

Making wall graphics look brilliant with Phototex repositionable wall covering

Written by Jason Price on 14 February 2017.



A lot of our work comes from the motorsports industry, which as you can probably guess means everything we produce has to always look twice as good as anything else in order to please our customers sponsors. After all, nobody in their right mind would ever sponsor a racing team that put crappy looking graphics on their cars!

We have two rules when it comes to printing for motorsports customers. The first is whatever we print has to look amazing and have built-in 'sponsor appeal', and the second is it has to handle really well when we apply it to the body of their very expensive racing cars. But it's not all about vehicle graphics. We have to produce a broad range of wall and floor graphics for these teams as well and, historically speaking, wall graphics have always been a bit of a challenge for us to get right. This is why we thought we'd give **Phototex** a bit of a go.

In a nutshell, Phototex is a self-adhesive fabric based wide format print media that can be used to create either short-term or permanent wall decor graphics - straight out of the box.

On first inspection the material itself has quite a tight weave/texture to it, and a nice sheen too, which makes for a great overall even print finish. The finish of the material is also 'tight' enough for the ink to bed-in and not spread out into the weave, which would almost certainly de-focus the print.

We ran the material through our **OKI ColorPainter** WS64 on a banner material profile, 8 pass run, and it worked perfectly with no banding issues. The artwork we set up was a mixture of photographic images and vectors with fades and tints, all of which went down without a hitch. We then profiled the material in and, to be honest, the difference was marginal, so a standard banner profile will work ok.

As mentioned above, we do quite a bit of wall art for the teams offices and other associated businesses, some of which we update a couple of times a year. This gives us the headache of stripping off self adhesive from painted surfaces, which never

ends well, but now that Phototex has hit the scene, those worries are no more!

We have used similar products in the past and have found them to be quite difficult to print on successfully. This was mostly due to the depth of the weave and that the adhesives never seem to be quite 'man' enough for slightly uneven or old surfaces. Nothing ruins your day quite like watching your freshly fitted wall art slowly un-peel itself from the wall!

We have found the adhesives on Phototex to be 'just right', the initial grab is not severe enough to cause positioning issues but once fitted it stays in place just fine. If you misalign a drop, simply whip it back up and reposition as many times as needed. A key thing to bear in mind while working with this material is trimming, as we don't like overlapped edges on wall art (we are finicky like that). This material also cuts down a treat, so there are no stringy bits of material hanging off anywhere. We also found that Phototex is really good for contour cutting! We popped a few bits of artwork through the printer then on to our **Graphtec** cutter and it cut out the logos a treat, and with no stringy leftovers! So it's extremely versatile as well.

However, what I think makes this material really stand out from the crowd is its dimensional stability; no distortion or stretching at all, no matter how much pull you apply. So if a wall graphic aligns at the top it will also be bang-on at the bottom – even with a heavy ink load the stability is not affected. Another thing I really liked was how the release liner drops off nice and easy. It's a small thing but it helps not to be fighting a material even before fitting!

Phototex is a pretty straightforward, simple, easy-to-use product suited to a massive range of interior graphics applications. What you put up will stay up, and for as long as its required, and when it comes to taking it down it simply peels off and leaves no messy residue behind. So as a graphics company, whether it is for permanent office wall art or retail promotional posters that change, or short exhibition panels and promotions, we know we will be able to rely on Phototex in future to get the job done.

For more information contact: www.phototexgroup.com

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