

Managing Your Wrap Business's Bottom Line



Introduction

As a small business owner, when it comes to your bottom line, it can often feel like you're stuck between a rock and a hard place. You simultaneously hear the phrases: "you have to spend money to make money," and "waste not, want not". You know that every dollar counts, and determining how and where to spend that dollar can often feel like an impossible balancing act.

That is why **it's important to come up with a system to help take some of the guesswork out of making those decisions.** What follows, is a guide to understanding how wrap films can impact your bottom line.

In this guide we cover:



Improve Quote to Finish Time



Reduce Wrap Redos



3M Warranty Comparison

Improve Quote to Finish Time

It's the very first step in a project, and your first opportunity to make a good impression to a new customer: writing a quote. The goal, of course, is to do this quickly and accurately. You want to make sure you make a profit, while also ensuring the customer is willing to pay the price. So how do you find that balance and do it efficiently and accurately? Here are four considerations to keep in mind:

- ▶ *Project kick off*
- ▶ *Design time*
- ▶ *Product cost*
- ▶ *Installation time*





WEBSITE:
[3M Brand You](#)



Project Kick Off

When customers arrive at your shop with very little knowledge about car wraps or how the graphics business works, **they depend on you to set expectations.** When discussing a project, customers might describe one thing, but actually have something else in mind. Educating your customers on [wrap film products](#) and project types, as well as [warranty information](#), will help the process go smoothly, and may open avenues to additional business.

A great resource to help prime your clients on what's achievable with wraps is [3M Brand You](#). Here, your customers can see examples of different installations, branding advice, color and design options and more. It may also prove an effective resource for kindling your own creativity.



A way to ensure you and your customers are on the same page is by walking them through a completed creative brief that includes visual aids. Whether it's design placement, product selection, color scheme or more, being on the same page early in the process will save you vital time and money later. It's also important that you know the intended goal of the wrap and target audience. As long as you have clear communication with your customer up front and include all necessary verbiage in your quotes and contracts, your customers are more likely to enjoy the process of working with you.

In order to avoid asking your customers the same questions over and over again throughout the duration of the project, have a turn-key system in place to capture all the information you'll need the first time around. Whether it's a physical document, online form or database entry, having a repeat process that retains customer information will make it easier for your team to execute. By doing so, you'll build rapport with your customers, save time and eliminate paperwork errors, such as misspelling your customer's name or forgetting project details.



Design time

Although it depends on the type of business and where the customer is coming from (online inquiry, customer referral, etc.), investing in the development of creative assets can be a risk. When you pour your creative energy into a design, the last thing

you want is for a customer to take your design to a different shop for installation or take up valuable time with rounds and rounds of creative revisions. That's why it's important to include a separate cost for design work. **The creative process is one of the most enjoyable components of the wrap business, but can also have a major financial impact.** Be sure your contracts and estimates are current.

It's also important to have a process in place to collect all collateral upfront (logos, brand guidelines, copywriting, etc.), so you can easily create multiple designs and save time on revisions. The process should also include getting the client to sign off on artwork (including all sides of a vehicle wrap) and a color proof. By doing so, the client shares the responsibility of the final product and will go through the proper channels to ensure you and your team are set up for success.

To ensure a design hits its mark on the first attempt, it's useful to have technology on your side. We are continually amazed by the creativity and design that emerges



[3M™ Visual Attention Software \(VAS\)](#)

from graphics manufacturers, and we've dedicated resources to help you take these skills a step further. [3M™ Visual Attention Software \(VAS\)](#) is an innovative web-based software tool, based upon decades of vision science research. **It works by analyzing designs and photos to predict what's most likely to grab a viewer's attention in the first three to five seconds of viewing.** Through product use, graphics manufacturers and designers can be sure a wrap's most prominent object or message is seen to the degree it was intended. As a result, clients feel more confident and are able to gain approvals more quickly. By reducing subjective client feedback, shop owners can manage resources so that talents are being used to efficiently generate new business, as opposed to working on a fifth, sixth or seventh revision.



Product cost

By not having the right inventory or using the wrong wrap film, productivity can decrease and ultimately leave your profitability vulnerable. **Before providing a quote, it's important to have a clear understanding of what the customer is looking for and the expectations of the final product.** After understanding that, it's easier to pinpoint the material best-suited for the application and approach – taking into account whether it is a flat, curved or textured surface. If you're working with [printable film](#), be sure to also include costs for printing. With a fully-stocked inventory and a deep understanding of product use, you'll be able to estimate product cost more efficiently and accurately. Taking these recommended steps when generating a quote could save money.



