

# THE BASIC GUIDE TO VINYL AND ADHESIVE REMOVAL.

To date, no one has discovered a magic formula that makes old vinyl and adhesive immediately disappear from the surface that it covers. Vinyl graphics only peel off without a trace of residue when they shouldn't and what was proposed to be a simple vinyl removal project can sometimes go on unexpectedly for hours.

In these eventualities, with a bit of foresight and armed with a choice of vinyl removal accessories to hand to speed up the process - money can still be made when stripping vinyl graphics.

## HOW TO REMOVE VINYL GRAPHICS

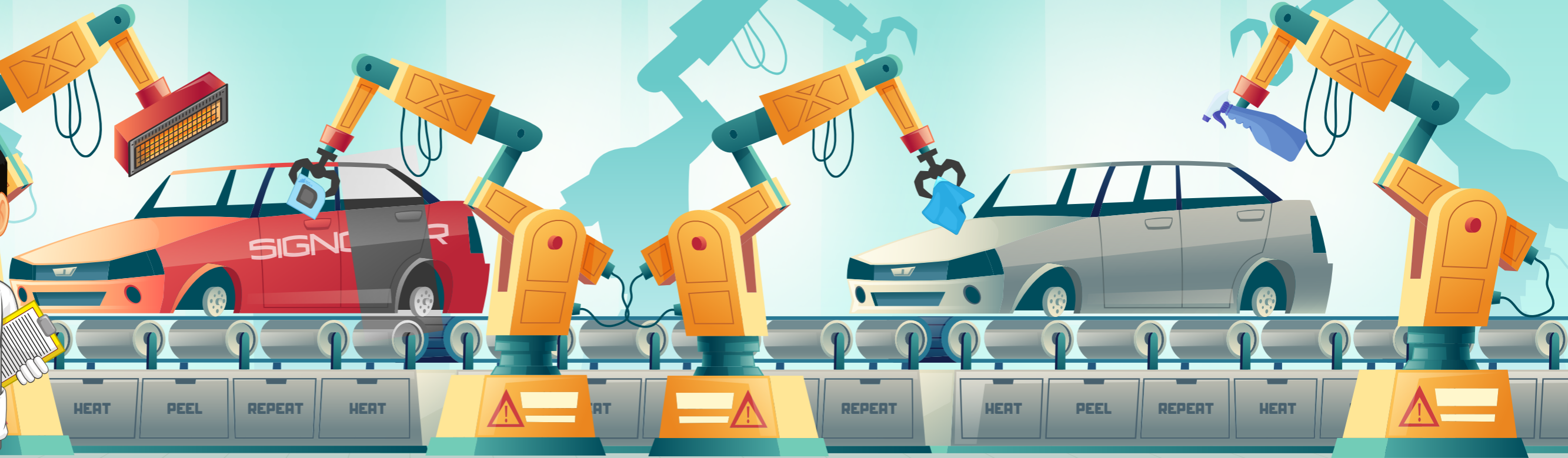
Let's get started. Basics you will need...

**Standard equipment - any hot air gun + plastic scraper** (plastic - so as not to damage panels, paintwork or glass) A plastic blade is ideal to use as a tool because it's much safer for both you and the substrate. The plastic blade will still work the same as a metal razor blade but without the chance of it scratching or scraping ... Plastic razor blades are designed to slide under vinyl and decals to gently lift them.

**Glue/residue remover** - There are a choice of glue removers available which are either chemical or citrus based. They both work by attacking the chemical bonds of the adhesive, allowing you to wipe it off of the substrate using your plastic scraper. Chemical based products can offer better results and are more aggressive in breaking down the adhesive.

**Nitrile Gloves** disposable gloves are a good choice and provide superior resistance to chemicals, cuts, abrasions and tears.

**Wipes** - Disposable strong blue wipes are a good choice for soaking with glue remover and taping to the vinyl with masking tape for a short period to speed up the vinyl/glue removal process. They can also be used for wiping residue from scrapers and the final wiping down of panels. A heavy grade 85gsm wipe would be a good choice - robust enough for industrial solvents and chemicals as well as being very absorbent, leaving surfaces clean and dry.



## PRICING

Stripping vinyl graphics can be one of the most challenging things in a sign shop's operation, especially when you are trying to estimate the time that it'll take to do a stripping job. When pricing, it's always best to offer a guide price as it will ideally need to be charged at an hourly rate.

If you're planning on removing vinyl on a regular basis or quoting for an entire fleet consider investing in a

power tool which is more powerful and efficient. The MBX Vinyl Zapper, for example, has the capacity to safely remove the vinyl and adhesive in one pass with no damage to factory finish paintwork.

If the opportunity arises, **spot test** to determine how difficult it will be to remove the vinyl. Plus make the customer aware that in the process if the panels have been resprayed there is the possibility that the vinyl may also lift the paint when removed.

**Tip** - Test an inconspicuous area such as the bottom sill of a door with a small strip of Sellotape (Yes, Sellotape!) Firmly apply a short length and give a sharp tug to give yourself a good indication if the paint or lacquer is going to lift (this can be a common occurrence when a vehicle has had a poorly keyed respray job)

**Customer questioning the price?**  
Give them a choice. Arm them with the basic kit - a plastic

scraper and some adhesive remover - you'll find demonstrating to them how difficult and time consuming it is to strip the vinyl will soon justify the price, plus there's the task of polishing the panels at the end of it too if ghosting occurs (especially with red or dark paintwork)...

Rest assured, once the customer has tried it for themselves they'll either invest in their own time or they'll hand the job back to you and won't care what it costs.



Factors like the type of vinyl and the length of time it has been on a vehicle will have a major impact on how easy or difficult the graphics are to remove. Also, its exposure to UV sunlight and heat if it is usually parked in the sun during the day or near to a heat source (eg: a portable spit roast trailer) will make removal more challenging.



As vinyl ages, the plasticiser "migrates" to the front and back surfaces. Eventually it saturates the adhesive, resulting in the face film becoming brittle and breaking down into small pieces on removal or the adhesive will delaminate from the face, leaving a lot of adhesive residue to remove separately.