter of the type of print desired. Water-based ink and plastisol ink are most likely the types of ink from which you'll be choosing, and both can work for fleece.

Plastisol may give you a brighter, bolder print, and water-based ink will offer a



thinner print with a smoother hand. Discharge printing may also be an option if there is a need to print over zippers or seams.

Keep in mind that you may need to have a longer cure time when printing on fleece, as that may also influence your ink choice. Fleece can hold more moisture than other fabrics, so you may need to slow down the belt on your dryer and allow for a longer curing time to ensure the ink is cured properly.

The other popular option for decorating fleece is embroidery. Here, as with screen printing, there are some accommodations that need to be made to get the best-finished design. First, since fleece is generally made of plush fibers, you'll need to use a water-soluble topping to ensure the stitches don't sink into the fibers.

Fleece tends to be a bit stretchy, but you can test it by stretching it prior to

stitching. High-quality fleece will snap back quickly, and lower quality will contract slower, so you'll most likely want to use a cutaway stabilizer that will resist stretching.

Denser designs may be a better option for fleece, and an underlay fill stitch can help hold down the pile in the design. When hooping, be careful not to stretch the fabric, as that will result in puckering when the design is stitched and the garment is unhooped.

Fleece outerwear can be a lucrative profit center for almost any decoration business. It is a popular garment choice for corporations, schools, ski resorts, gyms, and for fashion-conscious people who like to keep up with current fashion trends. While creating decorated fleece isn't as easy as some other garment types, the learning curve can be well worth the profit generated. **GP**



Image courtesy of MV Sport.



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An advertisement for JustHoods featuring three models in a library setting. A man in a yellow sweatshirt sits on a wooden stool, a man in a blue hoodie stands behind him, and a woman in a blue hoodie sits in a beige armchair. The background is filled with bookshelves.



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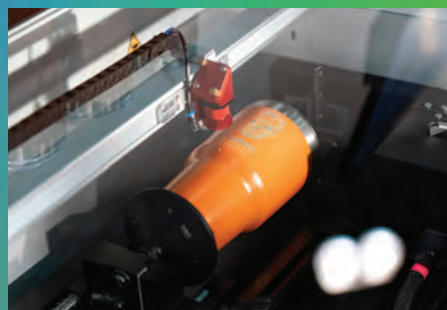
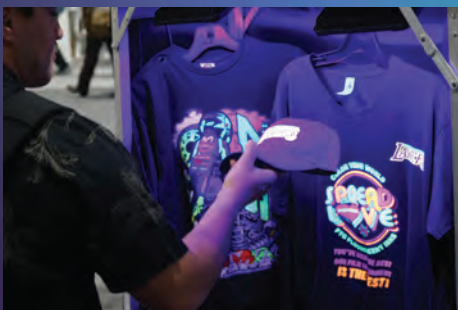
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AUGUST 17-19

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Plan your show visit by checking off the Exhibitors you'd like to see!

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Classes are offered the day before the show starts, and throughout the show, in all-day and 90-minute sessions.

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Check off the classes you'd like to attend or plan to take to help you prepare! Please visit g-p-x.com/ca for class descriptions.

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10 a.m. — 4 p.m.

- Hirsch Solutions Inc** – Join the DTG/DTF Revolution!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17

8-9:30 a.m.

- Epilog Laser** – From Theory to Application - a Practical Guide to Laser Engraving **START HERE**
- JDS Industries** - CorelDraw for Sublimation **START HERE**
- Wraps Designer Panel** **WRAPS CON**

11 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

- STAHL'S** – Heat Press for Profit LIVE **START HERE**
- Wrapmate** – Revolutionize Your Company's Marketing Strategy: 3 Insider Secrets You Need to Know
- Inktavo** – Let Technology do the Work: Using Software to Grow Your Business

1:30-3 p.m.

- Trotec Laser Inc** - How to Start and Grow a Laser Business **START HERE**
- Transfer Express** – Easiest Way to Print Apparel **START HERE**

4-5:30 p.m.

- Advertising Specialty Institute, ASI** - Start Selling More to Your Customers **START HERE**

4-5:30 p.m.

- CorelTRAINER** - CorelDRAW for Vectorizing & Digital Printing **START HERE**
- TheMagicTouch USA** - How to Grow Your Business Using CRIO White Toner Printers **START HERE**

4-6 p.m.

- FlexiShield** - Meet the Masters @ WRAPSconnect - Panel Discussion **WRAPS CON**

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18

8-9:30 a.m.

- Transfer Express** – Perfect Print Placement **PRO**
- IKONICS Imaging** - Profitable Sandcarving – Small Investment, Large Potential **START HERE**
- General Formulations Inc** - Which Glue is Right for You **START HERE**

11 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

- ORAFOL Americas** – Master Wall Wrap & Graphic Applications: Overcoming Challenges **PRO**
- GRAPHICS PRO** - Apparel Decorator Panel: Expert Perspectives, Tips and Advice

1:30-3 p.m.

- GRAPHICS PRO** - Tips and Techniques for High-Impact, Profitable Screen Printing, with Lon Winters

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THE MIXER



This after-hours networking event takes place at The Auld Dubliner (71 S Pine Ave) **5-6:30 p.m. on Friday, August 18.** Join us for drinks and hors d'oeuvres after the

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WRAPSCON will once again be the single-largest gathering of wraps professionals under one roof at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center in Long Beach, August 17-19, in conjunction with GRAPHICS PRO EXPO (GPX).

As we celebrate our eighth annual event, the best minds in the industry will be at the show sharing their advice, install tips, and business suggestions, all while presenting live demonstrations. Don't miss this opportunity to interact with top-notch installers, manufacturers, and your peers, in support of the ever-growing world of wraps.

WRAPSCON 2023 will feature classroom education geared toward wraps professionals, contests for pros and novices alike, more hands-on opportunities for installers and designers of all ability levels, and more vendors featuring today's top tools, templates, wide-format printers and films.

Highlights of this year's WRAPSCON include:

WRAPSCON Wrap OLYMPICS

This one-of-a-kind wraps contest will test the wrap skills and mental toughness of 32 two-person teams as they battle through a Decathlon of ten grueling stages of competition. Do you have what it takes? Grab your partner and register today.

WRAPSCON DESIGNER THROWDOWN 2023

A contest focused on designers to highlight your skills and show the market what you do best! The winner will be announced at the Wraps Designer Panel, Thursday, Aug. 17, 8-9:30 a.m.

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PRESENTED BY *FlexiShield*

Join industry influencers on Thursday at 4-6 p.m. as they discuss their big leaps of faith. There will be a 45-minute moderated session with 30 minutes of Q&A, followed by a Wraps family happy hour, aka, Meet the Masters.



Mule Days of Summer?

Celebrating the diverse ability of the American saddle mule



At 21 years old, Lon Winters was the production manager for Ocean Pacific and started his 30+ year career reclaiming screens. He's the president and founder of Colorado-based

Graphic Elephants, an international consulting firm and apparel decoration studio specializing in screen printing technical advances, plant design, layout, troubleshooting, productivity, quality analysis, and complete apparel decorating solutions. Lon is also a presenter at GRAPHICS PRO EXPO (g-p-x.com).

As summer fast approaches, we finish this month's column on the last day of spring. Our apologies to our esteemed GRAPHICS PRO executive editor. We are supposed to finish by the 15th of each month. Thank you for your patience.

It is that time of year for all multitudes of outdoor events. We are involved in a number of western and country events, what with the whole outdoor Colorado thing. After last month's addition featuring our Blue Mustang, we take a slight deviation from cowboys and horses. We will share with you ... Mule Days!

Mule Days

Jake Clark's Mule Days was established in 1997 and highlights the diverse ability

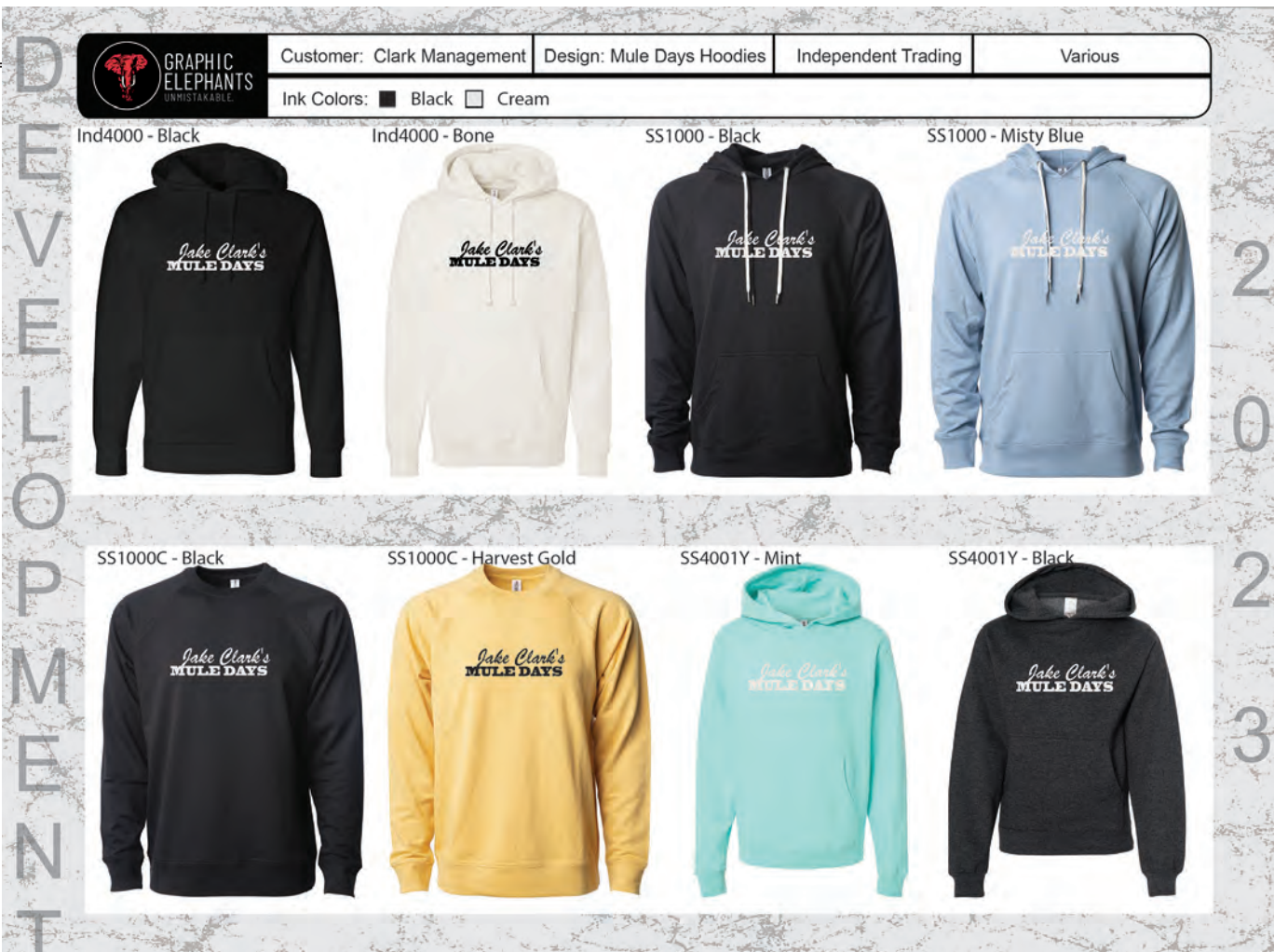
of the American saddle mule. The mule has become quite popular as an animal great to use on trails, in the mountains, and on the ranch as well as in the arena.

The mules show off their abilities at the all-mule rodeo, jackpot team roping, and barrel racing. Mounted shooting seminars and additional competitions joined the event in 2007. We get to enjoy the all-mule parade, a great steak dinner, a barn dance, and finally, and most well-known, *The Auction*. This popular auction has become nationally known as *America's Finest Select Saddle Mule Auction*. Trust us... it's kind of a big deal!

We began working with the Mule Days folks a decade or so ago. This has got to be our 10th or 11th year we have put together

	Customer: Mule Days	Design: Jake Calrk's Mule	Style: Hat	Hat Color: multi
	Ink Colors: ■ Faux leather patch			

Proofs. (Images courtesy of Lon Winters)



Proofs.

the event shirts. Every year it seems like it is manic and last minute. We usually have to send shirts overnight to reach the deadline. No matter how hard we try, it's the way these folks (and customers in general) like to work. Oh well...it's what we do.

We met with the good folks at Mule Days in January and February, to be proactive, and tried to nail down some ideas (this was for a June event). We called a few times, left a few messages, dropped a few e-mails. We followed up again in May to try to start working, and again with little response.

Finally, we received a voice message on a Friday. The apparel needed to ship the following week, so they would have the goods in time for the event.

There is something to be said for keeping things simple, but it doesn't have to be boring. Since we were out of time and probably weren't going to be printing thousands of garments, we kept it to a one-color design. You might be thinking,

"One color; kind of boring." Of course, there are exceptions. The Nike Swoosh is printed as a one-color and has become iconic. How did we make our one-color idea interesting?

Layout and composition

Like anything, we began with layout and composition. Simple. We would take the two-color logo they used for embroidery and *dumb it down* so to speak. A simple type solution using the logo components. Construction began in Adobe Illustrator for the vector components. Using the Lasso Tool, we isolated the imagery and traced the type components in a single color, then filled it.

We cleaned it up a bit and added thickness by duplicating the font and placing it some distance behind, and using the Blending Tool. The trick was to use the Blending Tool on the same point on both solutions so that it stepped from point A to point B to render the desired weight.

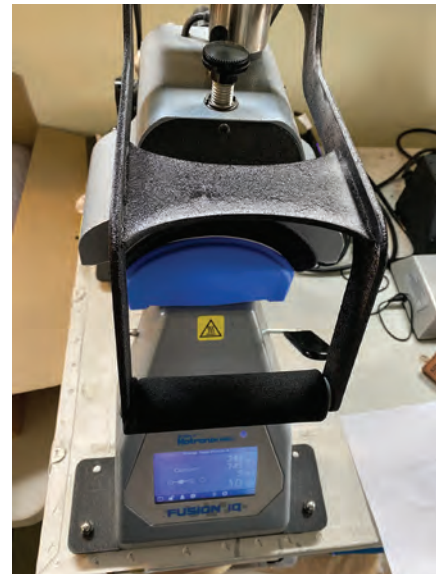
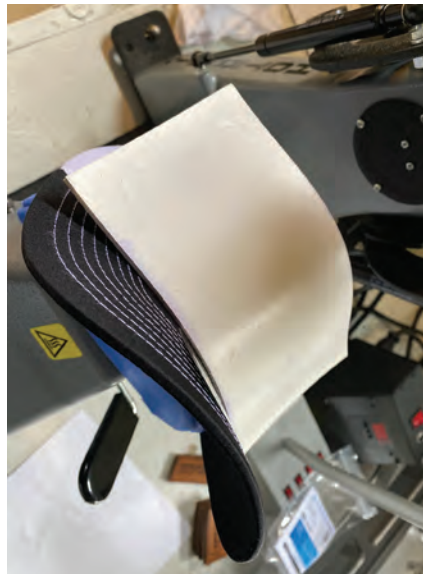
All systems go

Once everything was in place and the customer gave us the final approval, we could move forward. We knew she wanted this printed on various colored shirts but wasn't sure which ones she wanted to go with.

We showed her the art on various colored backgrounds that matched shirt colors as closely as possible in various locations. This helped to give her an idea of how the image would look. Once the art was approved and shirt colors selected, it was time to move onto the separations.

Hello! It was a one-color job built in Illustrator using layers and spot colors. Seps were done. No reason for any chokes on the white printer or base plate in this instance. Our client made the assumption that we would print black on lights and white on darks.

After choosing some great fleece options in multiple colors we noticed something we could work from. The bulk would be



Transfer process.



Finished hats.

black and ivory hoods and crews. The other colored fleece had ivory drawstrings. The ivory garments would be printed in black and the black and other colors in ivory. Brilliant! We thought so anyway.

We placed the file in Illustrator to output on our template with registration marks and specs. Of course, we wouldn't need the reggies, ha! For this graphic, we output at our default 55 lpi (lines per inch) frequency at a 22.5 degrees angle with elliptical-shaped halftones. It didn't really matter in this case.

Screens were built on retensionable frames with 230 tpi (threads per inch) with a typical, standard T or 48-micron thread for the two ink colors. The ivory ink also printed on a 156 / 54, and all at 30 N/cm as its base rather than white.

Each stencil was constructed using a high-quality dual-cure emulsion coated three over two finishing on the squeegee

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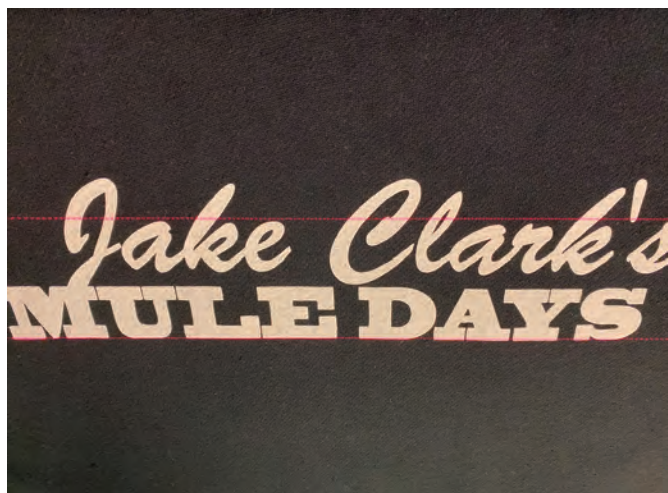




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On press.



Finished prints.



side and dried substrate side down to get us our desired 15% EOM (Emulsion Over Mesh) stencil thickness for optimal ink deposit. Only the first ivory was flashed on the black garments.

Since we were using a fashion fleece, we pressed the surface in station one with a heated iron and a Teflon screen. The ink printed nicely once the fibers were matted down. Then we flashed and followed up with a roller smoothing screen to ensure an ultra-smooth final print.

Squeegees were triple-ply dual durometer 65/90/65's and ran at a consistent medium pace with a little extra pressure for fabric penetration and bridging using a 15-degree angle.

Determining the location of the design was a bit tricky, but we ended up printing level with and above the armpits. In the end, the prints were really nice, and the customer was extremely pleased with the sweatshirts. They certainly merchandised nicely. Many times, simple is better. **GP**

GP+

WRAPS

GP+ is a monthly section of GRAPHICS PRO dedicated to taking a deep dive into a specific graphics market. This month's section is all about WRAPS and includes a variety of articles on the design, creation, and installation of wraps to help your shop take that next step.