Installation time

Estimating time is often the biggest challenge for pricing a wrap project. There's usually a fairly consistent time allotment for printing, but estimating installation time can be challenging and have an affect on the overall budget. Finding and retaining a skilled employee talent base can lead to group chemistry that produces car wraps and wall graphics efficiently and effectively, which makes estimating installation time easier and more accurate. Should any wall décor or retail graphics need to be installed after business hours, take that time into account, as well. **It's important that you and your customer experience as few unexpected business interruptions as possible.**

When it comes time to schedule the actual installation, it's important to set expectations

with your customer about when and how you would like to get started. With vehicle wraps for example, it may work best to have your customer drop off the car the night before an installation is set to take place, so you have time to ensure the car is properly washed and has time to dry. If a customer is late dropping off the car, it could potentially throw off your entire shop's schedule and put other projects in jeopardy.

Reduce Wrap Redos

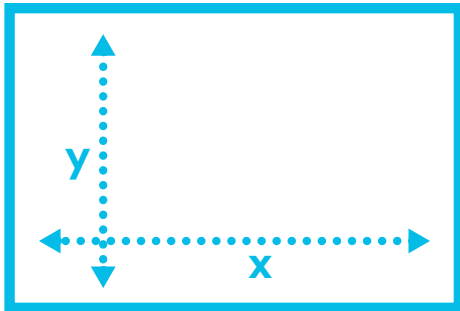
No matter the size or scope of your business, we all encounter problems that can set us back. It's no different in the wraps and graphics industry. Every now and then, issues arise that can stall an installation and necessitate a redo.

Here are a few ways to help reduce the risks:

- ▶ *Training*
- ▶ *Certifications*
- ▶ *Tips for Success*



Any graphics installer or manufacturer who's been in business for a while has likely worked with a customer who's come in to have a car re-wrapped. **That's why selecting the right materials, including a base film and overlaminates, is a crucial step for any project and can drastically**



impact the end result and cost. That way, you'll never be the shop that has projects that need fixing from competitors.

Ensuring you have enough material for the scope of the project is a critical factor when it comes to reducing redos. This prevents

having to patch material on at the end of a project when you find you don't have enough in stock. Having the right inventory can increase productivity time and keep the project profitable. With vehicle wraps, pricing out and using extra vinyl goes a long way, and the finished product will look much better the first time around.

For those unforeseen circumstances when you would benefit from a little extra film on hand, consider having go-to films like [3M™ Print Wrap Films IJ180mC, IJ175Cv3 or IJ180Cv3](#) always in stock. Having a versatile film that you're comfortable using can save you from having to push out a project completion date or pass on a new job. Additionally, if you haven't used a new or specialized product before and you have a tight turnaround, you may want to use what you know first, rather than a product you haven't. You can always come back and learn the product at a later date, rather than make potential mistakes that lead to a redo.



DOWNLOAD
[How to Care for
Your Vehicle Wrap](#)

Upon the completion of a car or wall wrap, be sure to inform the customer on how to take care of the wrap and any steps to take to extend its longevity. As long as you're diligent about checking the chain of commands on a regular basis and ensuring expectations are set correctly with your client, you should be successful with each and every wrap. It's critical to reduce the number of redos your shop undertakes, because when demand is high, it can be difficult to catch up.



Training and Certification

In the sign and graphics industry, new technology and products are continually being developed that change the landscape of the industry. None of these new technologies can come to life without your skill and creativity.

With an ever-evolving array of tools that increase creative potential and challenge skills, it's our goal to help you stay on top of the newest techniques and best application practices in order to maintain efficiencies and a competitive edge. One way to acquire such skills is through the various 3M training and certification programs.

Current 3M training and certification programs include:

[3M Advanced Installer Training:](#) 3M, in conjunction with other 3M Authorized providers, offers professional graphics training to improve your skills and prepare for 3M Certified and 3M Preferred installation testing. This program offers comprehensive installation training by 3M Graphics Authorized Trainers on vehicles, windows, corrugated trailers, box trucks, textured and smooth walls, and floors.

