

2017
**TRUCK & VAN
 CONTEST**

On the following pages are the winners of the first annual Wood Floor Business Truck and Van Contest. We were blown away by the number of submissions and eye-catching vehicles, so we decided to feature more than only the three winners of Best Exterior Graphics, Most Organized Interior and Most Unique. We're awarding honorable mentions for categories we came up with for fun—Best Matching Vehicle and Trailer, Most Shiny and Tightest Fit, to name a few.

Following the contest winners is a deep dive into vehicle security. Almost everyone in the industry knows someone whose vehicle was burglarized. We spoke with a local crime prevention law enforcement officer for the do's and the don'ts when it comes to keeping your vehicle and your equipment out of the hands of criminals. Turn to page 53 to read that article.



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Signature Innovations Owner Tom Koczur wanted no visible area of his vehicle “un-wrapped,” including the hinges, the insides of doors and underneath the headlights.



Photos: Lauren Justice

Best Exterior Graphics

Signature Innovations LLC

Elk Grove Village, Ill.

SIGNATURE INNOVATIONS LLC doesn't do “little.” Co-owner Tom Koczur established the company 15 years ago as a destination for wide-plank and long-length products in the Chicagoland area. The design for the company's vans was no different—Koczur went big.

This 2013 Mercedes Sprinter features a full-body wrap, which means the image and lettering were printed on a single sheet of plastic and hand-cut to fit every nook and cranny of the vehicle without any overlapping. And that's literally every nook and cranny: The wrap goes underneath the van, around door edges, between the headlight glass and the car body. The wrap even covers the four hinges on the back doors.

Koczur said it wasn't easy to find a company willing to install a single-sheet full-body wrap. The first few he approached told

him no. Finally, one agreed. The search—and the added expense—was worth it.

“The first day we took it out, I was at a gas station and people were just looking and staring at it,” Koczur says. “A couple people approached. It was quite fun.”

The image on the wrap is of 5-inch-wide, hand-scraped French oak. It was taken as part of an advertising campaign years ago, and Koczur thought it would be perfect for the van because it represents the core of his business, which installs flooring with a European aesthetic. Koczur came to the United States from Poland, and he brought many of the styles and techniques with him, from the species of wood to the finish. His company also hand-scrapes every plank they install, which is why the scraper and wood shavings are featured prominently.

Since the original image was nowhere near the size of a Sprinter, Koczur hired a graphic designer to blow up the image and mold it to the shape of the van. The process took about three months. Koczur says he didn't want to rush it—the wrap was going to be on the van for a long time, so it made sense to take the time to do it right. To protect the wrap from fading, he had it covered with several layers of protective UV coating.

It's been three years since Koczur had the wrap installed, and it looks the same today as it looked when he first took it out on the road, he says.

“It is a great advertisement. You drive around everywhere you go—every job you take your vehicle,” he says. “Make it an investment. Hire a pro to help you. It will be money well-spent.” —A.A.

TOM'S TIPS FOR A VEHICLE WRAP

1. Protect it. Make sure you cover the wrap with a durable coating that protects against UV rays.
2. Less is more. Only put one picture of your best job, even if you have more. Additional photos will overwhelm the viewer.
3. Think about readability. The name of the company is the largest item on the van. The phone number and website are distinct from the company's motto/tagline.
4. Colors. Koczur says he believes people's brains record lighter colors on a dark background faster than the other way around.
5. Information on all sides. Put your company's information on all three sides of your vehicle. (Editor's note: We've even seen information on the top of vehicles that have areas with lots of overpasses.)
6. Take your time with the design. Have a design company mock up five to seven designs and show them around, put them on Facebook, etc., to get opinions before choosing one.
7. Don't hire wrap installers to design your wrap. Wrap companies, Koczur says, want to make the biggest buck for the least amount of work, so they'll convince you to use one of their pre-made templates. He hired a design firm that wasn't associated with a wrap shop.