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Promoting early literacy through eye-catching design

By Jamie Mullican

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A wraps event, for wrappers, by wrappers!

64 Wraps Autobahn

Education, the latest materials and equipment, cutting edge tools, and clear processes

By Justin Pate

Check out more outstanding wraps projects by WRAPSCON WRAPScONnect panelists at <https://gpro.link/wrapscONnect> or scan the QR Code...





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BRIGHT AND BOLD WRAP

Promoting early literacy through eye-catching design

BY JAMIE MULLICAN



Jamie "Mully" Mullican has been in the graphics business for 25 years. With a degree in graphic design, Mully started Wrap Artist with the vision of serving the music industry's largest names, taking the ideas in their head and extracting them through the design process, producing that artwork on industry-leading equipment, and professionally installing through a highly trained team. In addition to founding Wrap Artist and co-founding Masters of Branding (MOB), he recently founded School of Wrap, a 3M authorized training facility. He

has spent decades mastering his skills, earning nine certifications from the industry's leading manufacturers. He has dedicated his entire career to advancing the graphics industry and looks forward to any opportunity to help others who are equally as passionate. Mully will be a panelist at WRAPSCON's Meet the Masters @ WRAPSCONnect at GRAPHICS PRO EXPO in Long Beach, California, August 17, from 4-6 p.m. at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. Go to g-p-x.com/wrapsccon for more information.

In the realm of visual communication, vehicle wraps have emerged as powerful marketing tools that can captivate audiences and convey messages effectively. When it comes to promoting a cause as vital as early literacy, creativity and impactful design are essential.

This article explores the impressive bus wrap produced from start to finish by Wrap Artist that was created for the Governors Early Literacy Foundation and Dickson County Schools (DCS), emphasizing the significance of the design process, customer collaboration, and the lasting impressions a well-executed vehicle wrap can make.

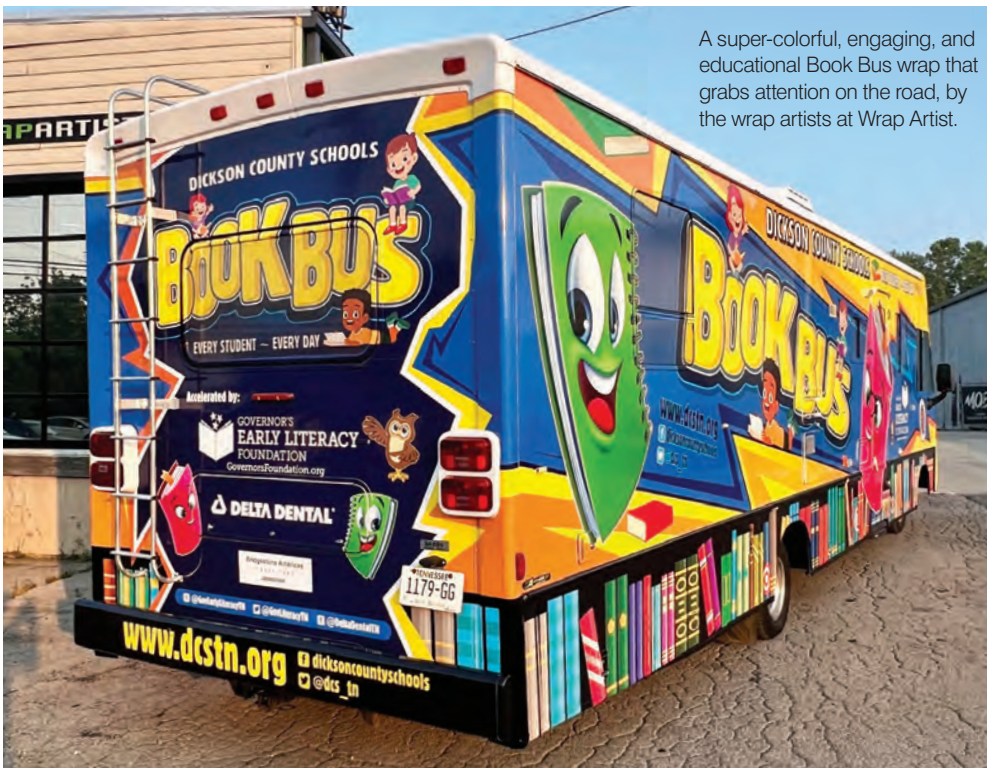
The Governors Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) understands the critical importance of promoting reading to young children and fostering a love for books from an early age. To capture the attention of both children and their caregivers, GELF sought a visually striking bus wrap that would serve as a moving billboard for their cause.

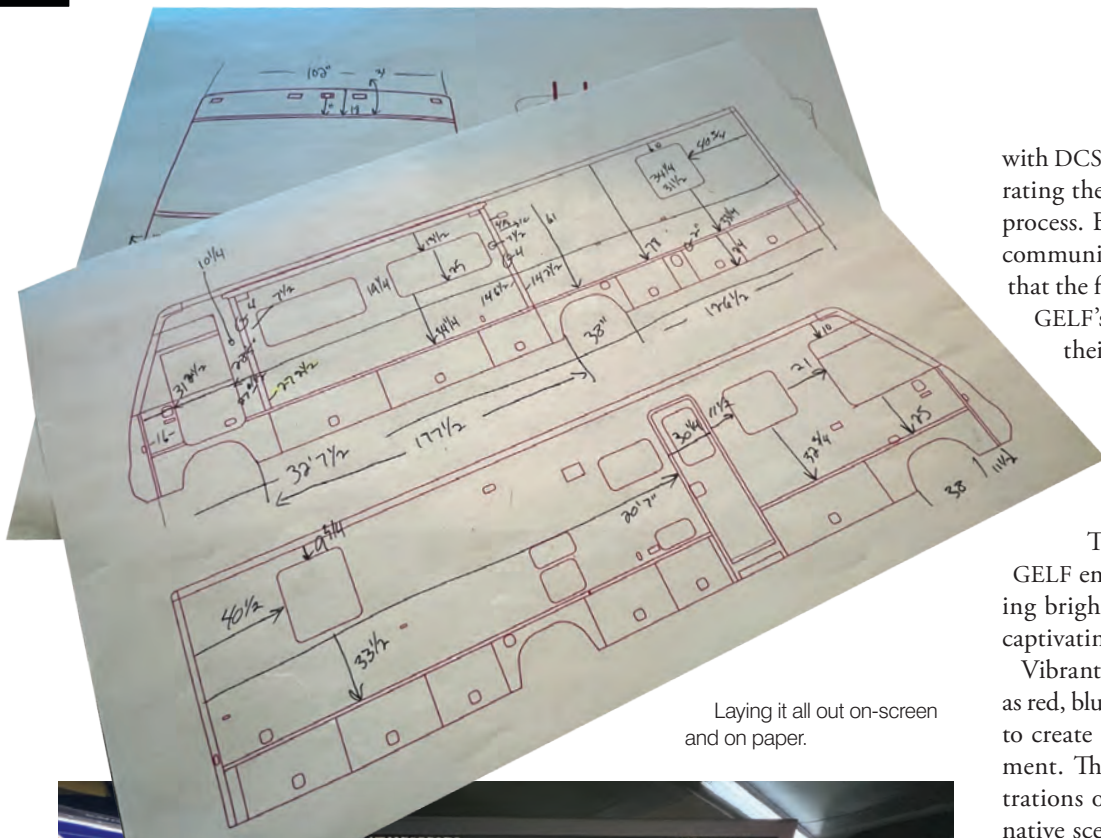
Design process and customer collaboration

Nationally recognized for creating bus wraps for celebrities with large vehicles, DCS/GELF reached out to Wrap Artist for this project. Creating a vibrant and captivating vehicle wrap requires a meticulous design process, one that involves careful consideration of the client's vision and goals. In this case, Dickson County Schools worked closely with talented designers and wrap experts at Wrap Artist to bring their vision to life.

The design team at Wrap Artist took the time to understand DCS/GELF's mission, target audience, and desired message. They collaborated closely

A super-colorful, engaging, and educational Book Bus wrap that grabs attention on the road, by the wrap artists at Wrap Artist.





Laying it all out on-screen and on paper.



with DCS/GELF representatives, incorporating their input throughout the design process. By maintaining an open line of communication, the design team ensured that the final product aligned with DCS/GELF's objectives and resonated with their audience.

When promoting reading to small children, it is essential to capture their imagination and create an experience that sparks curiosity.

The bus wrap designed for DCS/GELF embraced this principle by utilizing bright colors, bold typography, and captivating imagery.

Vibrant shades of primary colors, such as red, blue, and yellow, were incorporated to create a visually stimulating environment. The wrap featured playful illustrations of storybook characters, imaginative scenes, and larger-than-life letters spelling out key messages. This combination of vivid colors and engaging visuals was strategically chosen to evoke a sense of joy, wonder, and excitement of discovering new stories.

Impressions that last

One of the most remarkable aspects of a well-executed vehicle wrap is its ability to leave a lasting impression on viewers. As the wrapped bus travels through communities, it attracts attention, ignites conversations, and generates awareness for DCS/GELF's mission.

Pedestrians, drivers, and passengers cannot help but notice the vibrant bus wrap,





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Printing horizontally in this case allows us to align a panel with the vehicle body lines and avoid unnecessary trimming.



prompting curiosity and intrigue. The captivating design serves as a conversation starter, allowing passersby to engage with DCS/GELF's cause and learn more about the importance of early literacy. Each impression made by the wrap contributes to raising awareness, building

connections, and inspiring action within the community.

Moreover, a creatively designed vehicle wrap acts as a mobile advertisement, reaching diverse audiences and extending the reach of DCS/GELF's message far beyond traditional marketing channels. By being

present at community events, school functions, and public gatherings, the wrapped bus ensures that GELF's cause remains in the public eye, continually reinforcing the importance of early literacy.

Installation details

To ensure the wrap is installed correctly, there are some key considerations. First and foremost, understanding the condition of the vehicle ensures you can set the customer's expectations appropriately.

We ask the customer to provide photos and conduct a survey of the vehicle alongside the customer once it is at our shop. You never want to wrap over things like rust. We also want to be clear that wrapping over imperfections like dings and dents doesn't make them disappear.

Next, proper preparation is vital. Begin with washing the vehicle with soap and water. You can use something harsher like Prep-Sol to remove harder materials like road tar. Finally, before any graphics ever touch the vehicle, you must wipe every surface down with a mix of 70% isopropyl alcohol and 30% water. We pay extra attention to the areas like the wheel wells and underneath the hood that are easy to miss but trap a lot of dirt and debris.

Having said all of this, successful installations starts with the designer! I create our custom templates to make the installation as efficient as possible. Since I have thorough measurements and the template is dialed in, it's easy to streamline the installation process.

I try and eliminate trimming as much as possible. Printing horizontally in this case allows us to align a panel with the vehicle body lines and avoid unnecessary trimming; it will speed the process up tremendously. Creating a process keeps your team from having to guess which panel goes where.

They should also have visual references for what the final wrap should look like. From there, following the proper installation techniques we teach through our training facility, School of Wrap, will make sure you hit your registration points and produce a wrap that will leave your customer thrilled. **GP**

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● **July 18th & 19th**
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 ●

MILWAUKEE

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 ●

ATLANTA

● **August 2nd & 3rd**
 ● Wednesday & Thursday
 ●

VIBRANT WRAP DRIVES CAMPAIGN

Avery Dennison film transforms semi-trailer into moving billboard

COURTESY OF AVERY DENNISON – IMAGES COURTESY OF @ARTCITYWRAPSWI



When owner Brian Lauersdorf was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, his family and Oshkosh-based Art City Wraps seized the opportunity to transform one of their 25 semitrailers into a mobile billboard, raising awareness about pancreatic cancer.



Art City Wraps co-owner and installer Joshua Marquardt pictured here completed the full install in just three days.



Joshua Marquardt chose Avery Dennison MPI 1105 Easy Apply wrapping film because of the film's adaptability and durability to ensure a seamless adhesion to the corrugated, riveted surface.

Nestled an hour north of Milwaukee in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, JJ Trucking is a respected family-owned freight shipping company with a 50-year legacy, specializing in transporting refrigerated cargo, including cheese from Wisconsin's major manufacturers to retail locations and warehouses in the Midwest, Eastern, and Southern regions of the United States. When owner Brian Lauersdorf was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, his family and Oshkosh-based Art City Wraps seized the opportunity to leverage their fleet for a vital cause. Collaborating with Avery Dennison, they transformed one of their 25 semitrailers into a mobile billboard, raising awareness about pancreatic cancer through their "Trucking for a Cure" campaign.

Designing a moving tribute

Kimberly and Marilyne, along with Art City Wraps' talented designer and co-owner, Carla Marquardt, partnered with Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN) to create a visually stunning and educational message. The design aimed to inform about the risks and symptoms of pancreatic cancer, emphasizing early detection. Using Avery Dennison's MPI 1105 Easy Apply wrapping film, co-owner and installer Joshua Marquardt brought the design to life. The film's adaptability

and durability ensured seamless adhesion to the corrugated, riveted surface. To preserve the design's vibrancy and provide a glossy finish, Joshua chose to pair MPI 1105 with DOL 1360Z digital overlamine. The showstopper was completed in just three days.

Honoring Brian's legacy

In a heartwarming gesture, James Lauersdorf and Kimberly surprised Brian with the finished truck, allowing him to drive it for the first time in the nearby Plymouth Christmas parade. The Lauersdorf family and the community were deeply moved by the generosity and dedication to the cause.

Sadly, Brian lost his battle with cancer in January. He worked hard to build a business based on family morals and a strong work ethic. Today, his "Trucking for a Cure" semi-truck continues to make a difference in PanCAN touring events.

Driving awareness for a cause

The collaboration between JJ Trucking, Art City Wraps, and Avery Dennison exemplifies the power of graphic films to convey a mission-driven purpose. As the "Trucking for a Cure" campaign spreads nationwide, it serves as a testament to the resilience and compassion of individuals and businesses inspiring others to join the cause, keeping the fight against pancreatic cancer in the limelight.

To understand more and know the signs of pancreatic cancer visit pancan.org. For information on Avery Dennison's MPI 1105 Easy Apply wrapping film, co-owner and installer Joshua Marquardt brought the design to life. The film's adaptability

VALUE-ADD UPSOLLS

Don't let your customers miss out

COURTESY OF FELLERS



Countless automotive restyling dealers are missing out on opportunities to up-sell to their customers. In addition to your customers missing out on upgrading their ride, you might be losing out on additional high-margin revenue. Here are three ways to drive profit and add value for your customers.

Window film customers

Customers looking to add window film on their front two windows of a SUV or Truck to match the look of privacy glass on their other windows, might not realize the shortcomings of their factory tinted privacy glass. While it does make seeing into privacy windows more difficult, privacy glass does not offer all of the UV (ultraviolet) protection that window film can. This protects family members, pets and the longevity of the vehicle interior. IR (Infrared) rays are the main source of heat and window films also help reduce the concentration of these rays with some films performing at over 97% IR block to help reduce interior temperatures in the direct sunlight. Window film comes in many different VLT (Visible Light Transmission) options to meet

aesthetic needs of the vehicle, while providing up to 99.9% UV protection as well as glare reduction and additional safety and security from glass fragments if a window is broken.

Paint protection film customers

For customers that came in looking to protect the front-end of their vehicle against rock damage, they may be missing out on keeping other high wear and tear areas protected. Door edge, door cups and trunk ledge areas may be overlooked when considering PPF but will routinely suffer scratches and chips during normal use. Rings, keys, fingernails and luggage commonly scratch and wear paint down over time. Adding PPF to these areas is an easy way to increase profitability and protection of a vehicle.

Color change customers

Color-change wrap obviously changes the appearance of the vehicle, but when ceramic coating is paired with vinyl wrap, it provides an easier maintenance experience for the car's owner. Consider making ceramic coating a standard add-on to all color-change projects. If a consumer isn't aware of the benefits, make sure to inform them that ceramic coating minimizes the necessary maintenance needed for vinyl wrap, making the owner experience easier.

If you aren't taking advantage of selling PPF, AWF, and color change alongside each other, make sure to learn and get trained on whatever you're missing today! **GP**



UNVEILING THE ARTISTRY:

ALEX RAD'S
MASTERPIECE*A tribute to Alex "Rad" Reid and his gorgeously detailed Nissan GTR wraps project*

BY ADAM SUMNER



Adam Sumner is the owner of Wrapix Imaging and Wrapix Academy, Burbank, California.



Alex "Rad" Reid blended iconic Japanese race car liveries with fighter planes and took his concept to the next level, adding multiple layers of embossing to highlight and bring depth and dimension to his design.

Early last year we had the privilege of working alongside one of the best designers I have ever had in my shop. Alex Reid, or Alex Rad as most called him, was a talented designer who poured his heart and soul into every project and left a lasting mark on the world of wrap design.

His passion for design was evident in his meticulous attention to detail and his ability to create visually stunning and meaningful works of art. Unfortunately, not too long after this project was finished, our industry suffered the tragic loss of Alex. As we celebrate the beauty of custom vehicle wraps, we also honor Alex's memory and the legacy he left behind. Rest in peace friend; you will be missed forever.

In this article, we dive into his mesmerizing design of a Nissan GTR, where Alex blended iconic Japanese race car liveries

with fighter planes and took his concept to the next level, adding multiple layers of embossing to highlight and bring depth and dimension to his design.

Design concept

With a passion for automotive history, Alex embarked on a quest to create a design that would pay homage to the rich heritage of Japanese racing. Drawing inspiration from the classic Japanese Hakosuka stripes seen on the GTRs from the '60s and '70s, he knew that the color of the vehicle needed to be one of the most sought-after colors of the R34 called Millennium Jade. In order to achieve this color, we decided to print it on 3M-IJ180mC-120 metallic. We were able to nail the color pallet he was looking for on that film.

This GTR was not just a normal off-the-showroom-floor performance car, being a bit north of 2,000 horsepower. Alex wanted to elevate the design further by blending iconic race car liveries with the speed and aggression of fighter planes.

The goal was to showcase the dynamic nature of racing and the sheer power that lies within this GTR. Through careful selection and adaptation, the classic liveries found new life on

the GTR's surface. The vibrant colors, bold patterns, and intricate designs of past race cars seamlessly intertwined with the aggressive styling of fighter planes, creating a design that visually stunning.





Achieving depth and dimension

One of the most striking features of Alex's design was the meticulous placement of rivets along the body lines of the Nissan GTR. With great attention to detail, each rivet was strategically positioned to create an illusion of the vehicle's body being bolted together like that of a fighter jet.

