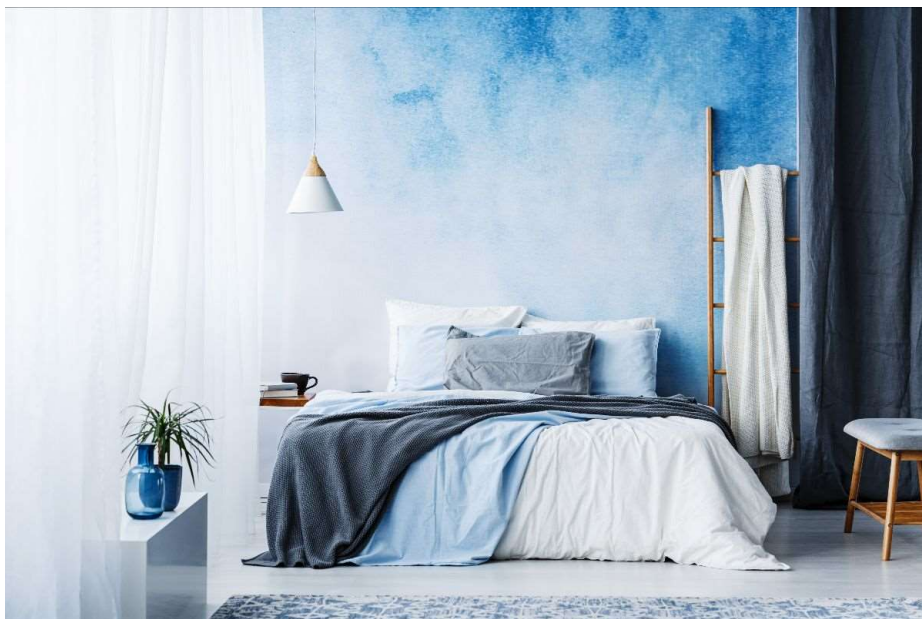


Wall Graphics: Fail to Prepare, Prepare to Fail

It's no surprise that over the past decade wall graphics have become more and more relevant. The explosion of higher quality and more affordable large format printers has enabled graphics companies to offer their customers more than just their standard signs, vehicle graphics and posters. Offices, schools, gyms and hospitals, to name but a few, are all benefiting from using formerly blank wall space to convey a mission statement or promotional message – or simply to brighten things up.

However, wall graphics can all too often go wrong, and sometimes very badly. This is due to the minefield that is different types of paint (particularly interior paints) and their compatibility with wall graphics products. Factors such as the incorrect face film and incorrect adhesive (including the wrong coat weight of adhesive) can have a disastrous effect.





A common cause of failure is lack of a proper site survey. This should include peel testing the products that will potentially be used, checking the paint in situ, finding out if there are any air conditioning units or heaters in the vicinity and what the local ambient atmosphere is, and, if possible, discovering what is under the paint and how long ago the paint was actually applied. There's lots of detective work to do!

Sign makers and printers can easily fall into the trap of thinking any wall graphics media will work with any wall – only to then get a call the next day from their client complaining that their wall graphics have overnight become floor graphics. Explaining to the customer that they would like to visit the site to check the walls and do some testing in advance of producing the graphics can eliminate a world of pain – and embarrassment. The end-user won't always grant this request, but most will understand that a day's disruption is better than several extra days on site to correct any faults later. A survey will make everyone's life far simpler in the long run.





Washable or wipeable paints that have become very popular over the past few years never make for an easy install when it comes to adhesive. Put simply, if a paint wants to chemically repel dirt, ink and fingerprints it will want to do the same to adhesive. If not prepped correctly, the highest strength adhesives can still fail when applied to these types of paints. Even if the bond is a 'pass' but the face film isn't stable enough, a 'pass' can quickly become a 'fail' as the film is effectively pulling on the adhesive. And it is often the case where wall graphics need to be fitted when the wall was only painted a matter of days (sometimes hours!) ago.

Paint needs to have been applied a bare minimum of 72 hours in advance (ideally a lot longer) to give any adhesive a fighting chance of working. And if the printer has input into the type of paint to be used, a basic emulsion paint is a far better choice as this has no washable properties to it. However, if a washable or wipeable paint has been used, there are some fixes. Ideally, this type of paint needs sanding to remove the 'washable' surface. Sanding generates a whole new problem of dust – and lots of it – but this is the preferred workaround for this type of paint. If this is not possible, a good quality sealer or primer to lock in the washable properties of the paint is a viable alternative. All finishes also need to be clean; a seemingly obvious fact that can be overlooked.

Source: DRYTAC – approved supplier of Signs Now UK.

Drytac has evolved into a highly regarded manufacturer of adhesive-coated products. With offices around the globe and manufacturing facilities in the United Kingdom and Canada, Drytac serves a truly international marketplace. Their core product line consists of laminating films & mounting adhesives; window, wall & floor graphic media as well as many other products.