

WRAP PRODUCTIVITY

How to Increase Quality and Decrease Install Times

Improving your wraps productivity will improve your bottom line

BY JUSTIN PATE



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across the world most notably for Avery Dennison and Mutoh in North America. Justin also heads up The Wrap Institute (www.wrapinstitute.com), a streaming video wraps education platform. For more information on Justin go to www.justin-pate.net.

ONE THING I have been focusing on in my car wrap workshops for both full print and color-change wraps the past year is ways of increasing quality and durability while lowering install times by 20 to 50 percent. Most people immediately think this is achieved solely through the installation portion of the wrap, but it's actually primarily achieved through good preparation.

Here are several simple rules for full print and for color-change wraps that will help increase your profits, and make for happy, faster wrap installers.



Image A: This design—created by Stephen Sinek for use at the Avery Dennison/Mutoh School of Wrap workshops this year—is a good example of smart wrap design.





Image B: Try to avoid using all vertical panels, which is still the norm for vehicles like this Sprinter van. Instead, it's best to use a combination of vertical and horizontal panels.

Receive the Vehicle the Day Before

This rule applies for both full print and for color-change wraps. Every installer or wrap shop has waited for clients to show up on the day of install (often times for hours). This delay on starting the wrap causes stress that leads to installers making mistakes as they try to get the job done by the end of the day.

If the vehicle is dropped off the day before then when the installers show up at 9 a.m. the next morning the car is there at the proper temperature and is fully dry. This means they can get to work right away, or, with a color change, hardware can be removed from the car the day before so that installers can simply wrap instead of prep.

Rules for Full-Print Wraps

1 Smart Designs

Keep your wrap designs smart. An example of a smart wrap design, is the one made by Stephen Sinek that was used for the Avery Dennison/Mutoh School of Wrap workshops this year (see **Image A**). It's a very cool design aesthetically that would satisfy the client and also works very well in terms of install.

The hood, roof and trunk don't con-

nect to the sides, which makes them islands. The hood has to only be centered and straight, the text on the roof simply has to be made straight and there is no text or numbers on the trunk, which means it's just wrapped with no measuring required.

The front bumper has matching design elements to the rest of the overall design but they don't literally connect to the front fenders, which saves the installers huge amounts of stress and time.

The driver and passenger sides are the same so the installers can reference both sides (once the first side is done there is no guessing where the second side goes). The Avery Dennison text on the doors is easy to measure as the bottom of the door is straight so it makes a great anchor to balance the wrap. The sides were also printed horizontally on 60" wide material so there is no need to register panels or apply a separate piece for the rocker panel which would be the case if it was printed on 54" wide material.

The back of the bull graphic goes from the rear fender to the back bumper. This would be very difficult to line up if the image had to be matched up with separate panels. However, this was

avoided by printing the back bumper only in red. This means the back bumper is put on first and the back of the bull is applied as an overlay. It's a connecting design without having to actually connect anything.

2 Smart Layout

What slows down installers the most is getting the registration right, and overlaps that pop out of recessed areas can affect durability longterm if they are not properly post heated.

Based on this, it's best to avoid making all the panels vertical (still the norm for vehicles like Sprinter vans). Instead, it's best to use a combination of vertical and horizontal panels. In the illustration above (see **Image B**), the main panel on the back section bridges the recessed area, which means no registration on those tricky areas. It also means that the overlaps are hidden in the recessed areas and will have zero stress as they will be fed in instead of bridges and pushed in.

3 Choose the Right Material

I went to around 40 wrap shops this year teaching workshops and often saw installers wrapping vans with deep



Image C: This Hummer design does not follow the three-inch rule. Text was placed too close to many of the vehicle's installation hot spots.

recessed areas using the improper print and lamination combinations. This leads to longer installs as the installers have to often feed the material in these areas and often the wraps fail and have to be either fixed or replaced. The key is to use the most flexible combination—like Avery Dennison 1105 with 1460z or 3M IJ480. Using these materials might seem costlier (generally around 10% extra) but if it speeds up installs and insures no failures then it's a bargain in the long run.

4 The Three-Inch Rule

All designers should create a three-inch buffer for any important text and images from hot spots like door handles, lights, wheel wells and license plate areas. This buffer allows installers to adjust placement and avoid having to take extra time measuring. This year I visited a wrap shop where the installers were wrapping a Hummer H2 that had all the text about half an inch from all these hot spots (see **Image C**).

I asked the designer why he did this and his reply was, "I wanted to challenge the guys." I told the installers that they should challenge the installer by putting his desk out in the parking lot on a 100-degree day. What the designer doesn't understand is that by laying out the text this way it slowed down the install by 15% and ran the risk of a reprint if it didn't fit. This is a risky move all around and is a quiet drain on profits for a wrap shop owner.

Rules for Color-Change Wraps

1 Don't Over-Remove Hardware

One big thing I pushed in my workshops this year was not over-removing hardware. Instagram and Facebook are filled with pictures of color changes that have the bumpers and headlights removed. These removals can take a long time, result in broken clips and lead to overwrapping. I show a variety of techniques in the workshops that demonstrate how to wrap these areas perfectly without hardware removals. The result looks exactly the same but the amount of time saved is astronomical, especially when you consider that the bumper doesn't have to be removed a second time when the wrap is removed.

2 Let the Installers Just Install

There are a lot of mechanics in the world but not a lot of people who can wrap a bumper in one piece. If an installer removes hardware, cleans and cuts down the panels before a wrap they are tired when they begin wrapping, which is where the money is at.

Hiring a mechanic for these tasks is more economical than paying an installer to remove the hardware. A mechanic can be taught to clean and cut down panels. This means the installers simply wrap, which lowers installer times dramatically. I have seen several wrap shops that employ this concept and it creates a very efficient workflow and quicker turn-around times. **SDG**