To achieve this look, we cut and stacked five circles in various diameters to give the domed appearance of rivets underneath the wrap. Through his clever use of shadows and highlights printed into the wrap, the rivets appeared to be three-dimensional, adding depth and texture to the design. The careful positioning of these rivets along the body lines emphasized the GTR's sleek styling, giving it an added layer of visual impact.

Precision and craftsmanship

Throughout the design process, Alex's unwavering commitment to precision and craftsmanship was evident. Every stripe, rivet and shadow were meticulously placed to ensure a seamless integration with the vehicle's contours and lines.

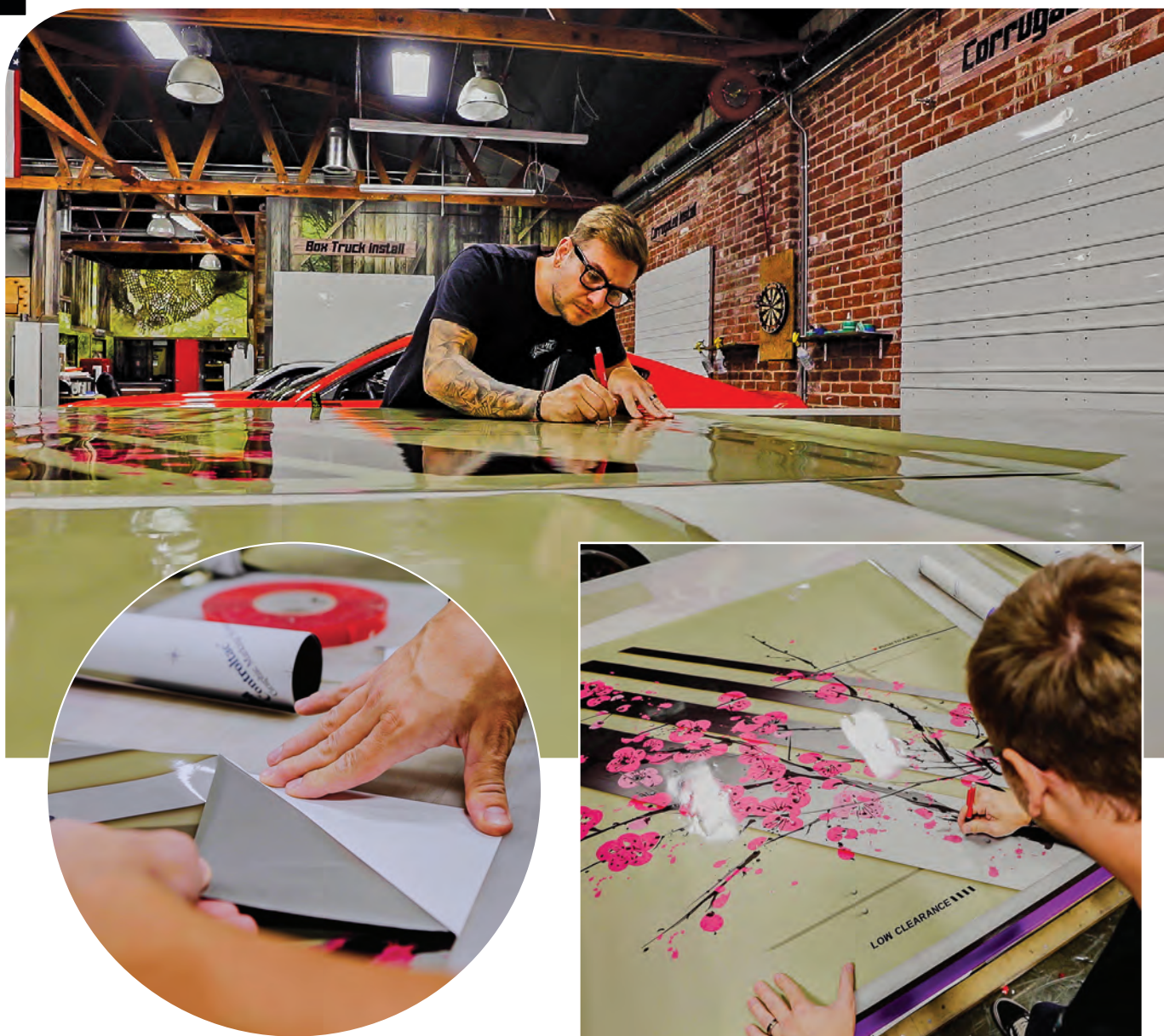
Alex began by wrapping each panel with white vinyl. Each body line and trim piece was marked with a Sharpie. The film was then removed carefully and heated



Each panel was printed separately to ensure full coverage was achieved.



Each rivet with an embossed effect was also designed with shadows that were printed into the wrap to give the illusion they had seen time in the air, adding to the dimension of the design.



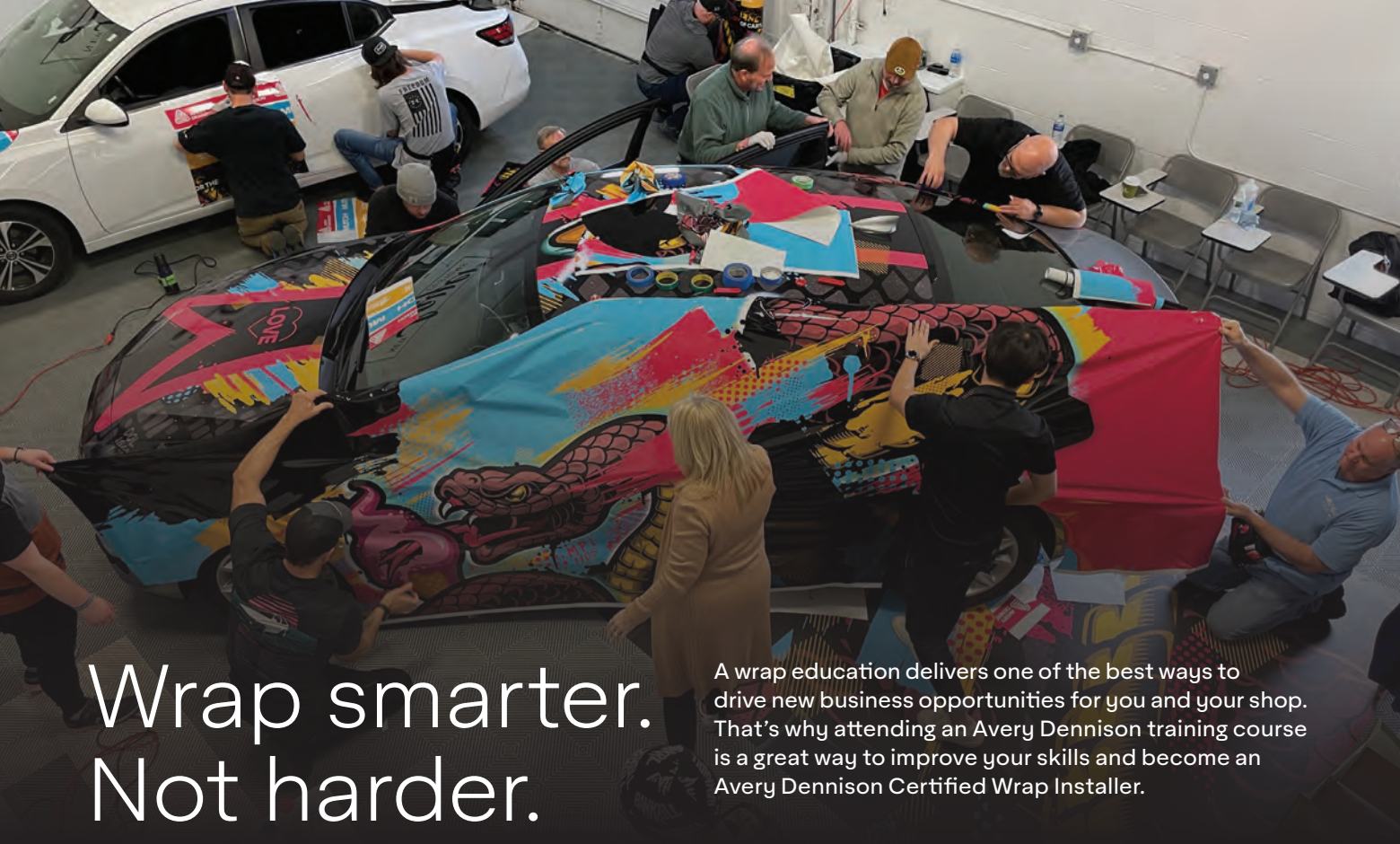
Alex marked on the surface of the wrap so when the vinyl was pulled off the liner, we had a reference point to place each rivet in the proper location. This meant that once the graphic was in place moving it was next to impossible since the rivets would have stuck to the vehicle and pulled off the wrap. It was a tedious and time-consuming process.

Layers of film create the domed effect of the rivet.



back to its original shape. This allowed him to design the artwork with not only each body line marked, but with careful consideration of how the installation allowed Alex to perfect the details and placement of each element of his design, resulting in a flawless representation of his artistic vision.

Each element of the design was meticulously crafted to create a sense of balance and harmony. Alex paid careful attention to the alignment of the stripes across the hood and roof, working hand in hand with the installers, ensuring the iconic stripes followed the embossed graphics he designed.



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Wrap classes are led by Justin Pate, John Duever, Chad Parrish, Charlie Trujillo, Ana Rios and Blake Madsen - six outstanding trainers with over 100 years of real world experience. These class programs and expert instruction not only increase your confidence in the art of vehicle

graphics and color change films, but also impart sound business practices to help you succeed. If you have installed more than 10 vehicle wraps, you're ready to test for CWI Certification. This recognition identifies you as a master of your craft.

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Sign up at graphics.averydennison.com/wraptraining.**





Alex worked alongside the installers and made sure the placement was perfect. With his design skills and installation training, he made sure his vision became reality.



More cool details by Alex Rad on the GTR.



Fighter plane-inspired details.



The iconic Hakosuka stripes are embossed with traditional Japanese artwork.

The embossing under the stripes featured traditional Japanese artwork and he included the imagery of Godzilla, as that has been the nickname of the GTR since the '90s.

The race car liveries were adapted and scaled to fit the vehicle's proportions, maintaining the integrity of their original designs. And every 3D rivet was meticulously positioned, allowing them to capture light in just the right way to create a realistic and captivating effect.

A timeless masterpiece

The final result was a Nissan GTR that transcended the boundaries of time and design conventions. The classic stripes, cherry blossoms, and fighter plane aesthetics blended, creating a unique visual narrative showcasing the vehicle's racing DNA. The embossed effects added a touch of authenticity and uniqueness, transforming the GTR into a rolling work of art.

As the Nissan GTR enhanced with Alex's design roams the streets of Burbank, California, it captivates all who lay eyes upon this one-of-a-kind wrap. The design not only celebrated the heritage of Japanese racing but also pushed the boundaries of contemporary vehicle wrap design.

It became a symbol of the artistry and craftsmanship that can be achieved when passion and talent converge. Alex's design continues to inspire and captivate, proving that vehicles can be more than just modes of transportation — they can be canvases for artistic expression and reflections of our passion for automotive culture. **GP**

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THE ART OF VEHICLE WRAPPING

Top tips for efficiency and profitability

BY MOLLY WATERS



COURTESY OF AVERY DENNISON

The vehicle wrap industry is experiencing remarkable growth, with increasing popularity in mobile advertising and complete color and texture changes. Throughout my 26-year career in the business, I have gained a wealth of knowledge. However, it is crucial to regularly reassess established techniques and stay updated on the latest skills and strategies. Whether you are a seasoned professional or just starting out, seeking guidance from industry leaders is paramount to maximizing operational efficiency.

Curated here are five invaluable tips I've gathered from leading wrap shop owners:



- 1 Training.** Invest in new and top installers alike by sending them to workshops offered by leading film manufacturers like Avery Dennison. Attending these classes provides a valuable opportunity to learn from trainers and fellow students, acquiring best practices in the process. Industry experts unanimously agree that taking a hands-on workshop, whether for yourself or a team member, is an excellent investment.
- 2 Process.** Establish a well-defined process for vehicle intake and preparation. Break down and clean the vehicle on the first day, enabling prompt installation the next morning. This applies to both solo operators and dedicated teams, promoting efficiency and reducing labor costs.
- 3 Inlay.** Opt for strategic use of inlays instead of complex installations. Inlays can significantly save installation time and become virtually unnoticeable when placed in body lines. This approach ensures efficient and durable wraps.
- 4 How deep?** Determine the extent of vehicle breakdown required for wrapping, charging appropriately for time and effort. Offering premium wrap options for comprehensive breakdowns enables appropriate pricing and meets customer expectations.
- 5 Pricing.** Set a general base price for wraps and adjust it based on vehicle type, color, material, and labor costs. Clearly communicate additional expenses for modifications like wrapping deeper into door jambs or under hood and trunk lids. Transparent pricing fosters client understanding.

One bonus piece of advice from industry experts is to familiarize yourself with various wrap materials. While you may have brand loyalty, it's important to be able to install different brands based on client preferences. Read installation instructions for major brands and learn about specialized films like metallics, ColorFlow, matte, and textured surfaces. Establish connections with manufacturers' sales and technical representatives for support and guidance.

Running a successful vehicle wrap business, as with any business, requires continuous learning and adaptation. Stay informed, deliver quality service, and consistently exceed customer expectations to stand out and attract a loyal client base. **GP**

BEST STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

Print settings to maximize your profitability

COURTESY OF CANON SOLUTIONS



Printing vehicle wraps requires careful attention to detail and adherence to best practices in order to achieve high-quality results. The media, laminates used, as well as the installer's time, are expensive. Therefore, minimizing waste and the need to reprint panels is extremely important. Standard best practices include incorporating bleed and safety margins, using cast for full wraps, or calendared for partial wraps. However, beyond these practices, there are considerations around print technology, print settings, and quality control steps used.

The type of print technology used can simplify the installation and streamline production. Print technology that uses heat to cure can cause issues with media expanding and not contracting properly, leading to problems with panel dimensions. Incorporating bleed and safety margins can mask these issues, but addressing the root cause can eliminate the problem altogether. Additionally, some print technologies require 6-24 hours of off-gassing before lamination, significantly impacting a business's ability to complete jobs quickly or reprint damaged or misprinted panels promptly while the installer waits to finish the job. Turning around a reprinted panel in less than an hour, compared to 6-24 hours, can be the difference between rescheduling the installation or finishing the job on schedule.

When creating fleet graphics, it is crucial to use consistent print equipment. Inconsistent print equipment can require constant calibration, leading to delays and potential rescheduling of

installs. Even worse, if a panel is damaged, inconsistent color can lead to reprinted panels that don't match on site leading to more reprints and more delays. It is best to print small color checker charts that can be read with a simple handheld spectrophotometer to identify issues before the panel reaches the installation site.

The printing and laminating of wraps are typically less costly and time-consuming than the installation process. Printing may take a fraction of the time it takes to install the wraps. Therefore, it is recommended to use higher-quality print settings and perform color checks before printing the job and on each panel. These steps may add some extra time to the printing process, but it pales in comparison to the time that can be wasted during installation if the panels are incorrect or the print quality is subpar.

By following these best practices, you can produce outstanding vehicle wraps that not only showcase your creativity but also withstand the rigors of everyday use. Taking the time to perfect each step of the printing process will result in satisfied clients and a strong reputation for your vehicle wrap business. **GP**



TAKING IT TO THE XTREME!

Wraps, event marketing, signage, customer apparel, laser engraving, and more

BY STEFANIE GALEANO-ZALUTKO



Stefanie Galeano-Zalutko is the president/CEO of Zalutko Business Services, Inc., a marketing agency based in Central Florida. She can be reached at szalutko@zalutkobusiness.com.



John Tarn, president of Xtreme! Marketing, Pilot Mountain, North Carolina, has gone from a basement operation to building a multi-million-dollar global marketing company partnered with over 600 multinational corporations. John first started Golfsticker Inc., which became Xtreme! Marketing in his basement. The PGA was John's first major client, a relationship the company's maintained since then (almost 22 years). (All images courtesy of Xtreme! Marketing)

(Right) This was a collaboration between Tequila Herradura and The Dallas Cowboys that Xtreme! Marketing helped make happen. They made several horseshoes (not all for the Dallas Cowboys) ranging from 8-12 feet in height. They are custom-built from start to finish in the fabrication shop where Matt Jester plays a huge part, including doing the electrical.



Like many successful entrepreneurs, John Tarn traded in a lucrative corporate career to try his hand at business ownership — leaving the world of IT and network engineering behind for the print and graphics industry. The Navy veteran set up shop in his Pilot Mountain, North Carolina basement, leaning on trusted family and friends to help kickstart a vision into reality.

Initially, Tarn hauled an 18-wheeler during the day and designed licensed PGA Tour decals from the back of the semi-cab at night. In the early mornings, he would hustle sales at local golf courses before heading back on the road.

Years later, Tarn began pursuing an MBA in International Business, granting him the opportunity to refine his marketing plans and evolve startup Golf Stickers Inc. into a more comprehensive business venture.

The strategic re-brand paid dividends as Xtreme! Marketing is on its way to becoming a \$150-million-dollar global marketing company partnered with over 600 multinational corporations, representing powerhouse brands like Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey and PGA Tour.

As a Certified Veteran Owned Small Business with an impressive A+ rating at



One of Xtreme! Marketing's most popular assets, The Barrel Experience. Due to its popularity, the company has four Barrel Experiences. Assistant Project Manager Matthew Jester wrapped the Airstreams to look like whiskey/wine barrels. They have two vending windows, AC, and an indoor serving station. In this picture, The Barrel Experience is in front of Pilot Mountain, the home of Xtreme! Marketing, where three of the four company locations are.



Xtreme! Marketing's Flag Truck is used to haul materials and for local deliveries.

the Better Business Bureau, the creative services provider is known for its uncompromised quality and innovative approach to marketing.

“We offer a one-stop shop for our customers — saving them time, frustration and money,” says President and CEO Tarn, who emphasizes people as the cornerstone of business building. “We’re not interested in a transaction with a customer, rather a relationship that offers massive value.”

The mega marketing company is no stranger to pushing the boundaries of imagination. Xtreme! Marketing

captivates its high-end clientele with a full-service menu that ranges from in-house art production and data capture to high-quality printing, vinyl wrapping, custom apparel and signage. Today, event marketing, signage and custom fabrication drive nearly 35% of annual revenue.

“Some of our greatest strengths lie in the area of innovation. We are able to custom design and fabricate items that few other companies can handle,” says Robert Giesbers, corporate marketing and sales manager. “Another one of our great strengths is in the area of service. Unlike

many other event marketing companies, we offer a turn-key approach for our customers. Yes, we do the custom designs, building and custom print work, but we also handle the transport, setup and take down of an event.”

