

Drive Up Business Profits with Vehicle Wraps by Patricia Schaefer

<http://www.franchisetrade.com/articles/vehicle-wraps.htm>

Driving through highways and byways in recent years, I have come across some vehicles with awesome graphics that have been both eye-catching and artistic marvels. So professional-looking and precise, the graphics look like they're custom painted onto the car.

These moving works of art are called vehicle wraps. The wraps are first graphic images printed on an adhesive hi-tech vinyl film, and then are adhered directly to the vehicle. The options for wraps are many; whether a full wrap around every nook and cranny of a vehicle, or a partial wrap for a specific portion.

Why use a vehicle wrap?

Vehicle wraps have become red hot for business promotion, and the chief reasons according to industry experts are affordability and effectiveness. The process of printing and wrapping has become easier and cheaper, vinyls and technology have greatly improved, and the attractive graphic designs are a distinctive, captivating way to effectively advertise and promote a business.

Paul Valdstyn, a partner at Vehiclewraps.ca and Image Digital Printing, says they have definitely seen an increase in the number of vehicle wraps over the past several years. He added, "I think the main reason for this is affordability. The manufacturers have also made it easier for a small sign shop to purchase printing machines capable of producing wraps. This is largely driven by what customers want and expect. Years ago, a typical van had cut lettering type on it and now that just doesn't attract attention so customers want full color digital images that draw attention like moving billboards."

Traditional billboard advertising ranges from about \$600 to \$2400 a month. Compare this to a company van "fully-wrapped" price of about \$3500 -- with a high-quality wrap that can last up to five years -- and it's easy to see how cost-effective vehicle wraps can be. And a wrap typically generates about 8 million impressions in a year. Multiply this by five years and no other advertising medium comes close to the low cost per viewing.

Speedpro Imaging is a large format imaging company in Austin, Texas. Owner Steve Fernandes knows first-hand the effectiveness of vehicle wrapping. While driving in his wrapped company vehicle, Fernandes is often flagged down on highways by individuals who notice the alluring

graphics and express their interest in acquiring a wrap of their own. Fernandes says customers can choose from an array of options and prices; i.e., at the lower range a 2x2 ft. picture with text for about \$500, and at the higher range a full vehicle wrap for about \$3,000 to \$4,000. What some businesses have to say about their wraps

We randomly surveyed a few businesses that have invested in full or partial vehicle wraps for their company vehicles, and here's what they had to say:

Halloween Outlet

Located in Worcester, MA, this family-owned business bills itself as "The World's Largest Halloween Superstore." For over twenty years, Halloween Outlet has been offering its customers "tens of thousands of costumes and accessories for sale and rent."

Nicole Apelian, Vice President of the Halloween Outlet, runs the business with her sister. They have had their business vehicle frightfully and delightfully wrapped for two years now. Apelian says the investment was unquestionably worth the expense: "People stick their heads out their windows and scream, and then ask, 'Where's the Outlet?'"

Mega Wraps

You might say Mega Wraps company vehicles are "double-wrapped." You see, the graphics on their vehicles are depicting their wrap-style sandwiches. Mega Wraps specializes in "delicious, healthy food served fast."

Immy Verjee, Director of Operations and Business Development for Mega Wraps, shared some of the effects their signature VW Bug wrapped vehicles have had on their business. With franchised stores in both the U. S. and Canada, Verjee says their wrapped vehicles have given them quite a bit of attention and positive feedback, as well as "absolutely" being worth the cost of the wrap ("much more cost-effective than radio and direct market TV")

Not only has Verjee received quite a few calls from individuals wanting to have their own personal Bugs wrapped just like theirs, an unanticipated bonus has been that the red vehicles have drawn a significant number of

prospective and eventual franchisees to their franchise system. Although Mega Wraps does not require franchisees to wrap their company vehicles, incentives are offered for them to do so. Considering the wrapped vehicles a "win/win situation," Verjee says Mega Wraps is looking to eventually "package it in" with their franchise offering.

Ruth's Chris Steak House

Hanne Olesen-Hahman, V.P. of Operations for Ruth's Chris Steak House, says they actually purchased and wrapped two vans to be used as shuttle vans to take their guests to and from hotels: "They have been very effective for several reasons. They are like rolling billboards and have helped to raise awareness of our locations in both Toronto and Mississauga."

"They have helped us to provide a service that no other restaurant, to my knowledge, provides and this has helped to make it very convenient for hotels to recommend us to their guests. The vans have helped us to increase our business from the hotels by approximately 20 percent so far. We implemented both vans approximately six months ago in December of 2005. I definitely feel that the results of using a wrap justify the cost, as long as it is done well."

Some vehicle wrap tips

Valdstyn of Vehiclewraps.ca has this bit of advice for businesses interested in wrapping their company vehicles: "The most important thing for companies considering a wrap to understand is that it is an entire process. It begins with a design that needs to be clean and make an impact, and then the wrap must be properly sized to the vehicle using proper templates. This is followed by printing which should be done using a strong solvent printer so that the wrap will not fade quickly. Lastly and maybe most importantly the wrap needs to be installed correctly. When this is done poorly, the entire process fails.

"In short, we believe that customers looking for a wrap should work with companies that can handle all these processes in-house so that when there is a problem, they also can fix it and warranty what they do."

JaxWraps, a print provider of large format graphics, provides these tips on the best way businesses can use their wraps to generate leads: "Aside from driving your everyday normal routes (you'll soon look at every traffic jam as a marketing opportunity), park your vehicle at the back of parking lots and position it so that it is seen by the maximum of passing street traffic. Attend sporting events and concerts early and park by the

entrance. Feature your vehicle in your company brochures and print advertising."

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