



Image courtesy of Bennett International Group LLC/Miller Decals LLC.

A Graphic Installation Wrap-Up

PDAA experts weigh in on today's installation trends.

The graphic installation and vehicle wrap market continues to evolve and grow as brands and customers seek new advertising avenues and more personalization. The Journal spoke with a panel of expert installers from SGIA's Installer Committee to discuss the market, their expectations and some of their favorite projects from 2018.

How would you describe the vehicle wrap business today? Is it going strong? Changing? How so?

Ken Burns, Axis Graphic Installations: It is going strong, and I like the direction it is going in. I feel like the industry is finally back to sourcing quality craftsmanship vs. cheap labor, after many years of mediocre to unskilled installers being awarded projects because of their low prices.

Kim Magraw, Vivid Sign and Design: The wrap business has grown tremendously. The auto detailing business is the largest growth area, with full wrap color change. Then there is the growth from printers that

used to be offset, etc., as the industry has evolved to make the cost of entry lower.

Jim Miller, Miller Decals LLC: Vehicle wrapping has established a foothold in the advertising industry, and more print shops are getting involved as the demand grows. The "entrepreneur" millennial generation is pushing this growth to support their ever-changing desire to make a name for themselves. I feel that this generation will take over the baby boomers' wealth and create more content in social media, which will in turn drive our industry further upwards. Most of the baby boomers with businesses have an established fleet will be rebranded as the new generation takes hold. Also, the hype in the advertising market to brand is so much aligned with our industry, there is no stopping where this may take us.

John Carthey, Corporate Installations: It's going strong and is more specialized.

Ritchie Daize, Arlon Graphics LLC: I think the vehicle wrap industry is still growing and continues to change. There was a time when digital print presses were

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By Lauren Searson, Managing Editor, SGIA

The panel of SGIA Installer Committee experts includes:



Ken Burns,
President/CEO,
Axis Graphic
Installations



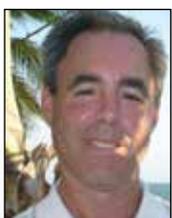
John Carthey,
President,
Corporate
Installations



Ritchie Daize,
Technical
Solutions
Manager, Arlon
Graphics LLC



Ron Gizzo, Chief
Operating Officer,
Visual Marking
Systems Inc.



Kim Magraw,
Owner, Vivid Sign
and Design



Jim Miller, Owner,
Miller Decals LLC



Matt Richart,
Owner, Digital EFX
Wraps

very expensive, and few had them. During that time, materials were difficult to install and not specifically designed to handle the rigors of fully wrapping modern vehicles.

Today's average sign shop has a digital printer capable of printing on vinyl specifically designed to be installed around the challenging corners found on most vehicles with ease. This has caused prices to drop as small companies with low overheads can compete at a local level and be successful.

Matt Richart, Digital EFX Wraps: It's wonderful. It can always be busier, but it's very strong. More companies are investing in mobile advertising, and commercial car sales have gone up over the past year.

Ron Gizzo, Visual Marking Systems Inc.: Growing. It is going strong and changing, though it is surprising how many people have yet to take advantage of this amazing advertising opportunity. Clients have become less brand-specific and are looking for alternative solutions. The attitude has changed with regard to the best product for the application.

What's trending in vehicle wraps? Is there a particular type of material? A style of wrap? Why do you think it's popular?

Daize: Vinyl manufacturers are making reflective media easier to print and install. This gives their wraps 24-hour viewing, which offers their customers a much richer return on investment (ROI).

Richart: Color change is still very popular, but we're just seeing more printed commercial graphics. We're also seeing more reflective printing leaving our shop. I think people are doing more evening driving and companies like pest control, road crews and even basic commercial companies want exposure at night as well.

Burns: High-end, custom color changes/modifications and paint protection are on the rise. I believe the individuality of owning a vehicle that is truly one-of-a-kind is why it's become so popular.

Magraw: The trend is still color change; the wrap business has been strong for over 21 years. Remember in 1990, 3M introduced the Scotchprint and the full wrap bus market started. Then it became affordable for every business.

The biggest growth is still the art of one vehicle — how to get set up, design, install and print from one to two vehicles. Big fleets are very competitive with many companies able to commit to bidding similar products and warranties. This has been the same for 10-plus years.

What surprised you about the vehicle wrap market in 2018?

Gizzo: The growth. We continue to see it year after year.

Richart: Being a trainer in the wrap industry, we saw a huge increase in new companies wanting to expand or get into the vehicle wrap market. The economy has played a large part in this.

Carthey: There's really no slow down or end in sight.

Daize: Vehicle wrapping has made its way into some major OEMs, which include factory wrap kits for ATVs, UTVs, water crafts and RVs!