[3M Certified Graphics Installation Company:](#) This company certification process requires customer references and a site inspection. The process is completed after an employee



[3M Training
and Certification
Programs](#)

installer passes the installation test held only at 3M in St. Paul, MN administered by both 3M and [United Application Standards Group \(UASG\)](#) testing administrators.

[3M Preferred Graphics Installer:](#) This testing program focuses on the individual installer performing all types of graphics installations. This is a challenging program for the individual, designed to test the graphics installer who seeks to be best in class.

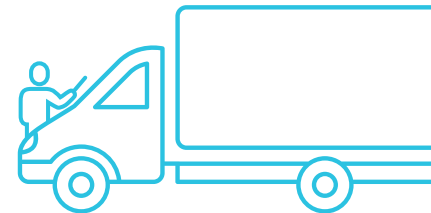
[3M Endorsed Architectural Installer:](#) This training covers the skills and knowledge necessary to apply [DI-NOC™ architectural films](#) in an interior design setting. Completion of the training will allow participants to confidently complete DI-NOC applications using appropriate materials, tools and techniques.

[3M Endorsed Installer for Knifeless Tape:](#) 3M offers a training and testing program for installers focused on high-end installations using 3M™ Knifeless Tape. Instead of using knives with the potential to cut a car, 3M

Knifeless Tape products help reduce the risk for potential scratches. The title will allow installers to set themselves apart from other installers while increasing the value they can offer their customers.

Having trainings and certifications for your company and employees can have a dramatic impact on your business's success, allowing more time for creativity and reducing human errors. **No two projects are alike, and it's important to be aware of the types of wrap films, tools and other products available to you — along with their strengths.**

Through trainings and certifications, you'll have the opportunity to work hands-on with products that might be new to you.



Other tips for success



In order to secure new business, it can be tempting to try to deliver projects in a shorter time frame. That's okay, as long as corners aren't cut. Be thoughtful in every step along the way, and make this common practice amongst your employees.



When it comes to how much media you need to do a job, it can be easy to underestimate the total amount of film that is actually needed. You also need to keep in mind whether you'll be cutting off any length or width, especially with a seamless project. Be sure to bring extra film along to an off-site installation, and stay on top of your inventory. The last thing you want to do is miss out on new business because of this.



To ensure proper printing and finishing techniques, you want to be in a clean environment and follow manufacturer recommendations regarding how to correctly print, trim and install the graphic. Each product has a set of steps for proper printing and laminating. If not followed properly, your final product could likely be flawed.



This is a cool industry, if you don't mind us saying so. You owe it yourself to enjoy what you do and know the products and process needed to be successful. The more you and your team know, the more it will seem like fun, instead of work.

3M Warranty Comparison

One of the easiest ways to separate yourself from the competition and provide added value to your customer is by offering a warranty. There are many out there, but following the proper guidelines and ensuring you're protecting your customers' investments is crucial to the success of both the installation and your business in the long-term. You need the manufacturer warranty to back you up and protect your customer.

- ▶ *3M Warranties at a Glance*
- ▶ *Training and Certifications*
- ▶ *The 3M Brand*



3M Graphics Warranties at a Glance

		3M Basic Product Warranty for All 3M Graphic Products	3M Performance Guarantee for Specific 3M Inkjet Products with Qualified OEM Inks	3M MCS™ Warranty for Finished Graphics made using all 3M Graphic Products
Coverage				
Physical Defects in 3M Product	Obvious damage for any reason	✓	✓	✓
Manufacturing Defects and Ink Performance	Visual defects	✓	✓	✓
	Adhesive defects	✓	✓	✓
	Adhesion failure on recommended substrates		✓	✓
Printing Defects and Ink Performance	Image defects when printing		✓	✓
	Excessive image fading			✓
	Image cracking, crazing or peeling			✓
	Blistering			✓
	Excessive dimensional change			✓
Cutting Defects	Clean cutting and weeding		✓	✓
Graphic Appearance	As defined in Product Bulletin for 3M Products only		✓	✓
Warranty Period for specific graphic constructions	As defined in base film's Product Bulletin		✓	✓
Removal	Removable or changeable films do not remove as stated		✓	✓
Additional Coverage for 3M Panaflex™ Awning and Sign Facing and 3M Panagraphics™ Flexible Substrates	Seam or splice failure when made as recommended			✓
	Blowout when used as recommended			✓
	Mildewing			✓
	Wicking			✓

3M Graphic Films are backed by the industry's most comprehensive warranty and support.



