

Taking vehicle branding above and beyond

 By [Beverley Klein](#)

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Out of home branding is a trend that's growing in leaps and bounds, with billboards, digital signage and more. But there's one that's been the business of Graffiti for the past 16 years: vehicle branding...

Graffiti specialises in transit branding, trucks, cars, busses, you name it. After starting out as a signage shop, Graffiti quickly morphed into a vehicle- and truck-branding business to become a national operation.



You can break up the business into four divisions: there's Graffiti Impact, which is your media division offering road hoardings, building wraps, busses and cabs branding, tavern media, as well as a digital platform offering; then there's Graffiti Designs, which involves car and truck branding; Graffiti Retail, which features general branding services such as interior/exterior business signage and visuals; and then Graffiti Tarpaulins, which does the branding & non-branded curtain sides for trucks.

I sat down with the Director in the Cape Town branch, Darren Kirby, who started out in production back in 1997 and from there was involved in new media, then went onto Primedia and managed two businesses within their out-of-home portfolio for just on seven years, before joining Graffiti around four years ago. He filled me in on where Graffiti is heading and shares some insights into the transit branding industry in SA.

■ *How has mobile branding taken off in South Africa?*

Darren: We definitely see a trend developing, the economy is tight at the moment, so clients don't spend as much on traditional advertising and marketing as they used to, so they use their own assets base and that's where Graffiti have been benefitting for the last couple of years.

We're seeing companies using their own fleets now as advertising, because ultimately it's a moving billboard platform. In addition to this there's also a security benefit as branded vehicles draw attention.

■ *Are you looking north into Africa at the moment, especially now with so many companies planning on targeting emerging markets?*

Darren: I feel there is a market for us in logistics branding looking north into Africa. Graffiti is the biggest vehicle brander in the country, there are other companies of course but not at the same scale that we can do it, and when you've grown to the size we have, you start looking at where the next area of growth is going to take place. We've got to find new markets, and logistically there aren't many more avenues in SA so we'll now look at African markets, and possibly doing joint ventures with existing suppliers in these countries.

We've just invested in a new printer, which is the first of its kind in the country, where we can print faster and at a very high quality, so we have to look into different areas to maximise its capability.

■ *Seeing as you're a predominantly print business, is Graffiti looking to move to digital?*

Darren: In terms of digital, it's not really a business we want to pursue on the transit side. I personally feel it's a sort of 'hamster wheel', you start selling that media and in two to three years' time there's new improved technology, you get screens fading its colour and brightness, so now clients start to consider reinvesting in new screens.

With that said though, our Retail department has done work on the digital side very successfully. Clients, where branding solutions are considered for in-office enhancement, don't just want static media, a digital element is almost always required and with what seems to be the way consumer communication platforms are heading, it's one we obviously cannot ignore.

■ *In terms of mobile branding, how do you measure ROI?*

Darren: There isn't a perfect science to this, but we do occasionally use a spreadsheet formula for clients that's based on potential product sales versus client branding spend. So for example, if you sell ovens and brand a couple of your vehicles, we'll take the cost of the branding over a three-year period, which is what we guarantee the branding of the vehicles for, and then you can gauge the potential return on exposure gained and resulting sales from this... With that said, we are currently talking to a market research agency with a view to creating our own definitive research, from an actual branding project - a perfect case study opportunity to use as a possible ROI model for future client reference. The results should be quite interesting.

■ *What trends are you seeing in the mobile and transit branding industry?*

Darren: If we look at our client base and sales over the last 18 months, it's definitely a growing platform. Clients are starting to realise that instead of spending hundreds and thousands of rands on media strategies, it pays to use your own resources for enhancing brand communication.

We're seeing a lot more truck branding taking place. In the last six months to a year we've also seen more logistics companies coming to us looking to brand trucks for their clients that they service, third-party advertising, where they're doing the deal internally and then we facilitate the branding.

Definitely some food for thought in terms of different avenues for branding and advertising. You can contact Graffiti via their website www.graffiti.co.za/, like them on [Facebook](#) and follow on Twitter: [@GraffitiPty](#).

ABOUT BEVERLEY KLEIN

Beverley Klein is the editor of the Marketing Media South Africa section on Bizcommunity.com. With a background in journalism and historical studies, she's dived into the world of industry news, curating content, writing and interviewing thought leaders. She's often spotted in a forest on the weekend and rarely seen without a camera. Follow [@BevCPT](#).

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