

VINYL APPLICATION TIPS & TRICKS PART ONE

COMPILED BY MEGGAN MCCARTHY

PSDG speaks to industry experts who give useful advice on how to ensure that the basics to achieving a perfect vehicle wrap are covered.

LEE MENZIES, MARKET APPLICATION SPECIALIST, 3M

1. Make sure you have images of the vehicle prior to planning the design.
2. Determine where all the joins will fall. Use the natural lines of the vehicle, whether horizontal or vertical. Use door panels/weld lines to cover overlaps.
3. Thoroughly wash the vehicle down with soap and water and allow 24 hours to dry, paying extra attention to door seals and wheel arches.
4. Degrease the vehicle. 3M recommend isopropyl alcohol. Alternatively use a fast drying panel wipe with silicone killer paying special attention to all the recesses.
5. For solvent printed media allow a minimum of 48 hours to out-gas. The rolls should be left standing vertically and loosely wound to help with airflow and should be turned regularly as the solvents are heavier than air. The more the vinyl can be allowed to de-gas, the less tacky the adhesive will feel and the easier the graphic will be to fit.
6. Laminate with cold rollers only. Do not use excessive tension on the rollers.
7. Use a hard 3M Gold squeegee or similar. Apply a strip of velvet to one edge and change the velvet regularly to avoid scratching.
8. Apply the vinyl to the flattest part of the panel first (create a base line) working from side to side, keeping the vinyl as level as possible. Stretch the vinyl without heat over the whole area and do not work the film into the more complicated areas such as recesses until later.
9. When stretching the vinyl, always pull outwards from the largest area of the vinyl you can to spread the tension. This also applies when you use extra heat to soften and stretch the vinyl, apply heat to a larger area than you need as this should help to avoid distorting the graphic.
10. When cutting through the vinyl on the bodywork or around handles, it is best to stick electrical tape to the surface first. Use a new blade each and every time you cut through the vinyl. The weight of the blade should be enough without having to apply extra pressure.
11. Post-heat to 95°C or above and always use an infrared temperature gauge to be sure that you have reached this temperature. Anything less and the vinyl will retain its memory and cause the graphic to pop out of recesses and curves. This post heating must be carried out scrupulously on all areas where the wrap has been stretched to fit, especially in deep recesses. Do not overheat as you may damage the film.
12. If vehicle wrapping in colder weather do not let the vehicle leave the workshop until the following day. The vehicle and vinyl should be allowed to cool down at the same rate as the workshop. This will help to avoid thermal shock and reduce the risk of failure in the recesses.

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STEVEN MATTHEE, OPERATIONS, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT, DNA SERVICES TRAINING & CONSULTING

'Full coverage vehicle wrapping is not for the faint hearted, you need to be on top of your game to achieve the almost impossible task of carrying out a perfect vehicle wrap. Many people enter the vehicle wrapping industry full of enthusiasm, only to be defeated after their first few wraps. It's a task that takes time to master and there are many negatives stacked against you before you even start, so make yourself aware of what those negatives are and address these before implementation or execution,' says Matthee.

1. Use the correct choice of media – using unsuitable media is the most common mistake people make.
2. With surface cleaning preparation, follow the correct cleaning procedures, remove auto glaze/wax or address the oxidation of the painted surface.
3. Working environment – working in direct sunlight or extremely cold conditions will not assist in achieving that perfect vehicle wrap. It needs to be carried out in a controlled environment where the temperature is a constant 15–22 degrees.
4. Avoid using inexperienced installers who do not carry out the post-heating/stabilising procedures in recesses or any areas where the media has been shaped to the form of the vehicle body. Not doing this will almost always result in popping and lifting.
5. The after-care of the wrapped vehicle is very important. Most suppliers are not aware of the after-care and maintenance of the newly wrapped vehicle. High pressure washers and hard-bristled brooms damage the printed media if it is not finished with compatible over laminate film.

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Tonic- Castle Events Container

ROBBIE LAMBE FROM MAIZEY PLASTICS

1. Substrates must be clean – if you are doing a wrap on a car use Isopropyl.
2. Use the correct grade of vinyl with the substrate lifespan.
3. Use the 'hinge' method to apply the vinyl to the substrate - [Can we get some elaboration?]
4. When removing the backing paper turn the decal 'upside down' so that the transfer tape does not 'let go' of the decal.
5. When removing the backing paper always cut it instead of tearing it as it gets 'fluffy' and sticks to the vinyl.
6. If you are using a digital print before you laminate make sure that the print has had enough time to 'flash-off' [can we get elaboration?] to ensure that there is no solvent present - this will take about 48 hours depending on the humidity.
7. When applying with the 'wet' method use a few drops of Johnson & Johnson baby shampoo as there is no Menolin present and there is less chance of the decal becoming 'hazy white' on the glass.
8. As the saying goes practice makes perfect – so practise and have fun.

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