

Put Your Dealership Under “Wraps” and Watch Your Sales Soar Upward

How to upstage the competition with large format graphics

By Chris Cunningham

On a street crowded with competitive auto dealerships, if you are not turning heads and getting customers to choose you, you need to amplify your auto dealer signage with large format graphics—the bigger, the better.

Today it's impossible not to see that large format graphics are on everything from buildings to trucks, cars, floors, walls, and windows. Large format graphics have also been showing up at car dealerships, augmenting or replacing traditional signage, and blowing away the old balloons.

Large format graphics can turn the exteriors of your showrooms and parts/service into “beacons”, making your car brand instantly recognizable longer distances away. Use reflective film and your beacon becomes a day and night transmitter that can increase impressions by as much as 40 percent. The high visibility of large format graphics is impossible to ignore and 75 percent of consumers report favorable impressions of companies that use them.

Large format graphics—or “wraps”—is the hottest idea in advertising and it has no boundaries of size, shape or color. Even a huge structural “eye sore” can be overcome by covering it with a “second skin” of large format graphics. That's exactly what Chud J, Wendle did for his dealership in Spokane, Washington. Owner of Wendle Motors, Inc., Chud says, “Over the last 30 years we have used traditional canvases protecting our ramps on our parking showroom/ parking garage. Last year we replaced these canvasses with Mesh Vinyl advertising our dealership and Ford. The comments have been unbelievable! We turned an “eye sore” into an incredible billboard for minimal cost.”

The technology that makes large format graphics possible.

Innovative technology enables the application of large format graphics onto virtually any manufactured object in the physical environment. The technology is the exclusive state-of-the-art Scotchprint© Graphics system developed by 3M. It is a complete system consisting of inks, toners, film, protective overlaminates, and hardware and software.

In fact, the overlaminate is the only film in the marketplace that helps improve sign face appearance over time following the first few months of initial exposure, allowing signs to look new longer. This technology even makes a self-cleaning feature (SCL) available, which activates *rain* to clean the film's surface. Hello *Seattle!*

Revitalizing your dealership through visual merchandizing.

According to some accounts, revitalizing a dealership with large format graphics can usually be done for less than the cost of outdoor advertising for one month. Also, manufacturer co-op dollars may be available toward large format signs.

Programs exist to make visual merchandizing easy to execute and control. They help individual dealers maintain corporate identity requirements and at the same time customize to local demographics and geography. Best of all, perhaps, canned solutions are available for creating

short-term promotions within branded and long-term corporate identity signage environments.

Dealers can truly create an overall experience throughout the showroom and service area. Using see-through window wraps, you can transform showroom windows into digital printed billboards for new promotions that lead patrons in from the street, even from blocks away. The wraps are digitally printed on perforated vinyl that is translucent from both sides, allowing sales staff to observe foot traffic on the dealership's outside lots—a major advantage over painted showroom windows of the past. With wall wraps, showroom and service areas can be revamped into environments that dramatically enhance the shopping experience and entice customers to return. Floor graphics can be used to answer the question of “how do I steer more business to my service department?”

General Manager Michael Loney (Toyota of Seattle) has been pleased with the graphics applications at his dealership. They not only gave new life to his signage program but solved facade issues as well. “For three years now, we’ve been installing state-of-the-art window wraps, wall murals and huge graphics on the upper building of our dealership. Some areas of the dealership that were invisible or unsightly are now actual sales assets because of these state-of-the-art graphics. They’ve weathered very well and become our most cost effective form of advertising.”

Bill Korum (Korum Nissan Suzuki in Puyallup) is another dealer who is impressed with the long life of large format graphics. “The large murals in our new Nissan store—in the showroom as well as in the service department—has held up perfect over the years,” he said. “I have had many compliments on them and feel they make both areas come alive. The color and attention to detail is outstanding. They look as good now as they did three years ago.”

Turn your courtesy shuttles, parts trucks and promotional vehicles into ads that really move.

Some dealerships are using vehicle wraps to transform their parts and courtesy cars into moving ambassadors for their businesses. A blank car is like a blank canvas, it's an opportunity to promote and drive customers to your location. A good example is how the copy line, “Follow Me to Toyota of Seattle Now!” has been cleverly woven into the design of vehicle wraps being used by Toyota of Seattle.

Typically, a vehicle averages 750,000 impressions per month, according to the Federal Highway Administration. This translates into 4.2 million views over a 12-month period—an impressive advertising potential for a vehicle wrap costing only about \$3,500. In comparison, \$3,500 buys only 150,000 listeners in a one-week period from a flight of 10-12 half-minute spots, or a direct-mail drop that reaches 90,000 homes. The same expenditure in newspapers runs a two-inch ad of one column for six weeks and reaches half the eyeballs reached by a vehicle wrap. Moreover, statistics are showing that 96 percent of interviewees *remember* vehicle wraps and 29 percent of consumers actually base buying decisions on them.

The technology for applying and removing vehicle wraps is now so advanced that dealers can envision the sides and backs of their courtesy and parts vehicles as dynamic advertising spaces useful even for switched-out promotions. Applying large format graphics is easier and faster than ever with correct positioning done very simply. The graphics film can be put on without damaging the body of the vehicle, lasts two to three years, and can be removed without leaving a trace. And it is easy to clean while it's on the car, of course.

Your only limitation is your imagination.

Large format graphics are about making environmental spaces more visually intriguing. Customers like and respond to large-format lifestyle graphics because they help them get what they want. When, where and how to use large format graphics can be anything your imagination can dream up.

Custom graphics can be provided in quantities from one to thousands and they can be printed directly on vinyl, fabric, metal plastic, tile and wood. Naturally, it's important to use a well-trained/certified "wrapper/installer" who understands what it takes to install bubble-free vehicle, window and wall wraps, and smooth wall murals, and has the knowledge of what films and adhesives to use.

For more information, contact Chris Cunningham, www.AutoTize.com, or call 866.333.4321