



# Graphics with an Attitude Designs Vehicles with an Attitude ... and an EDGE

**Product Spotlight:**  
GERBER EDGE®  
  
**Graphics with an Attitude**  
Croydon, PA

Eric Musser is the owner of Graphics with an Attitude, a 6000 sq. ft. sign shop in suburban Croydon, Penn., 15 minutes from Philadelphia. The 26-year old designer’s business, which was established three years ago, specializes in vehicle graphics.

He gets a lot of help with his vinyl sign work from three companions who never leave his side. They are all from Gerber Scientific Products. The GERBER EDGE® does digital color printing while HS15plus™ and GSXplus™ sprocket-fed plotters and an EmbossTrack™ friction-fed plotter cut all the vinyl.

### Pushing Productivity Over the EDGE

Ninety percent of all his work is done on the EDGE. “Today I did seven pretty big jobs,” says Musser. “If you’re doing two colors, it’s a lot easier and less time-consuming to pop out a foil.



You just pop in a black foil and do your outline, or whatever, with a foil instead of laying two colors and cutting two colors. Before we had the EDGE, we couldn’t do any shading unless we cut or stenciled the vinyl and then airbrushed it.”

He does a high volume of work for other sign companies. Things move a lot faster with the EDGE because multicolor jobs stay on one machine and only get cut once instead of once for each color. When it’s time to apply the vinyl, there is only one piece, or one

piece per panel, instead of many smaller pieces to be applied. Musser appreciates the extra speed and efficiency. He says, “Productivity is 100% better. I use a lot less vinyl. If I had to cut all the different colors for a job, there would be a lot of excess. There’s probably 50% to 60% less waste now.”

Musser remembers when he had to do a full color picture for a customer who, like most of his clients, tends to work irregular hours during the week. The only day he was available was Sunday. Musser says, “He needed the vehicles done right away. If I didn’t have the EDGE, it would have taken about ten more hours per vehicle.”



Reproducing that color photo would have been much more difficult without the EDGE. The EDGE can reproduce a photo as a weatherproof image that can be quickly applied to a vehicle, building, window, or other surface. Normally, the artist would have to airbrush the image by hand to look as much like the original photograph as possible, but the EDGE can reproduce an identical image over and over again.

Especially if you're working on a Sunday, the benefits are evident. Musser says, "If you have to hand paint something, it has to dry in between colors. It would take more than a day or maybe even more than a weekend to do a fleet of vehicles. If you print on vinyl, you can lay the pieces down one after another without waiting for anything to dry. You print one out, weed it, and apply it while the other one is printing. There's no waiting, but you get the same effects as with hand painting. With the EDGE, I did three trucks that Sunday."

### **Creativity to Spare**

As an artist, he takes pleasure in discovering the endless creative possibilities of the EDGE. "The neatest thing about the EDGE is learning new things on it that other EDGE users didn't think could be done. I like doing four-color process on vehicles and on lettering. When people see that, their eyes light up. Sometimes I'll sit here until three or four o'clock in the morning and just play on the EDGE and see how different things print out. I've had other EDGE owners look at things I've done and not know how I did it. You just find out how to do these things by accident."

Musser's customers are also becoming aware of the new possibilities, something that helps him realize additional profits. He says, "Customers begin to see what you can do, and their views change—especially doing race cars. They'll start out with a basic job, see something else that you do, and change it. For instance, there was someone I know here getting some landscaping trucks done, and it went from being something basic to taking two months to figure out what he wanted. We played with his signage, and it got real fancy. It went from like a few hundred dollar job to a couple thousand dollar job. The EDGE can produce better signage that can command a higher price. It costs less for the person making the sign, but the final product is of a higher value. If it wasn't for the EDGE, I wouldn't be able to do it all by myself."

Musser recalls some of the more unusual projects that the EDGE allowed him to tackle with confidence. He mentions a restored 1953 panel truck covered with a hundred coffee cup decals that was done for a large supplier of coffee and vending items. The decals were four to six inches apart and even covered the roof! The company used the truck to give out samples of coffee which they sell to businesses. "My friend painted the whole truck, and I did all the coffee cups. We had to apply them and put the sign on there, too. That truck is unusual enough to stop people in their tracks. Other companies have said that they want a vehicle like that but decorated with their own decals," he says.

He also uses the EDGE to do work on detailed custom mailboxes for a large company. He makes decals of ducks, cats, dogs, flowers, people's names, and more. He has even started making ivy for the posts. The ivy starts at the ground level and goes all the way up the mailbox. The images are hand drawn, scanned in, and reproduced as mostly four-color decals.

Even a traditional customer like the fire department has started requesting new designs. Musser

just created a detailed design for about seven fire trucks. It featured gold lettering and an American flag in the shape of the United States. The four-color process flag was made to look like it was waving.

### **Why Gerber?**

In the beginning, Graphics with an Attitude was a hand lettering and airbrushing venture. When Musser was first thinking about getting into vinyl lettering, he picked up a few sign magazines to find out more about it. He says, "All my friends in the sign business had told me it was way too much money to get into vinyl lettering. Then one day I just called a sign shop from the magazines and talked to them about how much it would cost, and it didn't seem like that much money to me at all."

Musser did some research and made his decision when the time was right. "Everybody I talked to seemed to steer toward Gerber. I saw different machines that belonged to other people. I just didn't like them; as soon as I saw them, I knew that wasn't for me. With the Gerber EmbossTrack, I saw it, I liked it, and I bought it. I was happy with how it worked, so I went down to the local distributor and bought the EmbossTrack in cash. A couple of months later, I bought the EDGE," he says.

He uses only Gerber vinyl, foils, and blades. "I've had certain customers bring me a different vinyl that they wanted used on their job, so I've tried others; but I don't like it so I don't use it. I guarantee all my work, so I'm not going to give them something I don't like. I like the fact that Gerber provides a 3M™-based product. People say that names don't matter, but when it's 3M and Gerber combined, it matters!"

Musser is committed to growing his business with Gerber. He says, "If I've ever had a problem with Gerber, they've always fixed it right away; but I've never had a serious problem. So I'll keep on buying their equipment. Graphics with an Attitude actually started out to be mostly T-shirts. It wasn't like a business business. Now it's a full-time job." It's amazing what can be accomplished with the right attitude.

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