

Outlines can help with design—and installation

The creative use of outlines can save you time

By Dan Antonelli

One feature that I often use when designing a logo is an outline that “houses” all the elements of the lettering. This may involve the use of overlaying or underlaying panels, or having various elements of the design touching one another. When all the elements are tied together as an integral unit, the design itself is not only visually more interesting, but is more cohesive as well.

Outlining not only helps with creating a better logo, but also aids you in the installation of the vinyl lettering. By doing a little bit of homework in your design program before cutting the design out of vinyl, you

can create layers of vinyl that will make your installation a snap.

Work in layers By working smart in your design program, you’ll be able to avoid those unsightly seams and overlaps in your design. More importantly, you’ll be able to apply the layers quickly and accurately, without measuring and remeasuring between all the elements of the design. How? Your base layer or outline takes out all the guesswork!

Building the layers There are two ways you can install this type of design. The first way is to build the whole design in the shop,

Step-by-step: A base outline makes installation a snap

This logo uses a full yellow outline that “houses” the design and ties it together. It looks like a complicated design to install, but the yellow outline makes our job easy.

I started with the Flange Bold font for *DeFalco's*, and modified the *D, F, A* and *C*. *Towing Service* is modified Fruitiger Ultra Black. Both fonts are from Adobe [www.adobe.com]. For *Instant*, I used Bob Behounek's Chicago Style font from SignDNA [530-795-1637, www.signdna.com].



Figure 1. This represents the base layer of vinyl. Measure and rule a single baseline and it's ready to install! Holding the base layer up on the vehicle first also lets you better position the graphic.



Figure 2. The next layer is the black vinyl, which is placed in register on top of the yellow.



Figure 3. Like completing a puzzle, the remaining elements go on top of the black to complete the design.



Figure 4. From the keyline view, you'll notice there is no overlapping vinyl, no distracting seam layers—which gives a more professional result.



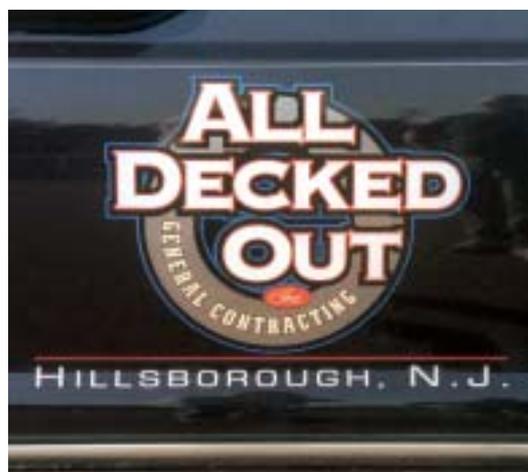
Dan Antonelli



Dan Antonelli



Dan Antonelli



Rich Dombey



Rich Dombey





Rich Dombey



Dan Antonelli



Dan Antonelli

Get paid for your vehicle lettering—and your logo design

The samples on these pages are logo designs by Rich Dombey (Rich Designs, Inc., Belle Meade, New Jersey) and myself that were used for truck lettering and other advertising. Rich and I make it a point to explain to the client that there is a separate charge for the initial logo design. This design fee includes providing camera-ready artwork and a disk, that contains versions of their logo as electronic files.

Most of the designs here have been sold for \$350 to \$500—which is a bargain. Most of the vehicles shown here have been lettered for \$375 to \$650, for two doors. The minimum price for a logo design and lettering on two doors is \$700.

Start today You may not be able to get those rates in your market, but start somewhere. If you can get an additional \$200 from the logo design and you letter 50 vehicles a year, that's an additional \$10,000 in your pocket. It's just poor business to leave that money on the table—and it further reinforces to the client that you only provide letters stuck on a truck rather than a cohesive identity.

Don't give the design away In the overall marketing scheme of a business, \$700 to establish an attractive image for themselves is a negligible expense. They are getting a lot for the money. If you've ever had a client come back after you've lettered their truck asking for the artwork, you know it's next to impossible to get any money then. You must get the money for the design upfront or it will be hard to get it later.



Rich Dombey



Rich Dombey



Dan Antonelli



with all the layers on the base layer, while still on the release liner. You then install the whole graphic in one step. I prefer this method because I find it easier to register the elements on a table than on the vehicle itself. The alternative is to apply the layers of the design on the vehicle, one layer at a time. Either method works fine.

Upsell your lettering You can use outlines in your logo design to help upsell your clients



Dan Antonelli's shop, Graphic D-Signs, Inc., is in Union, New Jersey. You can e-mail him at dan@graphicd-signs.com or visit his redesigned Web site at www.graphicd-signs.com. His book, *Logo Design for Small Business*, is available from *SignCraft*, P.O. Box 60031, Ft. Myers, FL 33906, for \$25 plus \$6 shipping and handling.

on a more sophisticated design. Reinforce to your clients the importance of a cohesive design, with all the elements fully integrated. It's not that complicated, and it adds that unique touch to their lettering that really makes it stand out.

The outer outline also helps when working on dark backgrounds. It distinguishes the lettering from the background—especially if you're using dark outlines on the main copy. •SC

There's more on www.signcraft.com

Click on *Features* to read Dan's article:

- Add dimension to your lettering with a click, May/June 2001
- And, several of Dan's past articles on design