The 3M™ MCS™ Warranty

[The 3M MCS Warranty](#) is the most comprehensive finished graphics warranty in the industry. 3M warrants to the distributor and graphics manufacturer that when the 3M product is used in accordance of 3M's written instructions, it will be suitable for the recommended types of graphics and end uses, and will perform satisfactorily for the outlined time period. 3M further warrants to the end user for whom a graphic was produced that when graphics are made using exclusively [3M Graphics Products](#), 3M will honor all warranties extended to the distributor or graphics manufacturer who sold or produced the graphics. When you use finished graphics made with all 3M Graphics products and components, you're protected for virtually any application.

Additional 3M MCS Warranty benefits include:

- ▶ **Accelerated weathering testing**, which allows 3M to continually offer the best warranty in the rapidly changing world of digital print.
- ▶ **Stringent mechanical and physical tests**, which allow 3M to warrant the entire finished graphic.
- ▶ **A Horizontal Warranty** for up to 3 years for select finished graphics.

3M Performance Guarantee

When 3M™ MCS™ Warranty approved inks aren't an option, consider the [3M Performance Guarantee](#). It guarantees the performance of 3M inkjet films, graphic protection and application tape when used with more than 40 OEM inks and printers.

Defects covered include:

- ▶ **Physical Defects:** Defects incurred during manufacturing, packaging or shipment.
- ▶ **Manufacturing Defects:** Visual and adhesive defects that prevent using the product as described in its Product Bulletin, including adhesion to the recommended substrates and removal when using removable or changeable film.
- ▶ **Printing Defects:** Artifacts or misprints that occur due to a defect in the 3M Product when printing on 3M Graphic Films specified in the 3M Performance Guarantee Matrix and using the 3M-qualified printers and OEM inks.
- ▶ **Cutting Defects:** Clean cutting and weeding characteristics when cut as recommended in the film's Product Bulletin.

- ▶ **Graphic Appearance Defects:** Defects such as excessive dimensional change, loss of adhesion or loss of reflectivity of 3M Graphic Films that makes the graphic visually unsuitable for its intended purpose when viewed with the intended lighting, angle and distance for such a graphic.

3M Basic Product Warranty

3M also offers the **3M Basic Product Warranty** for protection with the use of 3M Graphic Products to protect against obvious damage for any reason, as well as visual and adhesive defects.

Legitimize Your Business with the 3M Brand

The [3M](#) name is a familiar one, and it lends credibility with clients. **For many customers, especially first-timers, purchasing a custom car wrap or wall graphics installation is unfamiliar territory.** Offering a brand name legitimizes not only the quality of the product, but also the quality of your business. Whether it is [Scotch™ Tape](#), [Post-it® Notes](#) or [3M Scotchgard™ Fabric Protector](#), most people use 3M products in their homes and their shops.



Brand recognition is a useful selling tool for wrap and graphics professionals. Don't be afraid to use it as a way to educate your customers and boost their confidence. An easy way shop owners have utilized the 3M brand name is by including certification logos on their website, or displaying them near their front-desk or office. Additionally, having color cards of [3M™ Wrap Film Series 1080](#) or product samples that feature the 3M name may be helpful when introducing different design and product options to a customer.

At the end of the day, your works speaks for itself and customers will come back because of their faith in your talent and skill. The 3M brand awareness can also make a positive impact on your customer's decision making.

Conclusion

Premium films can help you produce a quality wrap each and every time.

Using the right products will decrease installation time, ensure fewer errors and helps reduce the need for redos. Using premium products is important for speed, quality and predictability, so you can stay on track to help meet estimated costs and keep your shop on schedule. Because customer satisfaction can pay dividends with repeat customers and referrals, it's important to lay the proper groundwork for a growing, profitable business.

The market for wrap applications in the converging segments of the commercial and personal space continues to grow. The opportunities for graphics manufacturers and installers to expand their businesses are plentiful. With commitment to the artistic craft and the incorporation of a few must-do strategies to help improve efficiencies and help save costs, the sky is the limit for the future success of wrappers across the country.



3M Commercial Solutions Digital Marketing Resources

If you found this article to be helpful, we invite you to check out the following articles, all aimed at helping you build your graphics manufacturing business.

- ▶ [How to Grow Your Wrap Business](#)
- ▶ [How to Use Digital Marketing to Reach Customers](#)
- ▶ [Guide to Digital Printing](#)



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