

Make a vehicle look like it's part of a fleet

The right design can make your customer look like a national concern

By Dan Antonelli, President and Creative Director, Graphic D-Signs, Inc. and SignShopMarketing.com

W've all seen the trucks on the road whose design makes us believe, if we knew nothing else about the company, that it was part of this company's fleet of vehicles this company. And we've also seen the flip side of vehicle advertising,

when, because of the design of the vehicle's graphics, it's clear that the company has only one or two trucks.

Most clients really don't give this a lot of thought. As a designer, it's your job to find out what image they are trying to portray





and to design accordingly.

Advertising is about perception. What we do is build a perception of our client's business for the public to see and hopefully buy into. We make the client look the part, by carefully considering how the each element of their branding is integrated and the perception it will ultimately portray.

As sign companies handle this component of brand implementation for their clients, it's important to think carefully about it. Consider the message the design will deliver on a subconscious level.

How we do it Along with branding and logo development, most of the clients who come to us are looking for a more professional and unified presentation of brand identity. One





component of the implementation of their brand is obviously how it is portrayed on their vehicles.

But many of these clients are very small businesses, sometimes with only one or two service vans. They are hoping we can help with them present their business as a larger, more professional and reputable firm. They want to look like the bigger firms—even if, in reality, they aren't.

Sometimes there are very basic design traits that give the connotation of being part of a fleet. Generally, it's a simplified design element that remains consistent, or simple way in which the brand, or brand icon, is portrayed. Another technique we like to use is horizontal striping. Whether on a van, pickup or truck, it's a simple technique that works well to give the appearance of a fleet or franchised business.

We know when we've done our job

Our best compliment is when a client tells us a story of pulling up to their customers' homes, and having the customer tell them that they "see their trucks all over." We both share a good laugh because in fact, they have one truck. That's the power of good vehicle advertising.

So, while vehicle wraps with confusing pictures, competing graphics and non-existent branding seem to be all the rage these days, take a step back for a minute. Think long and hard about the message and how best to communicate it. So many wraps fail in basic design principles. This is an opportunity for those who are good at design to really make their work stand out.

It seems to me that many wraps are designed for the sake of the designer's ego, or what currently looks cool or trendy at the moment. Remember: as designers our job is communicate our client's message as effectively as possible.

Here are a few examples of jobs we've designed for various clients who shared a similar request: Make us look bigger, more reputable, better established—and at the same time—reinforce our brand identity. •SC



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