



## VINYL APPS

By Steve Aust

### A Graphic Power Play

A Quebec shop produces a hat trick for a Canadian hockey-gear chain.

"With so many different types of signage and graphics in one location, we consider this job a showcase of our capabilities."

Throughout most of the U.S., hockey is considered a peripheral sport. Ardent fans reside along the Eastern seaboard and in the upper Midwest, but support for warm-climate teams in Phoenix, Tampa Bay and Dallas can be fickle at best.

However, hockey permeates Canadian culture. My one trip north in 2001 occurred during the National Hockey League's (NHL) Stanley Cup finals. