



A New Era for Marketing

AUGUST WHITEPAPER

August 2015 Whitepaper



One of the most difficult hurdles when deploying signage is that it takes up additional real estate inside or outside of the actual business building. When placed indoors, signage occupies valuable space that could be used for products. When deployed outdoors, signs are often accompanied by restrictions or, at the very least, regulations that govern where and how they can be placed.

But there is another option. There's a frequently underutilized space many businesses can easily use to their advantage. It's free advertising space that will create tons of impressions on a daily basis and can take any location from drab to fab in mere minutes.



What is this secret space? Your windows! Window graphics are becoming a more popular way for businesses to advertise hours and contact information, but also offer a perfect canvas for a splash of graphics to support a business' overall branding efforts.

What type of window graphics is right for you?

When having a custom window graphic created for your business, you'll first need to decide how you would like the sign to be configured. Window graphics come in many forms. They can be designed in almost any shape, size and color to fit the unique needs of different businesses. They can also be made to cover partial or complete sections of windows and doors. A complete window graphic would cover

the entire area of the glass. This may require perforation to allow natural light to enter and preserve interior visibility.

One of the other choices that you'll have to make when it comes to choosing a window graphic is the adhesive method that will be utilized to attach the graphic to the actual window.

- **Decals.** Regardless of the type of decal you choose or the area of the window to which it's attached, all decals have some sort of adhesive backing that makes them stick to the window. Decals can be applied to the outside or inside of a window. The adhesive material used to apply the graphic will dry fairly quickly, but repositioning is possible before complete adhesion. Window decals are very durable and are designed to remain in place for long periods of time.

- Clear: Clear window decals are clear wherever the design is not printed. These are ideal for storefront windows and doors that require two-way visibility.
- Opaque: Opaque window decals obscure visibility from both sides of the window. They have the appearance of a frosted window. Many businesses opt to cover an entire window or door in an opaque decal that has a logo, design or other pertinent information rendered in clear text or printed in the “negative” space.
- Perforated: Perforated decals are designed for one-way visibility. These would allow those on the interior of the location to see outside but not the other way around. Perforated window decals are great for full window wraps and can be used to display a business logo, hours, contact information or any other relevant branding while allowing those on the inside to see out. People outside of the location will be able to clearly read all of the information that’s printed on the decal, but will not be able to see inside the store through any area that is covered by the graphic.
- **Clings.** Clings differ from window decals because they don’t have any adhesive that causes them to stick to the window surface. They attach to the surface through a static charge or “cling” between the window and the printed graphic. Static cling window graphics are popular because they can be easily removed and applied in different areas or saved and reused for repeat promotions.



Whether to choose a decal or cling for your window graphic depends on how the graphic will be used. As mentioned, decals have better adhesion due to their adhesive backing, but window clings are repositionable and can be used again and again. Another major difference in determining which type of window graphic would be best for your needs is the ease with which they can be removed if necessary. Clings will peel away from the window with little effort and require no clean up, but window decals sometimes require a razorblade for complete removal of the graphic and a cleaning agent to scrub away any residue left behind by the removed decal.

Another option popular with many businesses and even homeowners is a window graphic that affixes to the interior glass surface but faces outward. This

is a good choice for people who wish to have an exterior sign but want to protect it from outdoor elements. For decals, in order to be attached to the window, the images and lettering will need to be printed on the back of the decal so that the front can be coated with adhesive. Because of that, opaque and perforated graphics can't be used for inside glass graphics.

How are window graphics made?

Window graphics are created by printing on vinyl film, then coating it with an adhesive so it sticks to the intended surface. When talking about vinyl films used for visual communications applications, you may hear the terms "cast" and "calendered." Cast and calendered refer to the types of vinyl that are used, as well as the process used for creating each of the types of vinyl film.