“This all sets us apart as a premiere event services provider,” he continues, pointing to the company’s TIPS-certified brand ambassadors who lead events with distinguished clients like World Golf Championships, Coca-Cola and Herradura Tequila.

They applaud a staff of 22 “multi-talented



This photo was taken at an Illinois Illini football game. Xtreme! Marketing represented one of the Illini's sponsors, Jack Daniel's with an asset they call The Ben Special, a 30-foot, abandoned Airstream, completely renovated with an indoor seating area, vending windows on both sides, and an indoor serving station.

designers, fabricators, makers and thinkers" for living the company's core values and prioritizing the customer experience.

"Every single person who starts a business does so because they have some kind of dream, whether that's to make a difference, send the kids to college or be able to retire," Giesbers explains. "As a marketing company, it's important to take on their passion [as our own] and be aligned in order to help them achieve their goals."

As such, "We always ask ourselves three questions," Tarn adds. "Am I adding value? Are we adding value? Is this product or service adding value to our customers?"

Vinyl visions

At Xtreme! Marketing, the conversation of value includes a specialization in custom-designed wraps. While the company



This was a wrap completed for a local community college, Surry Community College. Several of Xtreme!'s employees went to school there. The room being wrapped was being turned into a clothes closet and food pantry for underprivileged students. Graphic artist Gary Hicks designed the wrap and Matthew Jester installed it. It is meant to look like an armory, with two walls and the door wrapped.



This wrap was completed for someone who wanted to revamp their sports car they named The Super Bee.



This wrap was completed for a Surry County local who wanted to revamp his old race car. This car was wrapped entirely in white and then the decals were applied over top. This was a fun wrap for the team, and an employee favorite.

More background and business tips from Xtreme Marketing's John Tarn at The GRAPHICS PRO Files podcast. Listen here...

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[HTTPS://GPRO.LINK/EP54](https://gpro.link/ep54)



always offered vinyl flat-graphic and installation services, 2015 proved to be a critical turning point in volume. Tarn invested in newer equipment to provide a superior finished product, streamline operational efficiencies and offer wide-ranging wrap services in-house.

Initially, the printing and graphics upgrades bolstered Xtreme! Marketing's own corporate agenda, simultaneously fine-tuning production processes and crafting custom wraps for employee vehicles. Before long, the local commercial market took notice, and word-of-mouth quickly spread — allowing the company to evolve organically in response to consumer demand.

Today, Xtreme! Marketing's creative capabilities run wild, from fully-wrapped beverage bars, vehicles, RVs, and trailers to personalized spot graphics and

vinyl-wrapped signage. High-end clients across the globe are wrapped up in the company's premium offerings, including the PGA Tour, iHeart Radio, Mount Airy Parks and Recreation and even local police departments.

"We spin a lot of vinyl and could wrap a peanut, if you asked us to," Tarn says, noting wrap revenue now constitutes approximately 10% of the continuously-expanding business. In fact, the team has 15 wrap projects teed up this month, with more expected to hit the queue in the days ahead.

One way the company maintains quality control is by leading the creative process in-house. A handful of talented graphic designers work diligently to refine a customer's vision in the form of a high-quality, scalable graphic. Both the sales representative and customer take part in the

proofing process to ensure design execution is on-point, then production schedules the project for completion. A digital workflow ensures artwork, proofing and final files move seamlessly through different machine types.

While multiple team members create custom flat-graphics, only one employee leads vehicle wrap installation and special projects at Xtreme! Marketing.

"Wrapping is its own art form, requiring both a creative eye and technical execution," Tarn says. "Hands down, we have the best wrap guy in the business."

Wrap 'n Roll

Matthew Jester, assistant project manager, officially entered the wrap scene during the early 2000s. At first, he focused on spot graphics but skilled hands and a passion for precision helped the tradesman



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Printed with a faux wood effect, this wrap was completed for a local car dealer, Wrights Camper & Auto Sales.



This was a fleet wrap for a local trucking company with spot decals in back vinyl.



Speaking of whisky, this bar display for GlenDronach was custom-wrapped by Matthew Jester was custom-wrapped for GlenDronach at an event called Whiskey Washback in Washington D.C.



Custom-built and decorated bar and wall for Woodford Reserve at the Nantucket Food & Wine Festival. Roses were attached in the shape of the Woodford Reserve bottle, and the letters on the front of the bar are acrylic custom cut by the company's laser engraver.

hone his craft and eventually earn Best Vehicle Wrap Specialist in the area two years in a row.

"I love wrapping — it's a creative expression for me," he says. "I don't feel like there's anything I can't wrap with the right materials and sufficient time."

As a wrap specialist, Jester knows it is essential to remain up to date on new materials and installation methods. Since every brand has its benefits, drawbacks and shortages, he says shops require a wide selection to offer the best possible product for a specific job.

"Vinyl has gone through many changes since around 2010-2012. For example, older 3M Controltac used to have this diamond pattern that was visible on the film surface, whereas the company's newer air release films are smooth," he explains. "3M is always working on pushing boundaries to invent the next best product and remain on top as one of the best in the game."

"The 3M vinyls have made installations faster and easier with air channel technology, re-positioning and stretchability. As such, customer satisfaction increased because of the time we've saved them on premium installations," Tarn adds.

While most wraps last 5-7 years, the team agrees that with proper care and climate control, "it could last forever."

Jester and team rely on sophisticated HP latex printers, routers, cutters, and support equipment to serve up a superior finished product. Years ago, wrap specialists had to plot each color of film, lay

patterns, and layer them one by one to achieve a final image, whereas modern digital technology allows staff to print all-in-one via wide formats. In addition to saving precious time and valuable materials, Xtreme's modern equipment also makes it easier to repair or remove wraps if necessary.

"Our investment in latex printing saves time," Tarn says. "So often, we had to wait to laminate before we got into latex. We love latex printing, saving time on outgassing and being a greener technology."

The greatest asset

The team insists differentiation is in the details, starting with investment in its employees. Tarn remains hyper-focused on teaching and tracking specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART) goals. While leadership shares wisdom and lends assistance to staff, individual initiative, and accountability are driving forces of success at Xtreme! Marketing.

“I can inspire you, but I can’t motivate you,” he states. “People have to be self-motivated internally to reach their goals and be customer attentive.”

In addition, the company hosts a mandatory 8 a.m. training and production meeting every day to ensure the team is disciplined, aligned and results-oriented in the day ahead. Tarn says the daily touch-base subliminally reinforces the company’s mission, vision and values, while gathering the company’s talent to discuss “inspirational pieces.” Moreover, relevant department data is reviewed to prioritize the priorities, gauge current performance levels, and communicate next steps.

For Tarn, it is the faces behind the suite of services — along with the relationship-building sitting at the core of all customer partnerships — which drive the business forward.

“People move businesses — businesses don’t move people,” he states. “Always, always invest in your people. The right installer is worth the investment. Without top-notch installers, a company won’t be successful. A hallmark of Matt [Jester], for example, is that he takes the time to remove as many parts as possible before starting to wrap, whether it’s a commercial fleet vehicle or a 36-foot RV. Instead of working around those parts, he gets under the seams and gives the customer a better looking, longer-lasting product.”

For Jester, doing it right the first time is the only way to avoid common pitfalls like uneven application, unnecessary graphic re-prints, or damaged paint, all of which cost companies time, energy and profits. The final result is a finished project every team member is proud to present on behalf of Xtreme! Marketing.



Temple Baptist Church is a local church located in Mount Airy, North Carolina, Xtreme! Marketing’s neighboring city. Both sides of the bus are wrapped, including perforated window vinyl. Installed by Matthew Jester.

While work in the queue rings the cash register, relationships are at the core of every account.

“Small or large, all of our customers get the multi-billion-dollar-account treatment,” Giesbers says. “At Xtreme! Marketing, a live person answers each call, and usually on the first ring. And if you call me personally, you get me — not an answering machine or service.”

Looking ahead

Giesbers describes the last 19 months at Xtreme! Marketing as “absolutely transformative,” noting six new management positions, three facility expansions, and quadrupled head count. The production and warehouse facilities alone are 7,000 and nearly 12,000 square-feet, respectively, with another 2,500 square-feet in office space — and growing.

Giesbers says automation alongside

finely-tuned policies and procedures helped brace Xtreme! Marketing for a new wave of growth, including expansion within its signage portfolio and triple the number of mobile assets.

While growing pains accompany any exponential expansion, Tarn remains laser focused on the metrics to drive day-to-day operations and long-term decision making. He offers fellow business owners a piece of safe advice as he strategically prepares the marketing group to expand further out West.

“First, know your numbers and watch your cashflow because it’ll kill a business if not managed properly. Cash is king, and turning a profit is sanity,” Tarn says. “Second, don’t compete on price. Instead, compete on value. And, third: it’s always personal. You’re not dealing with a company — you’re dealing with a real person. Focus on the relationships.” GP



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AUTOMOTIVE RESTYLING

The top 3 product attributes to look for

COURTESY OF FELLERS



Utilize the TSER in AWF

Total Solar Energy Rejected (TSER) is one of the most comprehensive ways that films are rated and take into account the overall performance of a film and how it relates to Visible Light, Infrared Light & Ultraviolet Light. Most technology today with mid-tier to higher end films focus on spectrally select technologies that reduce Infrared Light which is the main producer of heat and the human body is the most sensitive to. Offering multiple tiers of film such as a Good, Better & Best is ideal to suit the needs of your end customers and budget while increasing profitability.

Go for self-healing in PPF

Paint Protection Film technology has come leaps and bounds since the late '80s and early '90s. Most all films today have a self-healing technology incorporated into their coatings and offer a 7-10+ year warranty. While all TPU (Thermoplastic Polyurethane) PPF products will add protection it is also important to look at the thickness of the product and how you are offering to your customers. Films can range from 6-10+ mils with the average being 8 mils in the market. PPF is a sacrificial surface, so educate customers that damage can still happen to protected areas.



Look for air release and repositionability in color change

In the last decade, color change has become its own category within automotive restyling. Innovations in air egress and air release technology along with floatability and repositionability of adhesive technologies continue to lead the way. Color pallets continue to change and expand along the way. In addition, some manufacturers are now including protective cap sheets to their gloss products that are removed after installation to give the ultimate finish post installation and reduce touch ups before delivery.

RIGHT SQUEEGEE FOR YOUR WRAP

Don't let something as small as a squeegee ruin your wrap

COURTESY OF LIDCO



Squeegees are one of the most important tools for a vinyl wrap installation, and finding the right squeegee for your job is equally important. If you choose the wrong one, your wrap could be damaged, which is costly in terms of time and investment in your wrap project.

Here are a few key things to look for when choosing the right squeegee for your vinyl wrap project:

Quality

When looking to purchase a squeegee for your vinyl wrap project, it is important to choose a quality squeegee to ensure that expensive films and vinyls are not damaged during installation. Don't compromise your expensive graphics with low-grade, poor resin or badly molded, sharp-edged tools.

Performance

Make sure that when choosing a squeegee, you are choosing a tool that will help make it easy to apply pressure-sensitive materials including vinyl, tapes, graphics, films, labels, and wraps. Choose a squeegee that provides consistent, accurate, and comfortable application.

Shape & material

Squeegee shape and material make a difference for each project you are working on. Not every squeegee is suitable for every

application, and choosing the right shape and material for the job will ensure that the vinyl wrap does not get scratched or damaged upon installation.



The proper squeegee for the job will:

- Improve application speed
- Allow your materials to be applied easily, accurately, safely, and comfortably
- Save time and money
- Protects your materials in the process of installation
- Inexpensively adds value to your products
- Increases customer satisfaction
- Give the final product a clean, consistent finish



Squeegee Profiles

- A. Single-curve profile with softip edge
- B. Econo-line, low indent-style profile
- C. Ribbed ergonomic profile
- D. Felt-wrapped Standard felt
- E. Felt-wrapped Heavyweight felt
- F. Big Blade Removal Tool profile
- G. The Chizzler profile



Vehicle Templates

Using vehicle templates throughout the wrap process



Charity Jackson is co-owner of Visual Horizons Custom Signs based in Modesto, California. She has been in business since 1995 and has worked in the sign industry for nearly 30 years. You can visit her website at VHSigns.com.

If you design vehicle wraps, you not only need a way to give the customer a visual representation of what they can expect, but you also need a way to place design elements accurately. More than a simple rectangle representing the side of the vehicle is required.

Several companies have compiled templates for the most common vehicles used for wrapping. These are high-quality, accurate templates that make your presentations look professional and speed up

the process, making you more efficient and profitable.

Quotes

We get so many daily calls asking for a “quick quote” or a “ballpark figure” on vehicle wraps. Most people have no idea what a wrap costs or how the process works, so this is typically a conversation that we must invest a bit of time into.

Although we’re busy, we try hard to take the time to gauge the customer’s actual interest in a wrap by asking questions and letting them know what to expect. When we have enough info, we may give them a rough estimate in the form of a price range, but we always ask the customer to bring in the vehicle if possible. This alone will pinpoint their seriousness about getting the work done. If they’re not willing to come by with the vehicle, they’re probably not ready to spend thousands on the wrap.

During the conversation, sometimes we determine the customer just needs spot graphics or a partial wrap like a hood or roof wrap. In these cases, we can use templates to quickly determine the square footage of the space to provide a rough estimate. If you quote a lot of similar vehicles, you might already have some pricing figured out and be able to give a rough verbal estimate on the spot, without even pulling the template.

For more involved installs, we could pull the template while the customer is on the phone, figure out the sizing, and give a verbal quote, but I prefer to email a written estimate. This allows me to take an extra minute to be accurate with my figuring, to put the estimate together when I have the time (especially if I was



Looking at this full wrap, which was designed on an Art Station vehicle template, you can see how accurate the sizing is. (Images courtesy of Charity Jackson)



Small thumbnails of commonly wrapped vehicle types let you choose the correct template more efficiently.

in the middle of something else when they called), and to start creating a conversation with the customer.

There will be a written quote now instead of just a verbal estimate, and if they're just calling around, it's easy for your quote to blend in with the others if they don't have something written to reference. I also highlight areas on the template to represent the coverage I'm quoting, which helps the customer visualize what they're getting for the price.

Measurements

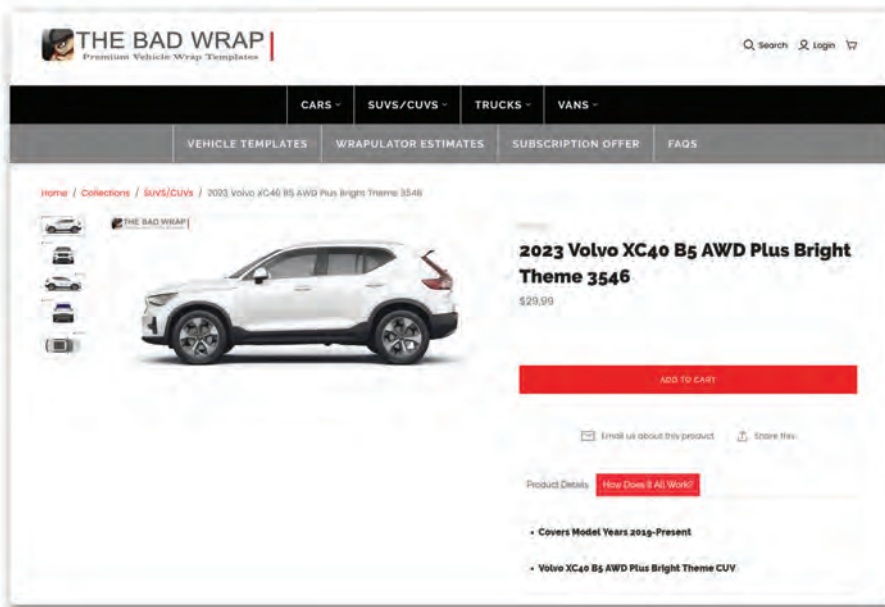
Before we even get to placing design elements in the computer, there are a bunch of ways that vehicle templates help throughout the wrapping process. We have the Art Station Vehicle Templates catalog downloaded, and we can access their vector line-art templates quickly.

I approach wrap design from an installer standpoint, which means I'm conscious of how design elements will fall on the vehicle's contours. This placement can not only affect the look of the wrap but can also make the installer's job more difficult. This means the vehicle's measurements are vital for correctly scaling and placing printed panels.

Vehicle templates are accurate, but I like to have notations of panel widths, obstacle placement (especially aftermarket parts), windows, and anything with tight registration. Most importantly, I note the height of specific areas, especially when I know I will create my template from photos of the vehicle. Since most vehicles have a natural curve, if I rely only on my width measurements when scaling my photos, I won't get an accurate overall height, and my printed panels may fall short.

Prefigured wrap dimensions of commonly wrapped vehicles make it super easy to quote partial to full wraps.

US Standard				Metric			
Point	Measurement	Total Sq Ft	Point	Measurement	Total Sq M		
A	522" x 63"	18.3 x 5.25'	A1	5,838.8mm x 1,602.2mm	5,838.8 x 1,602.2m		
B	222" x 63"	18.5' x 5.25'	B1	5,638.8mm x 1,602.2mm	5,638.8 x 1,602.2m		
C	60" x 23"	5' x 2.25'	C1	1,524.8mm x 609.6mm	1,524.8 x 609.6m		
D	81" x 23"	6.75' x 2.25'	D1	2,057.4mm x 609.6mm	2,057.4 x 609.6m		
E	84" x 69"	4.5' x 5.75'	E1	1,320.8mm x 1,727.2mm	1,320.8 x 1,727.2m		
F	63" x 57"	3.25' x 4.75'	F1	1,600.2mm x 1,447.8mm	1,600.2 x 1,447.8m		
G	97" x 18"	4.75' x 1.5'	G1	1,447.8mm x 457.2mm	1,447.8 x 457.2m		
H	36" x 66"	3' x 5.5'	H1	914.4mm x 1,476.4mm	914.4 x 1,476.4m		
I	21" x 21"	1.75' x 1.75'	I1	533.4mm x 533.4mm	533.4 x 533.4m		
J	21" x 21"	1.75' x 1.75'	J1	533.4mm x 533.4mm	533.4 x 533.4m		



The Bad Wrap, and many others, offer their templates for download one at a time or as a collection or subscription.

Printing out a copy of the template for the year, make, and model of the vehicle you're working with allows you to note measurements quickly and accurately. We take the printed copy out on a clipboard and draw lines from each point we're measuring.

