

# What's it cost to produce these trailer graphics?

*A digital print, layered vinyl and heavy copy add to the costs*

## Materials:

Two 10 yd. rolls 24-in. Oracal 651, red and white.....	\$66
20 feet of 15-in. Oracal 651 white .....	\$50
148-ft. of 15-in. application tape .....	\$64
4 ½-by-5 ½ ft. digital print.....	\$346
Miscellaneous: 3M adhesive remover, tape, isopropyl alcohol .....	\$25
Total materials.....	\$551

## Labor:

Sales meetings and design .....	4 ½ hours
Wash trailer and remove manufacturer's graphics...	2 hours
Digital printing, cut and mask lettering: .....	7 ½ hours
Install lettering .....	10 hours
Total: .....	24 hours

I designed the logo for Campbell Concrete when they got started about five or six years ago, using a graphic with the look of stamped concrete. I did their pickup truck and business cards first, and since then have done site signs and other signage. Recently they brought me a second pickup and this new construction trailer. All the vehicles are black.

There is a lot of copy on this trailer. You try to educate customers about the limited time that people have to read a sign as they see a sign as they pass by on the road, but it's hard for most of them to understand that. Often they have a lot of information that they really want people to know about their business—and they want it on the sign.

That was the case with this long list of services. I felt it would work best on the rear doors, since traffic following the trailer has much more time to read. But he really wanted it on both sides as well, so I explained that we needed to not compromise the main message—his company name, which says what he does—by making it smaller to make room for the services. I moved the list away from the logo as a separate copy block with plenty of negative space around it.

In the end, we were able to achieve what he wanted, which was to make it a rolling billboard. All the lettering on this sign is cut vinyl film and the logo image is a digital print. We removed all of the manufacturer's logo decals before we started.

To get realistic production times, it's important to track all the time that a task takes, start to finish. For example, you can't just log the time it takes to install the graphics—you have to include setup and clean up time, and the inevitable interruptions.

The times shown are total man hours, since Brian Miller and I both worked on the project. I did the initial meetings with the customer, and Brian photographed the trailer and sized up the graphics. Brian then showed the design to the customer and made a few minor changes. I washed the trailer, then Brian and I installed the graphics.



Kevin's shop, Wright Signs Inc., is in Adrian, Michigan.



**Initial meeting, take photos and design graphics: 4 ½ hours** Once we were ready to start the actual production, the first step was to wash the trailer and remove the manufacturer's graphics, which took about two hours.



**Print logo, cut vinyl lettering, apply transfer tape: 7 ½ hours** After the graphics were produced and ready to apply, we started installing them. Thanks to the ladder racks, the trailer wouldn't quite fit in the shop. Fortunately we got a nice day so we did the application outside. It took about 10 man hours to install all the graphics.



Here's the completed trailer, and below is a pickup truck we just did for them a few weeks ago.