The majority of vinyl films are created using the same materials. Beginning with polyvinylchloride (PVC) polymer, other substances such as plasticizers for flexibility, pigments for color and additives like UV absorbers are added to achieve specific properties. From there, the vinyl is treated in one of two ways:

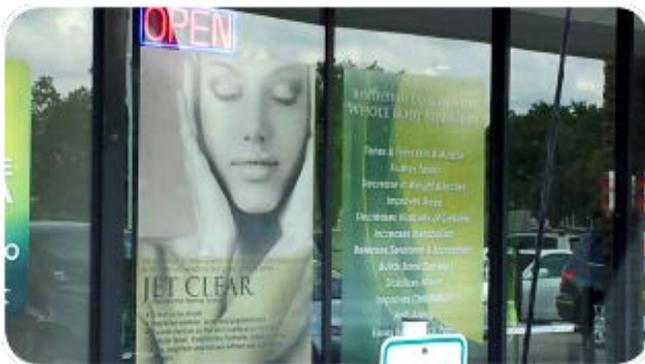
Cast vinyl, much like baking a cake, undergoes a process that includes the adding and mixing of materials which is then placed onto a casting sheet. The casting sheet is then processed through a series of ovens which allow solvents to evaporate, leaving behind a solid film. Cast vinyl is very rarely used for window graphics, as calendered film is less expensive and can be applied to windows easily.

Calendered vinyl, like its cast counterpart, is created by mixing similar raw materials. But rather than being processed on casting sheets in ovens, calendered vinyl is fed through a series of rollers that flatten and strengthen the compound. Inexpensive to produce, available in a wide range of colors and glosses and with an excellent performance record, calendered vinyl film is the first choice of window graphics producers for stunning, long-lasting visual communications.

The actual process for manufacturing, applying and removing window graphics typically involves the following steps:

1. **Design.** Whether you have a general idea in mind or need assistance coming up with a concept, with the help of a trained designer, you can create beautiful window graphics that perfectly reflect your business and objectives.
2. **Printing.** After the graphic's design has been completed, it is printed from a computer file using a wide-format printer.
3. **Plotting.** Often, graphics are then run through a plotter. A plotter uses a computer-generated file to cut out the vinyl design using a blade that's attached to a moving head.

4. **Weeding.** Once the graphic has been printed and plotted, excess material that isn't part of the final design is weeded away. This involves the use of an X-Acto knife and a steady hand.
5. **Masking.** The completed graphic is then masked in preparation for application. Essentially, the front of the graphic is covered with a transfer tape that holds the visual together in its proper configuration. This allows the complete graphic to be applied at one time, rather than placing various elements individually.
6. **Application.** When all preparation of a window graphic has been completed, the visual is finally applied. Being careful to keep everything level and to place the graphic in the proper place, an installer smooths the graphic to ensure that there's no bubbling or distortion and then peels away the backing to reveal the completed product. There are various things that can affect the application of a window graphic. Chiefly, extreme variations in temperature can have a significant effect on the decal's initial application, as well as its ultimate lifespan. Additionally, some window surfaces may be coated with substances such as silicon or anti-reflection and scratch resistant films that make applying or removing graphics next to impossible.
7. **Removal.** When you're ready to remove or swap out your graphics, window graphics are usually removed using a commercial adhesive remover and often the help of a putty knife.

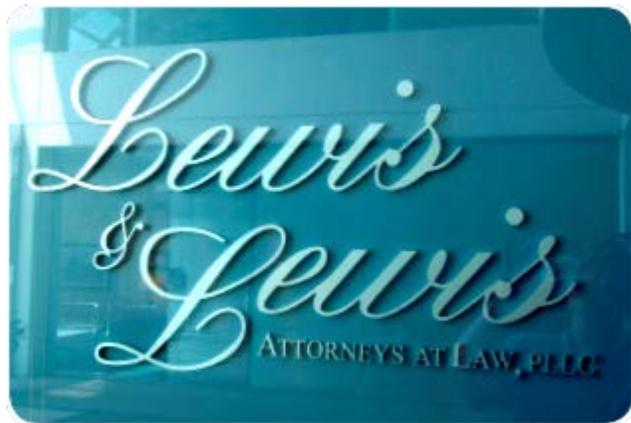


Why window graphics?