When you don't use a template, it's really easy to get back to your desk and waste time trying to figure out what two points you measured between. Did I go from the door gap to the light or to the back of the vehicle? Was that height I measured to the top of the vehicle, or did I stop at the top body line?

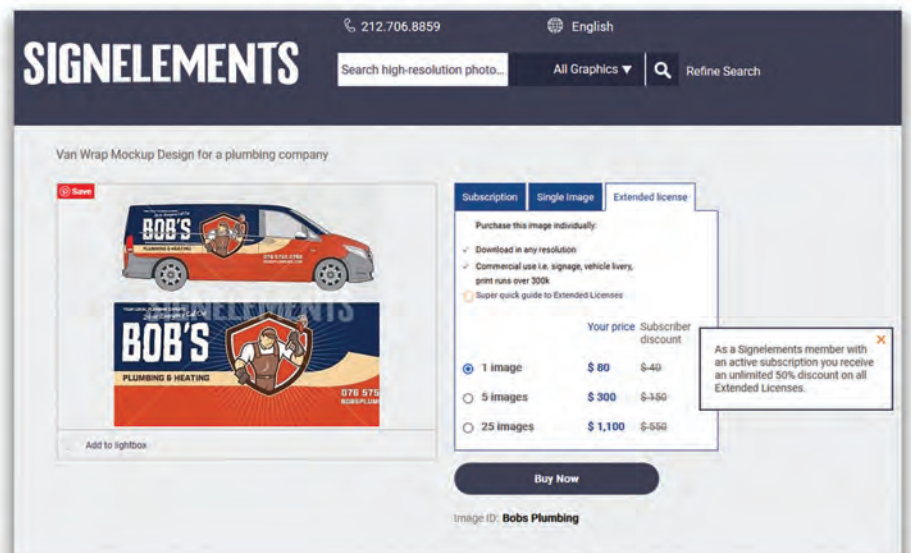
Since measuring is at the beginning of the process and you're already walking around the vehicle, this is an excellent time to note any body damage, paint issues, or significant obstacles. Circle the area on the template, document the problem, and follow up with a photograph to keep on file.

Sketching

Most people like visuals and need to look at something while you're helping them decide what to include on their wrap. It's easy to jump onto the computer and start designing, but you can waste a lot of time by going down the wrong design path early in the process.



The Bad Wrap's photographic-style, layered Photoshop templates make it easy to design your wrap.



SignElements provides line-art style templates as well as high-res photos and vector design elements.

Printed-out templates are great to use at the front counter, where you can quickly jot notes about coverage and placement while reviewing the art pieces the customer has available. There are common areas that work well for placing information. We like to highlight the customer's logo, so we'll place that in a way that maximizes its impact.

We'll note the colors the customer uses in their branding and draw lines to where we imagine these going. A box goes along the side to represent the phone number, a little rectangle at the front to show the placement of the license number, and maybe a box on the back where we'll place a short list of services.

These guides are great time savers that have pre-figured the square footage of all five sides of commonly wrapped vehicles.

This is a quick process, but it helps your customer understand what they can expect once you're finished on the computer. It also allows you, as a designer, to get an idea of what the customer likes or doesn't like so that you're using your time effectively.

Sources

There are quite a few companies that produce high-quality templates. One of the most common types of templates is line art (vector templates). Art Station Vehicle Templates refers to their templates as a *technical drawing style*.

These can be used in vector-based programs, like FlexiSign Pro and Adobe Illustrator, or imported into Photoshop. The templates are designed at 1:20th scale, so we size them up 2000% to get them to the actual size. Larry Lopez, owner of Art Station, says that most of his customers enlarge the vector templates to 1:10th scale so the sizing looks identical to full size, with just a shift of the decimal point over one digit.

A newer feature that Art Station has added to their template collection is thumbnail files for common vehicles that have multiple configurations. These thumbnails allow you to quickly scroll through the templates to find the one you need without having to import all the files.

Another high-quality template option is raster-based layered TIFF files by The Bad Wrap. These are photographic-style templates created in Photoshop; they are not vector files.

You'll see the artwork already set up in layers when you download these templates. On one layer, you can switch out their logo for your own to create a professional proof; then, there are layers for the vehicle sections and a section that you design within. The layers make adding information, moving objects around, and playing with colors and design easy.

The Bad Wrap templates are saved in a 1:10th scale, so you can scale them 1000% or move the decimal over mentally to get the actual size. You can also figure out accurate measurements using the ruler tool in Photoshop or Illustrator.

Both of these types of templates give you professional results. If you design most of your vehicle wraps in Photoshop, then The Bad Wrap or another raster-based template might be your best choice. If you do most of your designs in a vector-based program, you might prefer using Art Station templates or similar line-art style templates.

Another company I have come across is SignElements. They're based in London with worldwide distribution and offer line-art style templates. They take their offerings beyond templates by selling high-resolution photos, vector design elements, fonts, and vinyl-ready designs. With so many different sources, there are plenty of template options to make your job easier and more efficient.

Purchasing

While we like to have the whole collection of Art Station Vehicle Templates already downloaded to our computer for quick access, you can also purchase templates as needed. The Bad Wrap also offers its templates this way. You can either subscribe to their entire collection of templates one to two years at a time, or you can purchase the templates one by one.

SignElements offers monthly and yearly subscriptions with a limited number of monthly downloads. Choose the option that works best for your company based on the number of wraps you design.

Remember to account for the cost of templates in your design fees. If you purchase a template as you go, add the extra cost to the design fees you charge your customer to be sure you're not cutting into your profits. If you purchase an entire collection or pay for a subscription, estimate the costs over the number of wraps you do to come up with a fair price.

Wrap pricing tool

I spend a lot of time quoting wraps and fleet graphics, so any tool I can use to speed up this process is worth utilizing. Art Station Vehicle Templates offers its Wrap Dimensions Guide, and The Bad Wrap has the Wrapulator.

These guides are great time savers that have pre-figured the square footage of all five sides of commonly wrapped vehicles. A bit of extra bleed for your print panels is already figured in, and windows are sized separately for perf vinyl.

You simply download the file for the vehicle you're quoting and add up the panels you plan to cover. You'll use the total square footage if it's a full wrap. If you don't intend to wrap the roof or you're only doing a partial wrap, add up the noted square footage for the areas you plan to cover and figure out your pricing. **GP**

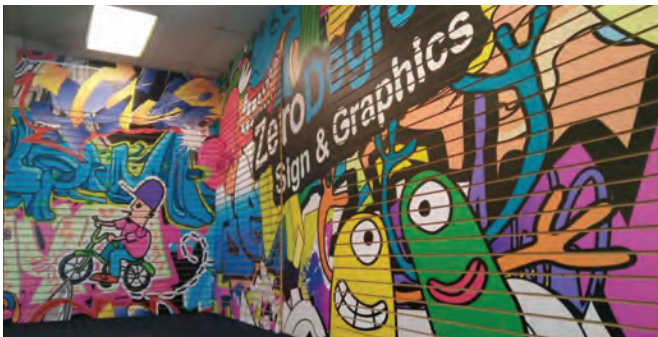
An advertisement for Lidco Squeegee & Application Tools. The background is yellow. At the top, it says "The World's Leading SQUEEGEE & Application Tools" in bold black text. Below this, there are three squeegee tools: a blue one in the foreground, a yellow one behind it, and a blue one behind that. At the bottom, there is a black box with white text: "Contact your local sign & equipment supplier" and the Lidco logo with the website "lidcoproducts.com". Below the black box, it says "The manufacturer of squeegees and applicators for over 30 years" in yellow text on a black background.

- In various materials for different performance characteristics
- Round & square corner variations
- 4" industry standard length
- Large format 6" & 12" lengths

THERE'S A BOOM IN BUILDING WRAPS

There are few surfaces left that can't accept adhesive films

COURTESY OF MACTAC



Gone are the days when textured wall surfaces like brick, block, and stucco were overlooked as potential design or advertising space. In recent years, plain white block walls and other textured walls have become unique canvases for displaying school spirit, supporting a company's brand messaging in restaurants, sports complexes, museums, and parking garages.

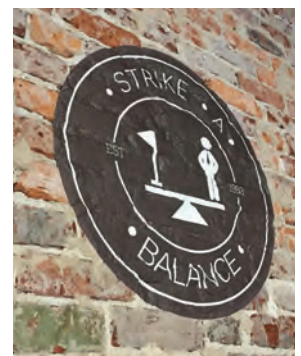
In today's latest environmental graphics trend, designers often incorporate wide-format pressure-sensitive print media into building designs to combine sophisticated design with architectural layouts and useful information. Environmental graphics tell a brand's story by utilizing a building's architectural elements and raw materials along with customized typography, images, and messaging to create a deeper connection between the place and the people who visit it.

Building wraps that feature pressure-sensitive adhesives can provide a long-lasting print image without altering the building with mechanical fasteners or clamps. Additionally, end-users will find that pressure-sensitive building wraps will remove without leaving any adhesive residue on the wall surface.

For graphic installers, textured surfaced building wrap projects can be some of the most complex. But with added effort, installers can successfully achieve a great-looking wall graphic that will benefit the end-user for years. The site needs to be inspected to ensure the correct surface preparation is made for a safe and successful installation. These types of applications typically require heat from either a torch or heat gun to help soften and "reset" the memory of the film used. This ensures a good bond to the rough surface and provides the appearance of the image being painted on the wall.

Manufacturers like Mactac offer pressure-sensitive print media and laminate solutions for all types of wall surfaces — from smooth to rough and textured. Textured wall surface applications require a high-performing media with a matching overlamine. Mactac's Roughrap cast media and Razor cast overlamine is a long-time trusted combination of PSPs. Roughrap consists of a 2.0-mil gloss white face with an aggressive, permanent opaque adhesive that can be printed with solvent, eco-solvent, latex and UV equipment. The 1.5-mil Razor laminate is available in both gloss and matte finishes. This combination can be used outdoors for up to 18 months, while interior applications can expect to look great for 5+ years.

For smooth concrete walls and columns, Mactac offers Rebel X-treme and Streetrap. These products feature a thick, clear permanent aggressive adhesive that can be used for five years outdoors when paired with ColorGard LUV intermediate overlaminates. **GP**



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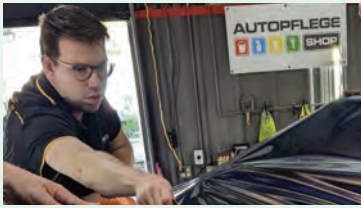
PROSERIES

STEK USA

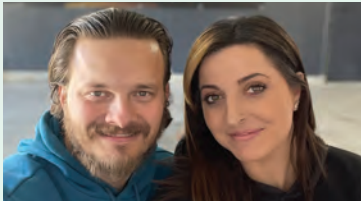
Kelly Spicers

CUTWORX
Complete Finishing Solutions

FlexiShield



Beau



David C. & Natasha



David R.

FlexiShield

Featured Installers:

- Beau Moore – *FlexiShield*
- David Richie – *FlexiShield*
- David Cockerham – *Empire Custom Wraps/Flexishield installer*
- Natasha Avadisian – *Empire Custom Wraps/Flexishield installer*

Educational Topics Covered:

- Color installation process
- Market trends and demand for our films
- Preparation and application of film on large horizontal surfaces
- Handling edges and corners with film

Company Wrap Mission:

FlexiShield is the ultimate choice for car paint protection. We offer both color and clear films that are durable, invisible, and easy to apply. Our films ensure that your car's paint stays flawless and vibrant. Whether you want to customize your car's look with a stunning color film, or maintain its original shine with a clear film, we have you covered. Our films also protect your car from scratches, chips, UV rays, and environmental damage. Our mission is to help you enjoy your car without worrying about its appearance. Choose FlexiShield and drive with confidence.

JDS Sign Supply



Chris & Anastasia



Brad

JDS SIGN SUPPLY

www.jdssignsupply.com

Featured Installers:

- Chris Youngash - *Wrap Works*
- Anastasia Youngash - *Wrap Works*
- Brad Felty - *B-Wrapped*

Educational Topics Covered:

- How to lower costs and increase profits with the new cast print films.
- Join hands-on demonstrations of 830 AutoMark™ and MPI 1105 Easy Apply™ RS. Compare for yourself the performance of both cast films.
- Discover film options to wrap windows, walls, and floors.
- Learn how to make more profit and reduce the strain on your body by wrapping more than just vehicles.

Company Wrap Mission:

With \$99 free freight and 13 warehouses from coast to coast, JDS Sign Supply is dedicated to providing the wrap films and tools you need with the customer service you deserve.

MUTOH America

Featured Installers:

- “Vinyl Vixen” (AKA: Jessica Bonifacio) & “Slim Shaddy” (AKA: Michael Shedd) - *Wrapsesh*

Educational Topics Covered:

- Basic Wrap Disassembly - removing handles/door panels and other basics for speeding up installation times.
- Exterior Graphics Wraps - tips to get the most coverage and quality with quick installation times, along with tips on creating super custom graphics through collaboration.
- Finding your Industry Niche - what type of shop do you want to be? What is your targeted clientele? What do you specialize in? Discussion of different tactics for advertising and finding clients, while making your company stand out above the rest.
- Achieving Top Notch Print Quality - discussing our favorite material and print options for achieving high quality custom wraps.

MUTOH

Company Wrap Mission:

As a leader in the industry for over 70 years, MUTOH America, Inc. is committed to delivering the highest quality products and services to our customers and partners such as Wrapsesh. Wrapsesh is a local wrap company that specializes in vehicles wraps while prioritizing quality. They excel in creating unique rolling art with custom vehicle wrap masterpieces meant to last. Together, MUTOH and Wrapsesh take wrapping vehicles to a new level and help others in the industry succeed and grow.



Vinyl Vixen & Slim Shady

ORAFOL Americas



Kristin



Marcos

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WRAP AUTOBAHN

Education, the latest materials and equipment, cutting edge tools, and clear processes

BY JUSTIN PATE



**BUSINESS
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Justin Pate began his wrap career as a freelance installer in New York City in 1996 and is currently based in Amsterdam. In 2010 Justin created the hands-on workshop program for Avery Dennison North America, which he continues to lead. In 2014, Justin founded The Wrap Institute, which is an online educational platform that has over 3000 professional instructional videos on how to wrap. In addition, Justin gives workshops worldwide and, via The Wrap Institute, provides engaging, interactive learning booths at sign shows and events.

In 2007, I moved to Amsterdam from New York City because my lovely wife wanted to raise our daughter close to her family in the Netherlands. Living in a new country, and continent for that matter, was filled with a ton of new experiences in food, culture, and even driving, especially the Autobahn. No speed limits!

As an American, this was a dream come true. At first, I thought no speed limits would mean lots of crashes and chaos, yet it's quite the opposite. The Autobahn is a perfect mix of well-manufactured roads, educated drivers who follow the rules, and quality cars. This allows you to drive from point A to B in a very short amount of time while being incredibly fun and exhilarating. It's the ultimate driving experience.

In many ways, the wrap industry can be comparable to the Autobahn in terms of how it works. In fact, I have always had this



Wrap Autobahn mindset and, more and more, I see installers, wrap shops, manufacturers and distributors getting it too and then some!

Yet, I also see a lot of people drive in the wrap industry like it's a highway with speed limits, bad drivers and lots of potholes. It certainly doesn't have to be this way.

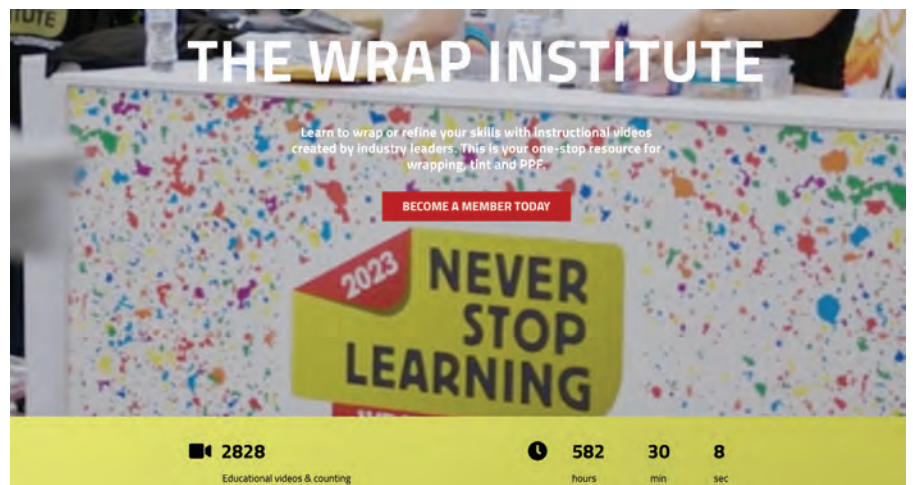
Instead, build a Wrap Autobahn so you can go from point A to B with high profits and maximum efficiency. And, what is especially cool, unlike the real Autobahn, which is only in Germany, the Wrap Autobahn can happen anywhere in the world.

The key building blocks for a Wrap Autobahn are: solid education about the materials/equipment, cutting-edge tools, clear processes, and a Never Stop Learning attitude, especially about techniques and trends.

Education on the Autobahn

In the past five years, there has been a dramatic increase in wrap-related education, both in person and online. More and more manufacturers and even distributors offer in-person workshops. I have seen the Avery Dennison hands-on workshop program go from eight workshops back in 2010 to over 120 workshops in 2023.

What this means is more installers have a much better understanding of the materials they are working with. This includes knowing the limits, which helps avoid durability issues as well as working faster as they can dial in the unique properties from that brand.



In line with materials, the manufacturers are upping their game lately from color change, commercial, and PPF. One particular standout is the new ORAJET 3971RA with ProSlide. It is a digital print film and the industry's first cast PU film. It has a huge jump from PVC film in terms

of durability, the conformability and long-term hold, plus the self-healing properties are all very interesting.

For equipment, when I visit wrap shops while teaching workshops across the world, the shops that are flying along the Wrap Autobahn are crystal clear. CL



Triple S all-in-one solution by The Wrap Institute..



The Wrap Axe tool by The Wrap Institute.



Visual in New York is a good example. Every time I am there, Chris and Leigh have rearranged their space yet again to fit new equipment that, even though the last equipment worked fine, the newest model is worth the education dive and purchase to ensure higher profits and continued growth.

Online education has exploded as well, and what is especially interesting is that this online education helps customers as well. They have a better understanding of wraps and trends, which can help everyone focus better on sales and workflow.

So, taking it back to the Autobahn analogy, when the drivers on the real Autobahn are educated and know the rules, they can drive fast while being safe. On the Wrap Autobahn, educated installers and customers can wrap with high volume and better durability.

