

What's it cost to produce this cut-and-roll 4-by-8 sign?

Practical, low-cost production makes it affordable yet profitable

By David Showalter

Materials

Omega-Bond board	\$ 85
Lettering enamel	\$ 12
Fine line tape	\$ 4
Masking tape	\$ 1
18-in. transfer tape	\$ 6
9-in. roller	\$ 2
Total	\$110

Labor 2 hrs. 40 min.

Here's a fairly simple, straightforward sign, but it does the job. I think there's more to it than what first meets the eye, if you think about the sign as a whole. The eagle overlapping the SRI is a nice design element. But what about the rest of the sign? It's all about tax and accounting, which is the message. The client asked me to include an eagle in the design. He had some artwork with him that was along those lines and liked the artwork we came up with for the design.

This is one of those everyday sign projects

done with the customer's budget in mind. I used a sheet of 1/8-in. prefinished blue composite stock and the cut-and-roll approach goes quickly. Using a reverse panel across the bottom lets me add some interest with-out really adding any production time. *SC



David Showalter's shop, David Design, is in Bryan, Ohio.



Layout and design on the computer:

20 minutes. Again, this was a basic design, so it didn't take too long to create the layout. But it did take about 20 minutes. Sometimes it's easy to overlook the time we spend on layout—especially on routine signs.



Tape off bottom panel: 10 minutes.

This photo shows the area I masked off using 3M Fine Line tape for the panel at the bottom of the sign. Here you also see some of the materials I'll be using: lettering enamel, a Wooster TIZ foam roller, Fine Line and masking tape.



Masking for cut-and-roll: 15 minutes. The top part of this sign will be hand-cut, weeded, then rolled with lettering enamel. I apply 18-in. wide transfer tape and squeegee it down really well so that paint doesn't creep under the paper before I peel it off.



Pounce pattern: 10 minutes. Now you see me pouncing the paper pattern onto the transfer tape. I made the pattern on my 15-in. plotter, taped it together, then positioned and pounced it.



Hand-cut logo and primary copy: 30 minutes.

Using a No. 11 X-Acto knife, I hand-cut the eagle and the *SRI* copy, then weeded out the material I will be painting.



Cut and apply mask: 20 minutes.

Here I'm laying down a computer-cut reverse mask for the *Tax & Accounting* copy in the bottom panel.



Apply paint: 20 minutes.

Using lettering enamel and a foam roller, I rolled the exposed areas of the masked sign face.



Remove mask: 20 minutes.

While the paint is still wet, I pull all of the mask off the whole sign and clean up any spots where the paint may have crept under the mask.