Burns: As previously mentioned, it was surprising to see the industry really turn back to quality versus making those extra few dollars by delivering a less-than-perfect product. And, to see so many people willing to spend the money that these custom color changes/modifications warrant.

What trends do you expect to see in 2019?

Miller: I feel that more developers of temporary campaigns will drive the amount of vehicle advertisement in metropolitan areas. We will also see the continued rise of car clubs individualizing their makes and models to brand the club as well as the uniqueness of their vehicle — much like Harley Davidson did for their motorcycles.

Gizzo: I expect to see more short-term advertising campaigns.

Burns: I'm thinking we will see quite a few commercial vehicle wrap installers learning and incorporating custom color changes into their skill sets. The appeal of commercial wraps is quantity. You can turn out one or more vehicles with a two-person team per day. Custom color changes take a week or more per vehicle. But now that the custom color change/modification market is warranting the high pricing that it rightfully deserves, I think we will see some commercial wrap installers wanting to slow down their pace and put out a final product that they can be extremely proud of.

Richart: I think you will see more commercial wraps and even more color change and laminates come out in 2019.

Magraw: I expect more companies making different vinyl products. We are seeing performance calendared, but why not just use cast? The market is cost-driven,



Image courtesy of Visual Marking Systems Inc.



Images courtesy of Axis Graphic Installations.

and we will continue to see lower-cost materials made with lower-cost products. I like the other films for more retail-driven projects.

Daize: As a vinyl manufacturer, I expect to see the continuation of a new generation of wrap films emerge over the next few years that will help installers wrap with more speed, accuracy and profitability!

Carthy: More people trying to get into the wrap business and bring down profits.

What do your clients want their vehicle wraps to achieve? How has that changed over the past five years?

Richart: They want an ROI on the vehicle wrap more than ever. As designers, we see clients wanting clean and crisp design/marketing campaigns (i.e., cleaner wraps that are effective with less photographs).

Gizzo: Clients have always had the expectation for clear messaging and brand awareness.

Magraw: They always want a lower price. And, they really want that phone call. They do not always know that design is so critical. We try to charge the rate of \$90 per hour for design, but the market still is growing more in a “give it away” mode. I see more poor designs done for free when the market still has room for great designs and great pricing.

Carthy: They want more personalization and to stand out. Personal wraps are starting to equate to commercial wraps.

Miller: Miller Decals has a very broad spectrum of clients. A vehicle wrap client could be a local guy that wants unique accents to embellish his car and express his personality; it could also be a fleet that wants their brand’s chosen color or logo to stand out in a parking lot. The intentions of any client wrapping their vehicle from the start of my career has been to raise brand awareness. Wraps are the cheapest form of advertisement per impression.

In the past five years, the material has improved; the classes to train installers have grown exponentially; certifications and groups that support the skill are expanding vastly; and the amount of designers and printers being asked to develop this product has grown due to inflated demand. The past five years has been phenomenal in growth for the vinyl industry and has allowed more clients to have better opportunities to receive a quality product with a trained technician

to bring their brand awareness to the market.

Did you have a favorite job in 2018? Please describe it — and tell us why you liked it so well.

Gizzo: Our local police department has a program during the holidays to take underprivileged children on a shopping spree, called “Shop with a Cop.” We volunteered to wrap the Swat Truck. We designed and installed a Grinch themed wrap. It was a huge success. The greatest reward is seeing children so happy on what is probably a very disappointing time of the year.

Burns: We completely refurbished over 100 Bank of Americas last year. This was so enjoyable because there was no self-adhesive vinyl whatsoever. In an industry where vehicle wraps, fleet wraps, wall and window murals are the majority of what we install, it was nice to take a break from the vinyl, perform some demolition, get our hands on some power tools and create a brand-new look with 3D, modular, cleated and stand-off mounted signage. It’s exciting to know PDAA will soon be incorporating these types of sign installations into their educational and certification programs.

Magraw: The best was a simple single van for the HVAC Physician, where the creative was the key to the sale. To see our design team create great, award-winning designs from scratch speaks highly of the people I get to work with.

Miller: Our Wreaths Across America project touched me because these trucks are bringing awareness of honoring people we know — and those we do not — over many generations. The installation of that graphic was one of many that I am sure made someone thankful for our military that fights for us to have the opportunities we have here in America.

I feel blessed to have been a part of their mission as we have many family and friends who have and continue to serve our great nation. My wife’s uncle, who went to the United States Military Academy (West Point), recently passed away and will be a direct recipient of a wreath on December 14, 2019, at West Point Cemetery.

Carthey: Our Alamo Museum Epic Art project involved completely wrapping walls with large graphics to teach the public history and give one the feeling they’ve traveled back 200 years. We also enjoyed wrapping buildings, storage tanks, sports stadiums, etc.