Tools for the Autobahn

Just like cars are getting better each year along with the driving apps like Waze, so are wrap tools, especially in the past several years.

Yellotools does a great job innovating both with technology and being open to input from their customers and partners. Two specific tools that came out recently that are true Wrap Autobahn tools are: Triple S and the Wrap Axe.

Triple S is the industry's first all-in-one solution for wrapping commercial, color change, and PPF. For prep, it can be applied on the surface of the vehicle, which helps high tack films slip, avoid sanding/adhesive lines, and stops silvering when picking up PPF. For install, it goes on the squeegee to speed up the process dramatically and for post-install, Triple S can be used on top of the wrap as a six-month aftercare solution.

The Wrap Axe is on the same Wrap Autobahn level. This is a tool that TWI sells in partnership with Tadashi and Yuki from Design Labs in Japan. It helps lower cutting times on car wraps by over 50% and avoids any possible damage to the vehicle that a knife normally poses. Plus, it's a great tucking tool so an installer can cut and seal all with the same tool.



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The final focus on tools is part of what I call the Great Crossover that has been happening the past few years. PPF, tint, detailing, and the wrap world are crossing over quickly these days. This means building blocks from those industries are finding a home in the wrap world, especially from the detailing world.

Prepping a vehicle has never been easier thanks to better clay bar scrubbers, quality microfiber towels, and cleaners like rinse-less wash from companies like The Rag Company. For aftercare, cutting-edge ceramic coatings that are truly made for wraps are speeding the Wrap Autobahn into higher profits more than ever.

One of the biggest Wrap Autobahn building blocks are protocol systems for wrap shops and coaching. Trello, Monday, and Google Docs are well established. Newcomers like Torq and other CRMs are really gaining traction in the wrap

industry as well. The shops investing time and money into them are able to scale and adapt much quicker than shops that don't.

In addition, as the wrap industry has grown and matured, understanding business is more important than ever. I have been teaching the Avery Dennison Business Boot Camp with John Duever for years now, and the classes are always packed.

In addition, John has his own podcast and coaching program called WrapIQ that is very popular and worth checking out. Simply put, if the business side of the wrap world feels like it has a lot of speed limits and traffic, it's time to adjust and find that fun Autobahn feel.

The final Wrap Autobahn building block is having a Never Stop Learning attitude, especially with techniques. Back in 2021, The Wrap Institute launched the Wrap Matrix and Zero Stretch. The few people that are truly catching on to this

are giving us amazing feedback: lower install times, wrapping easier than ever, and stress-free finishes that hold for the long term.

I can honestly say the wrapping process has completely transformed for me the past two years and materials that I thought would never work on a certain shape or vehicle are a breeze to install.

In the end, anyone can pick up a squeegee and a knife and start on the wrap road. The art is putting all the building blocks together in order to cruise on the Wrap Autobahn in the right way which is the perfect balance between quality, durability, and efficiency... that feeling you get when driving down the real Autobahn in a super car at 300 km an hour is the same one you feel when you hit that perfect profit point on the Wrap Autobahn. It's all about putting it all together, and I hope you do! GP

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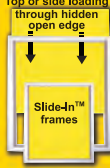
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BREAKING DOWN

DYE- SUB PART 3

Calendars and heat presses are key to sublimation success in customization

BY MIKE SYVERSON



Mike Syverson has been in the printing industry for over 20 years, at the forefront of the pivotal time of analog to digital conversion. Mike's industry experience over the past 20+ years was instrumental in the development and launch of multiple industrial inkjet printing devices, helping to create and refine many techniques that are still critical to successful print through digital methods.



Smaller clamshell-style heat presses, such as this hand-operated model are ideal for one-off production of smaller imprintable items. (Image courtesy of U.S Cutter)

 To view Part 1, visit <https://gpro.link/syverson1>

 To view Part 2, visit <https://gpro.link/syverson2>

Heat is king in the dye sublimation world. To fixate the dyes to the fabric, they must first be heated to approximately 400°F for at least 30 seconds. For that you need a good quality heat press or calendar unit. Any variation in consistency of time, temperature, and/or pressure can impact color, ruin the job, and in the end, cost you money. Thus, understanding the equipment necessary to achieve effective dye sublimation and rich output is one of the most important steps you can take.

This is the third in our five-part series that explores the intricacies of dye-sublimation with Mike Syverson, National Textile Manager for Durst Image Technology. Mike has more than 20 years of experience in the printing industry and was instrumental in the development and implementation of the first grand-format dye-sublimation printer in 2001. In this article, we will discuss the heat press and calendar equipment that is used in the signage and graphics industry, as well as other applications. The final articles in the series will explore finishing, marketplace economics and workflow.

Q: What does a heat press/calendar machine do, and why is it important in the dye-sublimation process?

A: The primary purpose of a heat press or calendar is to facilitate the sublimation of dyes into fabric. These devices have a heated element and some sort of feature to apply pressure to the transfer paper and fabric to convert the ink to gas (sublimate) and have it permeate the fibers of the polyester fabric (or polyester coating). This is a required step in the dye-sublimation process as the dyes are not fixated until they have been heated at a certain temperature for a certain amount of time.

Q: The terms “heat press” and “calendar” are frequently interchanged. Can you explain the difference?

A: Although the function of a heat press and a calendar in dye-sublimation are basically the same — fixate the colors into fabric — the fundamental difference is that a calendar is designed for roll-to-roll sublimating, typically for rolled textiles and more commonly used in the graphics and apparel industries. A heat press is designed for one-off images. Heat presses come in many different sizes and designs depending on the specific application. There are flatbed-heat presses that can be used for one-off flat prints such as mouse pads, glass or ceramic tiles, or other specialty small graphics. There are also circular heat presses with a curved heating element for imaging on to a mug or a baseball cap, for example.

The most common heat presses are clamshell and swing-away units. A clamshell opens from the rear and the platen opens at an angle to allow access to your image area. This is good for small imprintable items and garments. The swing-away style raises and lowers the platen vertically and swings to one side and is usually used for rigid surfaces. Some of these presses are automatic in that they will close and open on a timer, so you have precise control of your transfers. Many units are fully manual. These are much more popular as they require a lower initial investment. Finally, there are units designed for transferring onto t-shirts. These have a shuttle

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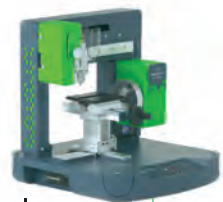


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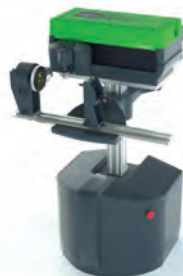
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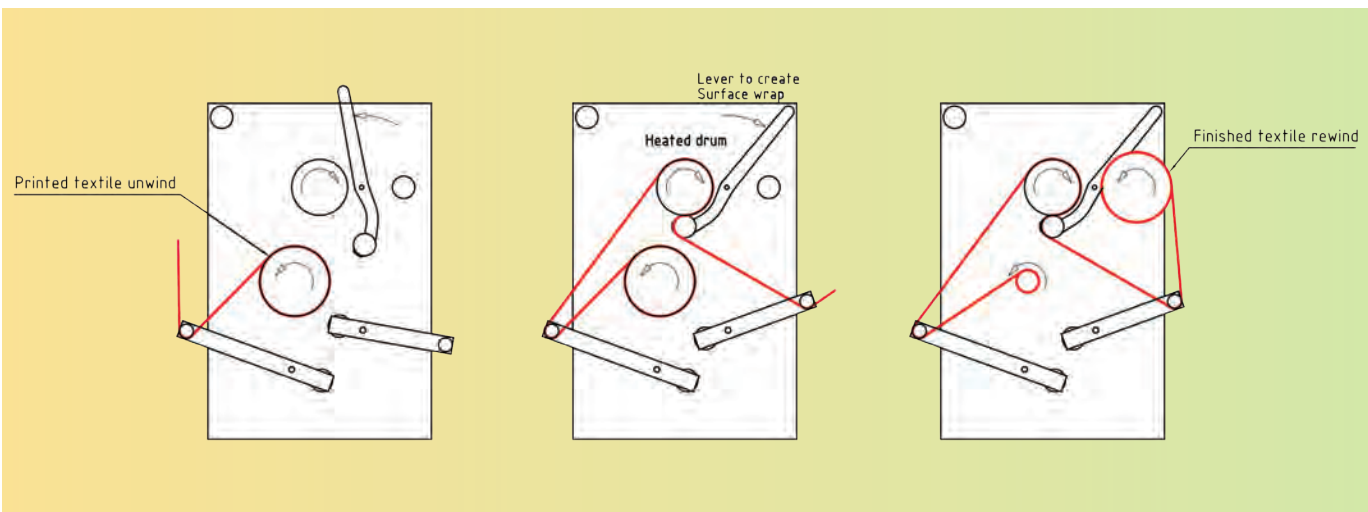
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This illustration shows a schematic of how fabric is threaded through a calendar fixation unit. (Image courtesy of Klieverik)



(Image courtesy of Klieverik)

type system so you can stage a t-shirt on a jig while one is transferring. If you are producing short-run t-shirts, this is a good method. On the larger scale, there are also large format flatbed heat presses that work very similar in principle to the smaller clamshell systems but are designed for producing sublimated graphics up to 5' x 10' (and even larger on some custom units).

There are many choices for calendars, as well. They are available in several different widths and can come with many options, such as a staging table for setting up flexible sheeted goods, multiple roll functionality, different diameter drums, auto

shutdown timers, blanket or belt lengths and a variety of other enhancements. There are also beltless calendars specifically for direct printing that don't require transfer paper. However, you may need protection paper if you're working with delicate fabrics.

Q: What is a flatbed heat press, how does it work, and what applications is it best used for?

A: Flatbed heat presses are designed for sheeted applications only. The presses can range in size from small 11" x 14" presses to 5' x 10' presses with two full size beds. They usually have a bed where

the substrates and transfer paper are laid out. Above the bed is a heated platen that is lowered on the substrate. This bed is heated to approximately 400°F and is lowered on to the substrate with an amount of pressure sufficient to sublimate the inks into the donor substrates. The pressure and time can be changed based on the substrate. Some of these devices are manually actuated, while some of the more sophisticated devices have electronic or pneumatic systems for raising or lowering the platen. Many of the smaller products, such as gifts, promotional items, and specialty graphics are imaged with the smaller units. Some larger shops use the bigger presses for higher volume products. A 4' x 8' press can be used to set up 32 12" tiles with one large sheet of transfer paper to create custom tiled mosaics, for example. The units with two 4' x 8' beds are designed so you are laying out one print while the other is sublimating, creating a more efficient workflow.

Q: What is a rotary calendar and how does it work? What applications is it best used for?

A: A rotary calendar is designed for output onto flexible substrates, such as rolled fabrics. Its operation is similar to a laminator. There is a continuous blanket (or belt) that wraps around a heated cylinder. Fabric and transfer paper are put together and set upon this blanket. The blanket carries the fabric and paper and

presses it against the heated drum for a given time to sublimate the image to the fabric. The blanket also has pressure applied to it against the drum to help facilitate the process. The advantage of this device is that it can be used for high volume rolled goods (and some select sheet materials).

Because the material is wrapping around a heated cylinder, items such as coated tiles or other rigid materials cannot be sublimated with this process. For rigid materials, you must use a heat press. Calendars are ideal for the big production textile industry as well as large-format graphics such as exhibition signage, banners, exterior/interior design displays, and upholstery.



(Image courtesy of Klieverik)

Q: What is “protection paper” and why is it used? Is it different than transfer paper?

A: Protection paper, or tissue paper, is used on a calendar or heat press to protect either the drum/platen or the blanket from ink sublimating onto it. It absorbs excess gases that do not sublimate into the substrate. If, for example, you did not use tissue paper on the blanket of your calendar and ink sublimated through the fabric into the blanket, there is a possibility the ink in the blanket would re-sublimate back into the fabric the next time that spot in the blanket wrapped around and contacted the fabric. This is a very important component to use on the calendar to extend the life of the blanket and prevent any unwanted offsetting of ink onto your printed graphics.

Q: What should a print shop owner look for when purchasing a calendar and/or heat press?

A: There are many things to consider when choosing a calendar or heat press.

For calendars you need to consider:

- **The width**—The calendar should match up in terms of width with the output device being used. Calendars are available in sizes from 64" up to 16' wide. Many shops will purchase a calendar that is wider than their current output device in the event they decide down the road to purchase a wider printing device. Companies will purchase the calendar and keep it many more years than a printer so anticipated growth should be considered when purchasing.

- **Maximum capacity**—Calendars have a cylindrical drum that is heated. The diameter of this drum determines the speed of the calendar, as fabric needs a certain amount of contact time with the drum to achieve proper fixation. The bigger the diameter, the faster it will produce graphics.

- **How the drum is heated**—Most calendar units these days have a drum filled with oil that is heated to approximately 400°F. You want a calendar that uses oil because it produces a very even

heat across the width of the unit and the temperature will stay very stable. Calendars with electrically heated drums can cause hot spots in the fabric and some units cannot keep up with the transfer speed in terms of heat. Hot spots can cause color differences and a variance in temperature from the beginning to the end of a print.

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Any rigid item must be printed with transfer paper if it's to be sublimated, such as coffee mugs. (Image courtesy of Jennifer Foy)

• **The length of the printing blanket or belt**—The longer the belt, the steadier it runs through the calendar. The belt will tend to wander and move which must be corrected and different machines have different ways of handling that. Some machines use a pushing and pulling mechanism that tends to damage the belt over time. Others use an electrical steering arm that moves up and down which doesn't damage the belt and extends its lifetime.

For heat presses, the following areas need to be considered:

• **Size of press bed**—How large do you need the press to be? It again depends on the application.

• **Heating element**—Most heat presses use an aluminum upper heating element with a heat rod or heating wire attached or cast into it. Make sure the heating element heats evenly and can keep consistent heat. Where many heat presses are one-off type

machines, it is easier to maintain heat as you can let the press heat back while you are staging your next print.

• **Warranties**—You should expect at least a one-year warranty on your purchased piece of equipment in addition to training and installation.

Q: How does using a transfer press differ from an inline sublimation solution?

A: Transfer presses have historically provided better finished products than their inline counterparts, although the latest generation of inline dye-sublimation printers have dramatically closed the gap. An inline system is designed to directly print on the fabric and sublimate it on board printer, without having to move the printed fabric to the stand-alone heat press. This has many advantages in terms of lowering the operational and capital costs of the heat press in addition to the extra labor and wasted material loading and unloading two devices can create. That said, there are still many reasons to have a stand-alone heat press. Some fabrics, such as high-stretch fabric, or most décor fabrics, are not suitable for direct printing and benefit from a traditional transfer paper workflow. Additionally, any rigid item must be printed with transfer paper if it's to be sublimated.

Q: How can a shop owner justify the cost of the calendar versus that of a heat press. What are the particular benefits?

A: The choice between a flatbed heat press versus a calendar unit is rather simple. It depends on the applications. If a shop owner is producing soft signage (banners, flags, etc.), then a rotary calendar is the way to go. If a shop is producing nothing but small garments, gift and promotional items, then a flatbed press is more appropriate. Several shops that have rotary calendars may also have a small heat press for proofing small files or testing different applications. The smaller heat presses are relatively inexpensive and cost much less to operate than a 10' rotary calendar. **GP**

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3 STEPS

to Keep Customers Coming to Your Engraving Shop

Tips to keep your shop door swinging and the cash register ringing

BY TIM REINHART



Tim Reinhart began his career in the awards and personalization industry in 1995 when he joined a large retailer in Indianapolis. He worked first in production and then moved on to inside sales and sales

management. Seven years later, after transitioning to another Indianapolis retailer, Tim broadened his industry experience as he led customer relations, purchasing, inventory control, new product development and website maintenance. In October of 2021, Tim moved from retail to wholesale when he joined JDS Industries. His territory covers Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia.

Online retail attracts a lot of attention — and with good reason. It generates hundreds of billions of dollars in business from customers each year. What we often overlook in all the hype around e-commerce is how its volume compares to all retail sales. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the fourth quarter of 2021, online retail accounted for 12.9% of total sales.

What should we take away from this statistic? Even with a strong e-commerce presence, most business is conducted face-to-face. The value of foot traffic into your physical store cannot be underestimated.

There are plenty of obstacles deterring customers from walking into your shop. We're all busy, and online ordering can be done whenever and wherever you want.

And the biggest challenge is the most recent. The changes COVID-19 brought to buying habits could take years to reverse.

In hopes of retaining and growing your existing base of engraving business while attracting new customers, here are three tips to keep your shop door swinging and the cash register ringing:

1 Be active and visible in your local community

People like to buy from businesses that support local groups. Join and participate in your school's booster club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, etc. This is especially important if your business is new.

Network with people from all walks of life. Be an active volunteer. Establish and



(Images courtesy Artistic Awards Indianapolis)



Customers like a personalized touch. They want someone who can help them through the process. They need someone who's done it before. Someone like you!

grow relationships with the influencers in these groups. They are the people who make decisions on what gifts or awards to give and where to buy them.

2 Showcase what makes you unique

The last thing you want to hear is, “Oh, I didn’t know you did that!” Create a “New Products” section in your store. Update regularly, so customers see something new each month or quarter when they pick up an order. If your floor space is limited, rotate products around the store.

Remember, first impressions are important! Present a showroom that is clean, organized, and inviting.

3 Promote yourself as a consultant to customers

Customers like a personalized touch. They want someone who can help them through the process. They need someone who’s done it before. Someone like you! Share your expertise, and you’ll win a customer who is more loyal and more likely to visit again next time.

Have an area in your store where you can lay out samples and easily access swatch samples of material to help customers through the design process. Want to encourage a loyal customer to try something different? Personalize a sample of one of your new products and present it to them the next time they pick up an order.

Even if customers place their order online, you have an opportunity when they pick it up to visit with them. Ask questions about their organization and offer advice for the next time they place an order.

Attracting customers inside your store will take extra effort. Over time, little steps taken each day will produce big results. **GP**

TEAM SPORTS:

What Teams are Looking for in Signage

BY GINA LYNCH

Finding the players to use your services, ideas, materials and production methods for different types of team signage and more



Gina Lynch is the owner of Great White Graphics in Johnson City, Tennessee. Great White Graphics is a boutique sign business that focuses on quality service and products. Gina graduated with a Travel and Tourism degree

and worked/managed a travel agency for years before opening her sign business. She's given lectures on marketing strategies and won several oratorical awards. In her spare time, Gina enjoys early morning spiritual meditation, time with her husband, exercising, and traveling.

We call our sign company a boutique sign company. We're small and cater to our customers with good old-fashioned customer service. I hope this article about team signage helps you grow your business with some new strategies to implement.

