

Nuts and bolts of a wrap shop.

Design computer

As you will be working on very large files you need a computer that can handle the work. WE recommend having a big computer with plenty of RAM and an external hard drive for backing up your work. It is also a good idea to backup your backup. Here are a few specs. that will help. Mac's are designed to design.

Design computer specs.

Processor Name - 2GHz or greater Intel Core 2 Duo

RAM - 3GB or more

Hard Drive - 250 GB or more

2 External Hard Drives - 500 GB or more

Firewire 400 or 800 ports for faster file transfers

Design software

Adobe Creative Suite 3 or 4 standard

This design package will have everything you need to create a design for a vehicle wrap or any other media for advertising. There are a few different configurations you can get for this software including web and video support. Find the package that fits your need. Adobe Creative Suite is the industry standard and will out perform all others.

RIP station specs.

Your rip station needs to be a workhorse as well. The bigger the computer the faster RIP times you will experience. Your RIP computer most likely has to be a PC to run most rip applications. ONYX, VersaWorks, FLEXI, etc. with the exception of the wonderful Caldera RIP software. With Caldera you can rip straight from your mac or pc.

Processor Name - 2GHz or greater Intel Core 2 Duo

RAM - 4GB or more. The more you have the faster your computer will operate.

Hard Drive - 250 GB or more

Printer

There are many great large format digital printers on the market. Do the research and choose the printer that is right for you.

Laminator

A good laminator is very important and can make or break your production. My favorite 3 are AGL Compadre or AGL Encore and Seal Image 600C, all of which have pneumatically controlled pressure nip rollers.

Plotter

A stand alone plotter is a great thing to have in your shop. You can be cutting vinyl while you are printing something else on your printer. Summa D160-R is a great drag blade 63" plotter. Again do the research and find the machine that best fits your needs.

Work tables

Be sure to have plenty of tables in your shop. Your tables should be wider than the materials you print on and preferably longer than your prints. This allows you to roll out your entire print, let it dry if necessary, trim after lamination and makes the production process easier overall. This also ensures that your prints never hit the floor.

Controlled environment

This is extremely important for the production of your graphics. Temperature and humidity can affect the way your printer prints, the way the media accepts the ink, and dry times. If you control your environment you eliminate the fluctuation in print quality.