While window graphics do require an upfront cost and can be tricky to remove, the benefits far outweigh these minor considerations. Here are just a few of their many benefits:

- **Effective, affordable advertising.** Window graphics utilize space that already exists within your establishment, so should not require a drawn-out permitting or installation process. Also, window decals and clings are inexpensive compared to other advertising options and can be produced quickly.
- **Brand building.** Window graphics can be used to build your brand. Take advantage of under-utilized space to promote what sets your brand apart.
- **Promotion of specials and events.** Storefront windows are a great place to advertise current specials. And graphics printed on static clings can easily be removed as promotions change and reused in the future.

- Instant privacy. Window graphics can provide privacy for organizations that deal in sensitive matters or simply for companies that want to give their clients extra discretion to conduct their affairs.
- Better views. Some business locations don't have the advantage of facing an idyllic park or bustling intersection. For those that open into the back of another building or an alley, window graphics are a great alternative to blinds.
- Directional guidance. Window decals are often used simply to provide directions to customers. Push/pull signs on doors, arrows showing the way to rear parking, indicators of the appropriate entrance—these are all great tidbits of information that can be applied to storefront glass.
- Sun shields. One of the greatest benefits of window graphics is that they help shield an establishment from the sun. Full-window, perforated decals are great for shielding clients' and employees' eyes, while still allowing those on the inside to see out.
- Cost savings. Most cities require permits to display signage outdoors, requiring the acquisition of costly permits. If businesses do not comply with permitting restrictions, they can receive fines. Window signs can help save time and money.
- Placement options. Storefront and door windows aren't the only places that are fair game for signage. Decals and clings can be placed on bathroom mirrors or even on the windows of company vehicles, allowing you to create valuable impressions everywhere you go.



Where are window graphics used?

Where there's a window, there can be a window graphic! Some of the primary places that window graphics are used are:

- Businesses: Window graphics are most commonly used in businesses to advertise everything from the company name and logo to hours of operation and contact information and, of course, promotions, campaigns and branding. In addition, frosted crystal graphics can be applied to interior glass cubicles, office windows, etc. to resemble etched glass and enhance the overall esthetic of the office.
- Autos: As you've undoubtedly seen, vehicle window decals are becoming more and more popular. This is a great advertising option because it takes your ad on the road, literally. Graphics can be applied to side or rear

windows and can cover a partial area or the entire window. They can even be integrated with a vehicle wrap for a seamless image and look.

- Homes: Though not as common as graphics on storefront windows or vehicles, window decals are great for the home too. You can have removable clings made to represent your favorite sports team or to pay homage to your alma mater. And for a really sophisticated, high-end look, you can have opaque window decals installed to give your windows a frosted glass feel.

Window graphics from Image360

A great way to communicate to passersby when facing outward – or shoppers when facing inward – window graphics from Image360 are ideal when announcing a sale, [promoting](#) a grand opening or featuring another special event. Of course, they're also invaluable when simply communicating a business name and address, days of operation and opening hours or wayfinding information.

With Image360, you'll enjoy many options to create graphics that are right for you. Choose from window graphics for indoor or outdoor use and a variety of materials – including [vinyl signs](#) that adhere to glass through static cling for easy on/off and ready repositioning. You can select full or partial window wraps, and even opt for perforated vinyl graphics, which allow a clear view from one direction while presenting the image of a full-color window graphic to viewers on the other side.

Image360 can precisely [reproduce](#) your logo, a photo or other artwork as a full color window graphic, to the exact size you specify. Of course, the expert designers at Image360 can create wholly original graphics, as well.

Ready to take the next step? Schedule a consultation with Image360 by clicking the "Start a Conversation" button below, or calling directly 877-728-7446.