Identifying the teams & products

Breaking down what teams are looking for in signage, we start with exactly who is buying team signage. What we've noticed is it's not always a school, as you might think. More often, it's the booster clubs or parents.

While sports such as football, baseball, and basketball are popular and funded by the school, don't forget the smaller sports that don't have as many funds, such as wrestling, track and field, soccer, volleyball, and others. These sports are just as important, and some are funded by parents and/or boosters. With that in mind, finding the athletic director or the person who oversees the booster club/parent association is a must.

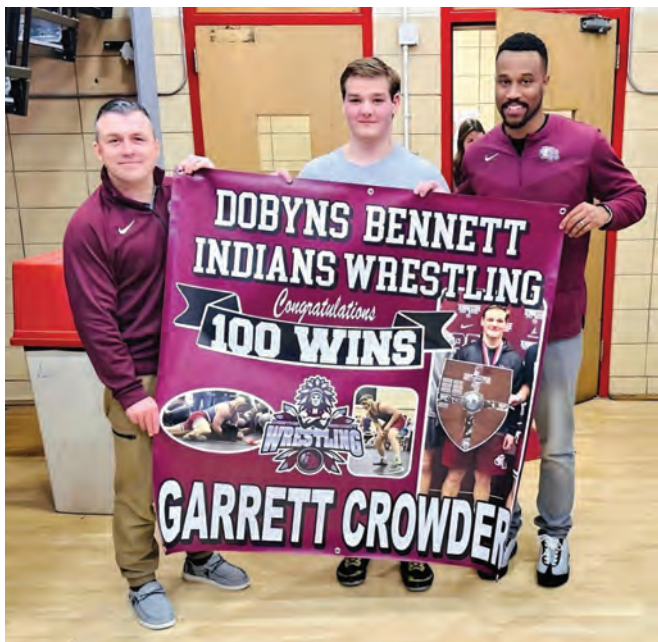
What we've noticed is that teams are moving away from the big trophies of the past. Sure, plaques and trophies are still used, but teams are moving toward



Custom-branded tents set your team out from the crowd, and they're relatively easy to take up and down at meets or special events. (Images courtesy of Gina Lynch)



Custom banners are the hot item of the year for us. Students are displayed in the gym and/or on awards night, and they are a great way to display the athletes and showcase each player.



When a student has an amazing season, coaches/parents/boosters love to display the winning athlete's season in their gym/school walls. These banners make great social media photo ops, and schools love to give these banners to the amazing athletes when they graduate.



Sponsorship team banners are trending. Companies love to congratulate their local team with a prominent banner displayed at their business.



Enlarged headshots are a fan favorite! Everyone smiles when they see one. Team parents/coaches love taking them to tournaments or sporting events for team encouragement. Parents proudly display their athletes at events, games, and graduation, and they make a great unique gift item.

custom banners with the athlete's face. Parents and students alike love seeing their faces in the gym on game nights or pep rallies, and what a nice gift to give the student as they graduate for a keepsake.

Also, team pennants are a great way for the school to display their team spirit. They are smaller than the regular banners and require pole pockets on the top. We had a local youth director of a church ask us to do these so they could display the various schools represented within the group. The kids loved them.

Speaking of game night or pep rallies, fatheads is another trend we've seen for teams. The funny fatheads we've done for students bring such a smile to the student and the parents. They're easy to do for any size business and require just a good headshot, Coroplast material, wooden stick, and a sharp X-ACTO knife, if you don't have a flatbed cutter. We've learned that boys love to do those crazy faces for laughs, and girls are more conscious of their appearance, such as leaving more of their hair.

Ballfield signage is always popular, especially sponsorship banners. Generally, the team coach and/or head parent will organize this. It's a lucrative way to do many banners at once. We recently produced over 30 large 4x8 banners for a local team. As a thank-you, we donated a couple of dugout mesh banners. We added our logo with our phone number. It's a win-win with advertising for us and much-needed shade on hot summer days for the players. The coach was appreciative, and it's a great way for them to remember us next ball season.

Metal signage for schools is also trending. We have a school that has a phenomenal wrestling team. They started an after-school program to train kids of all ages to wrestle. To motivate the kids,



For more durable and long-term displays, metal signage is a great way to go. The sleek, sophisticated look makes any wall more eye appealing.



Large step-and-repeat banners are perfect for team branding/logos and make great photo ops for social media.

they wanted their state and regional champs to be displayed in the wrestling room. This motivates the kids in training, and the champs love to see their faces permanently displayed on the wall. We started with just a few, and now every season we add more and more.

Don't forget that large step-and-repeat (back-drop) banners are also very popular. When teams gather for team signings or banquets, this is a great photo op. We work with a local race company that puts on many races within our community. The director loves the step-and-repeats as it's a great photo op for social media with her race name on it.

At our shop, we offer the choice for the customer to buy the hardware stand or rent it. We've noticed some schools like the idea of us setting it up and doing all the work. This service will pay for itself after a few times, and customers appreciate not having to worry about setup/take down.

Fabric banners are another trend we're seeing. They're a great way to sell team logo/graphics to your customer as they're easy to store and transport, and you don't have to worry about wrinkling or creasing.

One thing we started doing during Covid is yard art. We don't advertise this a lot because it's a full-time job in itself, but teams and schools love it, and it's a great way to get into the school to do other things. This is a whole other article, but if you have the manpower, it's a great way to make extra money.

Motivational wall graphics round out what teams are looking

for. Positive affirmations are important for athletes. Coaches love displaying positive thoughts and words to build team/individual self-esteem.

Production methods & lessons learned

Most of the custom banners we produce are on 13-oz. material with grommets. However, we can do heavy material or pole pockets if requested. We've noticed that generally 13-oz. with grommets is what the customer wants, and it's the least expensive.

Checking on where the customer will hang these banners is important. More wind may mean adding bungee cords so the banner flexes in the wind, extra grommets, or even suggesting a mesh banner for hanging. Make it as easy as you can for the customer to take the finished product directly to its destination.

Keep one thing in mind. If a customer is planning on using a banner for a long period of time, don't be afraid to quote 18-oz. material. When you explain the reasoning, customers will appreciate the durability and longevity of a thicker banner material, even if it costs more.



Yard art is celebratory. People of all ages love it, and it will bring a smile, even tears of gratefulness. If you have the manpower, this is great way to earn extra money and an amazing way to get you into the school for more work.



Fabric banners are easy to transport, the colors look great, and they're less likely to wrinkle or crease.

For indoor material, we use a lot of Signbond aluminum composite and PVC for nicer school signs. This gives a smooth look without breaking the bank.

For custom banners, I can't stress enough how important a good photo is. Check with the person that placed the order on what they want on the banner. Some will even send you a photo or something they've seen online. Listen and take good notes. Try to be original and not copy someone else's work. Generally, most like their team's name and/or logo, the student's name, school, year, etc. Each is different so check with your contact.

For outdoor banners and signage, find out how long it will be displayed. Using the correct material (thickness) and adding bungees/extra grommets makes the customer's job easier.

Use a good design app and extra apps that smooth pictures, but don't alter the faces. The kids want to look their best without being distorted in any way. Our goal is to give the kids something they'll treasure for a long time.

Keep in touch with the decision-maker. Once you get the initial order, mockup one proof and send it to that person. Make sure you're on the right track. Once you get the approval of that one, then you can start working on the others. Your time is valuable, and team banners take time. Explain this to your customers and keep them in the process.

Fatheads depend largely on a good headshot. We generally make our fatheads 18" x 24", but they can be custom-sized smaller or larger. Offer discounts for large orders. One or two fatheads take time and should be priced accordingly. If you can do at least 10-20, it makes it more profitable for you and gives the customer a better price per unit.



Team gym banners honor past accomplishments, showcase school pride, and are a great way to include everyone. Generally, at the end of the season, they are given to each student as a keepsake.



Locker rooms are great spaces to include motivational signage to inspire the team. It's a nice touch that both the team and coaches appreciate.



Mesh banners are lightweight and durable. They make a great advertising tool for team ballparks since the wind can pass through the banner, causing less wear and tear to the banner, keeping it looking good longer.



Hanging banners for the table or step-and-repeat banners make a great way to display the new college and/or player's name on signing day.

Get a good X-ACTO knife and change the blade often if you don't have a flatbed cutter, and be careful. Home Improvement stores generally have plain paint sticks that you can buy in a 10-pack. Heavy-duty double-sided tape adheres easily to the sticks to round out the process.

If the pictures you get from the customer are blurry or too small, you may have to take them yourself. We had a team recently that submitted pictures that weren't very good. We arranged a time with the coach and came out and retook the photos. We had each student smile or make a crazy face and they turned out great. Remember these faces are magnified and some of these kids will keep these banners/fatheads for a long time. Give them something they'll be proud of or laugh about.

Put your name somewhere on the signage. When the parents hold up that fathead or the teacher is handing out that banner, you never know who will say, "We're did you get that?" Make it easy for your contact to give your name and number.

Post on social media. When you do team signage, make sure you show your work. Most of our customers are always looking for ideas for their schools, and it's a great way to cross-sell. If one school is doing banners and they see fatheads, that gives them the idea to do that as well.

It sounds crazy, but just saying thank you or sending a thank you card to the school contact is so important. One parent, who oversees the booster club, made over 35 custom banners for three schools. She worked day and night getting names, checking with parents, and so forth to finalize the product and doesn't get paid. We appreciate all the effort she makes to help the school and the

students. Be appreciative to all customers; it goes a long way and creates repeat customers.

My husband came up with an amazing idea to help with fundraising if you have a school that is lacking in funds for a big project. My husband offers to donate 100 decals with the school name/logo for the students to sell for fundraising. Every time we've done this, the school can get their project done. They appreciate the extra effort you took and again it creates customer loyalty.

Don't forget larger items like team tents and flags as well, which are something we've sold to many existing customers. Once you get your foot in the door with small items, like banners and fatheads, tents are something to suggest. You'd be surprised at how many teams love their own custom tent and/or flags.

If you have the manpower, we like to deliver team signage whenever possible. It's

a great way to thank the customer. We've noticed when we deliver, many times we're asked about doing more work. Coaches, athletic directors, booster club presidents, parents, and anyone else associated with teams are busy people. Helping them get their product by delivering is an advantage over other sign companies, and again, it builds customer rapport.

My husband always says that it's not always about the money. Hear me out on this ... Helping schools, churches, and charities often leads to more work. Remember, they generally work with a limited budget, so be creative in helping them raise the extra money, and if possible, giving them a slight discount or donate signage here and there; it goes a long way.

Team signage is a lucrative business. Finding the right contacts is important. Keep in mind if you do good work, you'll do this every year for a lot of different



Team pennants are generally smaller than regular banners and make for easy display in churches, schools, and homes.

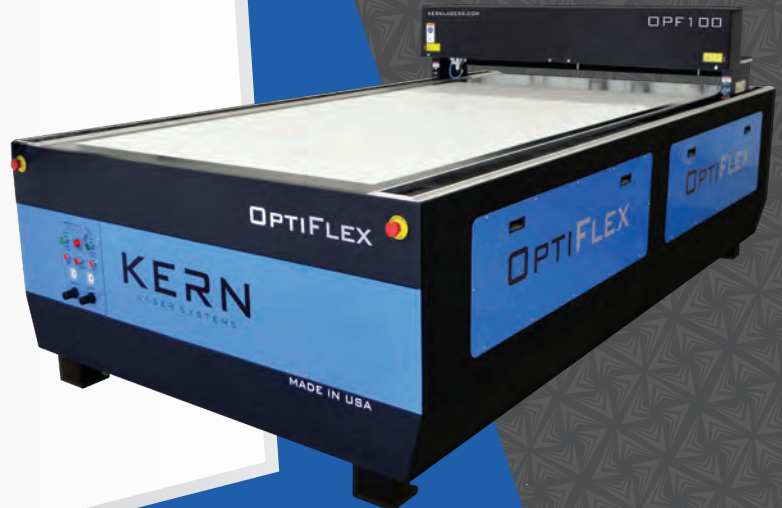
sports, and word of mouth and social media will get you even more work.

Custom banners, fatheads, in-school signage, and ballpark sponsorship banners are all good ways to add to your revenue. Team signage generally takes a little more work, but the rewards can be tremendous. **GP**



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Lamination Nation

BY PAULA AVEN GLADYCH

Benefits of liquid and film lamination



Paula Aven Gladych is a writer based in Denver. She has been covering the signage and graphics industry for 10 years and can be reached at pgladych@gmail.com.

Laminators are some of the workhorses of the print and graphics industry, lasting years without any problems, but that doesn't mean print shops shouldn't take a peek at the latest lamination technology. New innovations in both laminates and equipment can help new and existing shops increase their capacity, save time, and improve product quality.

There are two types of laminate: film,

which is applied with cold or heat; and liquid laminate, which dries instantly when cured with UV light.

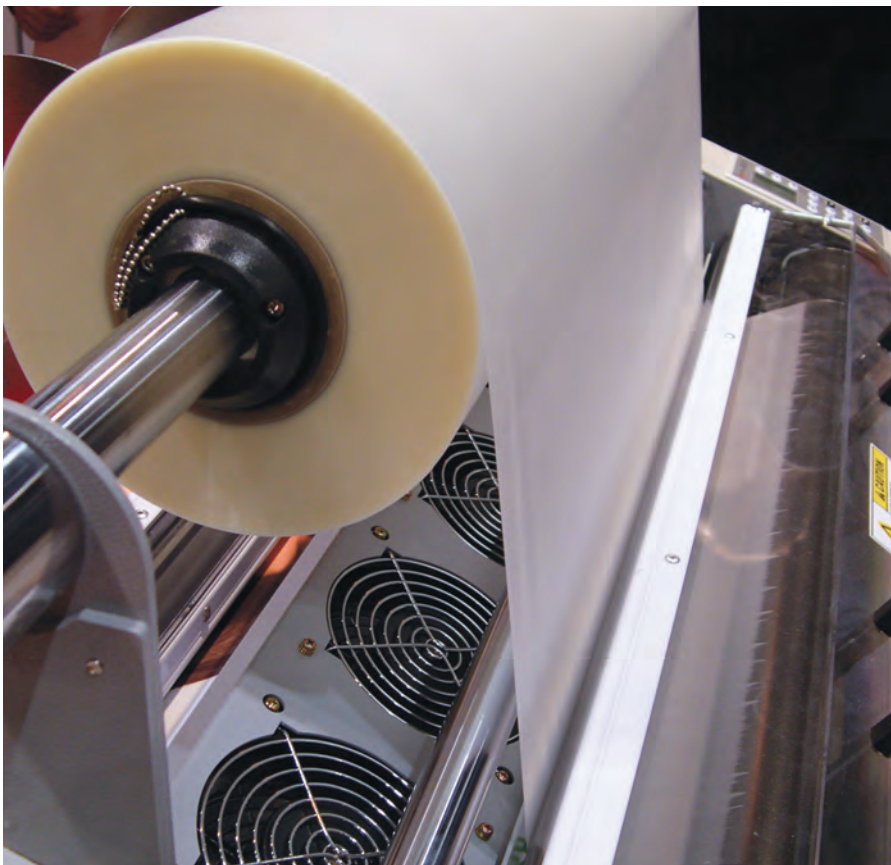
"Today, both film and liquid lamination are used for UV protection, image enhancement, and total durability," says Carl Hoffman, dealer manager for Graphic Finishing Partners in Maryland Heights, Missouri. "Film lamination provides a thicker protective surface coating over liquid lamination, but both are used in today's signage market. Film lamination most times needs to be applied with a laminator but can be hand applied, whereas liquid lamination can be brushed or rolled on, sprayed, or applied with an automated liquid coater."

Liquid lamination has an advantage over film when applied to surfaces such as canvas, textured wall covering, or banners that do not have a smooth surface, as the liquid will conform to the high and low areas of the material," he adds.

Another benefit of liquid lamination is that it can be applied to wall graphics after they have been installed, while film laminates need to be applied to the graphics beforehand.

Film has been a popular option for years, but liquid lamination is starting to come into its own in the sign and digital graphics market as commercial printers find new and innovative ways to use today's more advanced materials, including for wall coverings, says Syd Northup, Marabu's VP of digital inks and coatings for North America.

Companies wanting to change the texture of their signage should use film. Those that want UV or graffiti protection can use either type of laminate.



Lamination film allows customers to determine the type of finish they want to apply to their car wrap graphic as well as how thick they want the material to be: from thicker and easier to manage when applying to the vehicle, to ultra-thin and flexible. (Image courtesy of AGL)

Marabu has been involved with the liquid lamination market since it acquired Clearstar Coatings in 2007. Before arriving at Marabu and taking over as VP of digital inks and coatings, Northup ran his own print shop, so he has worked with both types of laminators. What he has found is that not all print applications work well with film or liquid laminate.

Liquid works better for wall coverings than film because it doesn't have a sheen to it, he says. "It's not really going to protect it like a liquid laminate would, so it comes down to application."

One reason sign and graphics shops consider shifting to liquid laminate is that films have become more expensive.

Liquid laminate ranges from 8 cents per square foot on the low end to 20 cents per square foot on the high end, depending on the volume and what products are being laminated. Films can cost \$1-2 per square foot or more.

Marabu's Star Lam Liquid Laminator is an inline coater for water-based-only products. The company offers a 64-inch machine or can manufacture 8-foot and 10-foot-wide machines. The ClearShield Select formulations come in gloss, semi-gloss, and matte finishes for manual and automated applications and work well on a wide range of printed graphics, including vinyl, banners, and rigid substrates.

ClearShield Select for StarLam is formulated for use with roll-to-roll liquid laminators, like the StarLam 1600R, on digitally printed vinyl, banners, and fleet graphics.

"The material is rolled in and passed through the metering bar, which is important. That way it spreads a consistent



(Image courtesy of Graphics Finishing Partners)



(Image courtesy of Kala)

amount of liquid laminate onto the canvas or onto the wall graphic with texture on it," Northup says. The machines are set up for a single operator. Once the roll of material is set up it passes through an infrared dryer.

"From unwind to rewind, a roll of media can take an hour and a half and a gallon of our product to coat an entire 150-foot

roll. You are not dealing with the weight of film and the cost of film," he says. "That has been a big reason people are looking at this now."

Liquid laminate is perfect for outdoor signage and wall graphics that are in non-high-traffic areas.

Marabu works with a number of customers that use liquid lamination to coat



(Image courtesy of Alliance Technology Corp)

shops to buy liquid laminate in bulk and save money.