Richart: We wrapped two trailers and matching pickup trucks for a local

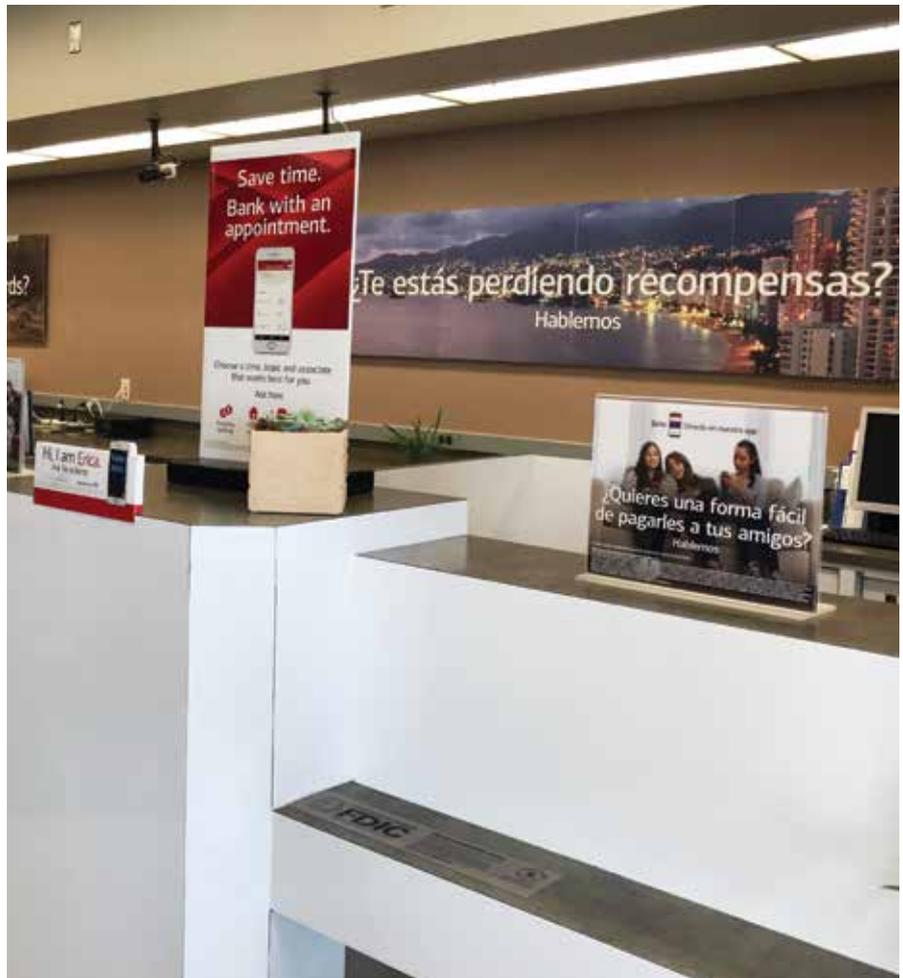


Image courtesy of Axis Graphic Installations.



Image courtesy of Vivid Sign and Design.

fishing tournament company. It was cool to see two matching trailers/trucks that are visible in the fishing industry.

What advantages have you found with a PDAA Master Certification?

Burns: Being Master Certified has brought our company at least half of its ongoing sales. When a national company needs installation work in a part of the country they've never done work in before, PDAA is their best resource for quality installers that are well versed with all material types. This is very important as different producers prefer different film manufacturers and types.

Miller: A Master Certification has many advantages — the number one being one of the few people who have placed themselves in the position and passed the criteria to become part of this unique group of individuals. This provides me with a network of like-minded people I can turn to for questions about my career. It adds value to my service to be able to say that I have dedicated my time to become skilled

and passed testing by my peers on many levels.

Richart: It has allowed us to meet new people, tap into the installer network and add another badge of certification to our company.

Magraw: Our company has prided itself on being a PDAA member since 1984. I have been involved with three different companies, but always get right back to being part of PDAA. The best part has been the members, meeting installers, talking about projects, installs, travel — all of it. It's a place where camaraderie can be shared.

Gizzo: We have consistency across applications and have formed many strategic partnerships nationwide. We have confidence that the job is done right, sharing the same ethical approach we have at VMS.

Lauren Searson has been the Managing Editor for SGIA since November 2017 and has worked in publications for more than 10 years.

Show customers you're the right installer for the job. Get certified at the next two-day workshop/PDAA Master Certification Testing event (May 15 - 16; Kansas City, MO) with Ken Burns, Ritchie Daize and Nate Vandervliet (Exotic Vehicle Wraps).

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