The pandemic did have an effect on the liquid lamination market due to raw materials shortages, but Marabu produces everything in Charleston, South Carolina, “so we were able to control our ability to make or create new products,” Northup says. “I don’t know if we really had a major increase versus film. I never looked at the variance, but we maintained our business through COVID. We got through it.”

Film laminators

Film laminators are a different animal than liquid laminators, says Sol Gnatowsky, Royal Sovereign’s Western regional sales manager/graphics, who has worked in the graphic and lamination market for more than 37 years and has had a hand in designing lamination equipment. He says that there are three factors involved in successful lamination using films: time, temperature, and tension, and newer technologies can help improve all three for better results.

Time is the speed at which the laminator operates and is critical to the output of any job, he says. If the machine runs too slowly, it “can cause wrinkles, and too fast can cause silvering in the back areas of the print.”

Royal Sovereign’s factories have developed a specialized frequency controller that allows precise and accurate stability



(Image courtesy of Kala)

art on cruise ships or indoor signage for amusement parks, arenas, and coliseums.

Another area in which liquid laminate shines is when a print involves texture of any kind. Film laminate would obscure some of that texture, but liquid laminate moves into the contours of it.

The company’s most popular liquid laminate, ClearShield, is a water-based product. Many smaller print shops hand-apply liquid laminate on the signage they produce, but once they get enough of that type of work, it makes sense to move up to a Star Lam laminator, which allows



(Image courtesy of Royal Sovereign)

Film laminate will give added rigidity to prints when needed, and film is the preferred laminate for vehicle graphic installation.

of the speed controller. “Many different lamination films and media depend on repeatable time for repeatable results from job to job,” Gnatowsky says.

The advent of new temperature controllers gives shops the ability to vary the temperatures of the rollers, whether it is for warm roller settings, such as in the Sigmont 55H, Sigmont 65H, and RSC 6500H; or for hot lamination with the company’s Thermal 45” RSH 1151 or 65” RSH 1651 laminators.

“All have thermal sensors that assure exact repeatability of the temperature settings, and all have thermal cutouts that prevent any damage to the rollers of the laminators for excessive heating,” Gnatowsky adds.

As for tension, he says that “exact and proper tension is never automatic. This is where operator experience comes in. As you place a new roll of lamination film on the mandrel you will have heavy tension on the machine. As the film gets used, the roll gets lighter in weight and tension must be applied to the top and bottom mandrels manually. This is achieved by turning the tensioning mandrels on the side of the spindle. This will prevent wrinkling and boat waking of the films.”

The composition of the rollers is also very important as they put a force of 30-50 PSI on the film and media, he adds. Royal Sovereign uses crowned rollers to prevent them from flexing on the lamination media and boards, which could cause air pockets and wrinkling when running long prints — such as those used in the ad wrap world.

Graphic Finishing Partners recently launched a 63-inch heat assist laminator with added features that simplify the steps required for operating a laminator, Hoffman says. The laminator comes with a 10-inch tablet-style interface that controls all functions of the laminator, including the home screen, roller gap, pressure, brake tension, direction, and heat assist temperature. The device is supported by an integrated Roll Label Printer.

“Within the functions of the digital control panel, you can enter such things as the brand of laminate, surface type,

and set the length of the lamination roll,” Hoffman says. “As you run production, the laminator will count down the length of laminate used, and at the end of the job, you can print out a label to identify the roll of laminate, including the remaining length of the roll. This is a wonderful feature not seen with most laminators.”

The LCD color display also offers an onboard operator help tutorial to assist users with any operational questions, and two inline rotary slitters give the option to slit the laminated material as it exits the machine.

“This feature is great for trimming the output edges during production or slitting the material into individual sections in order to support postproduction. All of these standard features improve repeatability, time, and efficiency,” Hoffman adds.

Film laminate will give added rigidity to prints when needed, and film is the preferred laminate for vehicle graphic installation because of the added thickness, which makes applying graphics to a vehicle easier in most cases, he says.

Most film laminates are waterproof, while liquid laminates are only water-resistant, Hoffman says, “so, if moisture is concerned, film would be the better choice.” **GP**



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Harnessing positive energy for growth



Aaron Montgomery is certified by New York Times best-selling author Jack Canfield as a Success Principles Trainer and is the co-founder of OurSuccessGroup.com. Aaron has over 25 years of experience with personalized products and small business development and is the co-creator of the “5 Keys of Business Success.” You can also find Aaron co-hosting the decorator’s industry podcast 2 Regular Guys Podcast (2RegularGuys.com). Also, check him out on his podcast channel called Small Business Saturdays (SmallBusinessSaturdaysPodcast.com).

As small business owners, the environment is such that calm can quickly turn to disarray. The world of a small business owner can ebb and flow between excitement and calm and then quickly switch to chaos and unpredictability.

These quick shifts can show up in many forms, from supply chain disruptions to staff shortages. It’s essential to have a strategy to pivot back into our productive zone as rapidly as possible. We perform at our best when we are calm, focused, and able to trust our instincts for quick decision-making and project execution.

Anchors aweigh!

Understanding the concept of anchors is key to achieving this balance. Derived from Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), anchors act as reminders or triggers, putting us into a certain state of mind. However, not all anchors are created equal; they can be perceived as positive, propelling us toward success, or perceived as negative, dragging us into a vortex of stress and underperformance.

Most of us are very familiar with negative anchors. They show up in our daily lives and businesses as fear, stress, anxiety, procrastination, negative thinking, frustration, and a sense of isolation.

But the good news is these negative anchors have just been programmed over the course of our lives and can be managed through intentionality. Acknowledging and then utilizing that space to pause, reflect, and shift away from negative anchors and focus on positive anchors is essential.

To manage our negative anchors or beliefs, you must be able to identify the alternative feeling you would rather have and pinpoint what your goal or idea of success is specifically. It is essential to measure success not

just by financial gain but also by joy, fulfillment, and the quality of the relationships we have.

Business owners who radiate positivity in their work are seen as successful because their positive energy translates into their interactions and services. Our thoughts and energy impact those around us, so it’s crucial to be intentional.

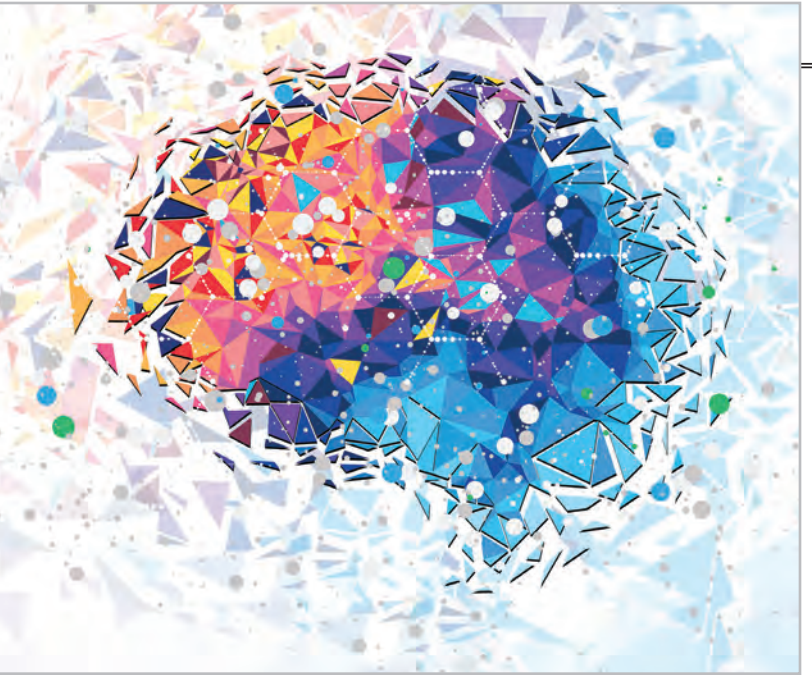
When we are not intentional with our environments or the people we surround ourselves with, it can negatively affect our overall well-being. These anchors or triggers can feel like a vortex, so we also need to understand how our own thoughts and actions might be contributing to that toxicity. If we constantly find ourselves in such situations, the reality is we are guilty of initiating the negative triggers and are just attracting more of the same into our life and workspace.

We often label experiences as good or bad, but in hindsight, we can usually find experiences that didn’t turn out to equal the label we originally gave them. These labels are grayer compared to the straight black-and-white perception we start with. These labels get in the way of valuable feedback we need to grow ourselves and our businesses, so removing these labels is the start of the intentional switch to positive anchors.

Our conscious brain thinks linearly, while our subconscious mind is more fluid and capable of handling multiple thoughts and emotions simultaneously. It’s crucial to acknowledge and allow ourselves to feel negative emotions but also to examine the stories we attach to those experiences.

Once you intentionally remove the labels and limiting beliefs that shape your perceptions of events, you have the power to create new narratives and attach positive meanings

We perform at our best when we are calm, focused, and able to trust our instincts for quick decision-making and project execution.



to past experiences, even if they were initially difficult or painful. Every event in our lives contributes to our growth and shapes who we become. Going beyond superficial understanding and asking ourselves why we feel a certain way is critical.

Taking action is essential, and without consistent application, you will be unable to replace a negative anchor that was learned over time through consistent experiences with a positive anchor. The action allows you to release limiting beliefs, rewrite your stories, and embrace a growth mindset that will change your business and your life all in one set of consistent daily actions.

An anchor can be thought of as a link to an emotional state. For example, an athlete might use an anchor to get into the zone for peak performance in a game. It can be as simple as touching a certain sign that is above the doorway as they walk out of the locker room.

As a business owner, you might have a routine you do to start your day, and you can tie positive anchors to that routine. By tying positive states of emotion to anything memorable, you can utilize this same concept at any time to help you get out of a chaotic state.

Once you identify an anchor you want to use, you must intentionally create a narrative that will be quickly recalled by your subconscious brain. For example, an athlete might touch a sign that has been passed down from one team to the next over the years, and all team members are familiar with the message, what it means, and the positive emotions that come from that message and meaning.

The routine you do to start your day can be utilized as a positive anchor if you add some meaning to the routine by clearly understanding why you do the routine the way you do it, what turning on the equipment means, and the memories of the great days that followed that morning routine.

It's all about being intentional and in control of the types of emotions you have when confronted with the anchor. Here is a six-step process that can help you turn anchors into positive reminders:

- 1** Take a few slow, deep breaths to center yourself.
- 2** Think of a highly positive experience in the past when you achieved success.
- 3** Identify the anchor you wish to associate this experience with and physically touch it if possible.
- 4** Go back and think of the experience again. See the experience through your own eyes, hear the sounds around you, notice any comforting smells or tastes, and feel into it emotionally — as if it is happening now.
- 5** See if you can find other similar positive experiences to link to this anchor as well.
- 6** Use your breath to secure the anchor by taking a three-second inhale and exhaling for six counts. Utilize the exhale to energize the anchor.

When you see, hear, feel, and sense the connection, you will know it because you feel that desired emotional state of success. You have now created a tangible link to your desired success emotional state that you can use anytime you need to move from chaos to calm.

In the words of my mentor, Jack Canfield, “Everything you want is on the other side of fear.” Embrace the journey, take action, and believe in your abilities. Surround yourself with positive energy and mark those with specific anchors that will help you thrive in your business and personal life.

Harnessing positive energy through the use of anchors is a powerful tool for growth and success. By understanding and managing the anchors in our lives, we can create a more focused, positive, and productive environment for ourselves and our businesses. Take the steps to identify and create positive anchors and watch as they propel you toward your goals. **GP**

Training the Second Generation

Have you planned for the future?



Howard Potter has worked in the promotional industry since 2003, from designing to building brands and a family-owned business. He is the co-owner and CEO of A&P Master Images LLC, Utica, New York, with his wife, Amanda. Their company offers graphic design, screen printing, embroidery, sublimation, laser engraving, direct-to-film, online stores, vinyl graphics, and promotional items. For more information, visit MasterYourImage.com.

Never in my life did I think I would be asked to write articles, and I never would have guessed in a million years that my children would want to not only learn the family business, but eventually take it over. I believe articles like this can be some of the most important ones for all of us to read, because no one really talks enough about planning for the future.

Let's go back in time for a bit to talk about our family business. I went to Proctor High School and took a design class, which then led to me going to BOCES — a local vocational school — during high school for two years for design. During my senior year of high school, I bridged over to Mohawk Community College to take design courses and worked on my two-year degree from them. I always knew in my heart I wanted to do something with art, and my dream was always to own a graphic-based business.

Fast forward to after my wife and I got married. We started A&P Master Images from our home in 2003, more as a hobby for me to be creative since we both had very good full-time jobs. The business naturally grew year after year, but then a boulder hit us. One of our children became very ill with a rare disease.

At the time I was only 25, and my wife was only 22. Once we saw the care our child needed and how much time it could require, I made the decision with my wife to double-time it, working close to 100 hours per week for at least three years to get the company off the ground to take it on full time.

We barely saw each other during that time, but we both knew it had to be done. My wife not only worked full time, but she made sure our home was taken care of inside and out so I could focus on work. I worked midnights and also ran the business during the day, and my wife worked during the day as well and then

would help me run orders afterward.

All during that time, our children were very little. They grew up watching us work and got to be around when customers came to the house and when we delivered orders. We even had my wife's dad, Clayton Baker, and sister, Rachel Nitti, helping us run machines at one point. It was great having other family members that were willing to help along the way.

Generations

So, as our children got older, they always helped on and off in the business. We never forced it on them, but we told them: You want money? You have to work for it. You can pick up hours at the shop, but you have to take it seriously.

I remember at times bringing test print shirts home for my daughter to cut up in her room so we could save money on buying rags and on recycling, or my son coming in to help clean screens for screen printing. So, they have always been around it.

Fast forward to now. Our daughter, Angelena Potter, who is now 20 years old, has been managing our shipping/receiving department since she was 17. She knows how to help in customer service, embroidery, sewing, heat pressing, and much more. She has really grown into the position and taken the lead, which has been a massive help to our company's growth.

Our 17-year-old son Ayden has, over the past few years, truly acquired a hunger for production as he knows how to clean screens, produce them, operate manual and automated screen-printing presses, run our new direct-to-film printer, and much more.

So, the point of all of this? A few weeks ago, my son told me that next year when he graduates high school, he wants to come on full-time and learn to become the production



Are your children also growing up in the shop? Making sure they are ready to take over the business if they are so inclined is a big part of planning for the future.

manager to help me and to back up all the managers in our company. I asked him why, since it was never our plan to have the kids work full-time in the business. He gave the best answer I could have ever wanted to hear! “Dad, I do not want anyone else who is not family running or owning our company.”

The following week, my daughter and son approached my wife and I together. It is never good when they both show up wanting to talk ... They basically wanted to talk about the future of the company and how they wanted to take it over together to keep it going, which, to be honest, caught us by surprise. We never would have guessed that they wanted in for the long haul after watching how hard we worked to keep up with the success and growth of the business.

When your kids or any family members come to you with that type of conversation, it really starts to make you think about life and puts everything into perspective for the long haul. So, my wife and I sat down and talked about the future and what it entails for both of us.

We immediately had our living will revised so that everything will go in equal shares to our children except for how the business is set up. My son will take over my shares, and my daughter will take over her mother’s since we are an NYSWBE-certified company, and everything else will be put into a trust for them until they are 25 years old.

That was part one to help protect them financially and to ensure the company stays in the hands of family. Part two will be training both kids over the next two

years to manage finances, buy product, develop pricing, maximize buying power, and more so that they learn everything now. This will not only prepare them for the future, but it will also help us ramp up our growth since we know both kids care about the company as much as we do.

As business owners, each day we are focused on growth, day-to-day operation, and simply keeping the lights on, and we never truly think about retirement or who will take over/own our company one day. I am truly thankful that my children want to be in the business and take it over. It was never the plan, but it does make me proud that my wife and I have built something that they truly want to take over for all of the right reasons. **GP**

SUBLIMATION TRANSFER PRINTER

Mimaki USA introduces the Tiger 600-1800TS, a roll-to-roll sublimation transfer inkjet textile printer. The company says it can print at up to 550 m²/hour. It is structured for the transfer paper to be mounted at the rear end of the machine, wound up at the front after printing, and for printed paper to be re-diverted to the rear side. The product uses

the MLSb510 series of sublimation transfer ink.
888-530-3988
mimakiusa.com



FALL SPORTS AWARDS

JDS Industries Inc. offers a series of fall sports awards. The company has resins for football, soccer, and cheer with insert holders.

800-843-8853
jdsindustries.com



HYBRID PRINTER

Epson introduces the SureColor-F2270 hybrid printer, which the company says is made for DTG and DTF printing. It features a PrecisionCore MicroTFP printhead and UltraChrome DG2 ink. It also has a 4.3" touchscreen and a quick-load platen.

800-463-7766
epson.com



PRINT SOFTWARE

Roland DGA announces Roland DG Connect version 3.0, its cloud-based app meant for print operation with Roland DG devices. Users can use the software in "Standard," "Professional," and "Premium" versions to access different capabilities of the app, with the Professional and Premium versions being subscription-based.

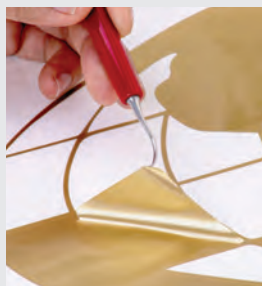
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rolanddga.com



PRESSURE SENSITIVE VINYL

Siser North America offers the EasyPSV Brushed pressure sensitive vinyl, which is available in gold and silver metallic finishes. The company says it can be applied onto surfaces such as wood, glass, plastic, ceramic, and metal, and that it can be used indoors and outdoors.

866-301-9409
siserna.com



ENGRAVABLE STAMP RUBBER

Jackson Marking Products offers its Lemon Yellow Laser Rubber, which the company says emits a lemon

aroma while being engraved and during the washout process. It is available in sheets that measure 8 1/4" x 11 3/4" and are .09" thick.

800-782-6722 • rubberstampmaterials.com



INK SERIES

International Coatings Company introduces its reformulated General Purpose Color Series (7600 Series). The inks are part of its FlexCure line, which the company says cures at temperatures ranging from 275 F to 325 F. The product consists of 26 ready-for-use ink colors.

800-423-4103
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GLASS AWARD

Topmost offers a tidal wave art glass award, which the company says has a rich blue body and pearl white caps.

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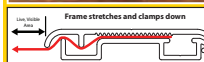
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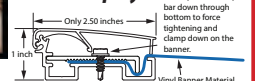
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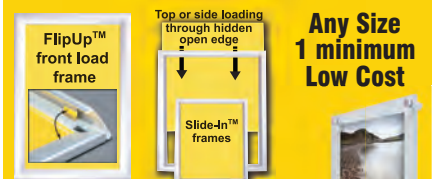
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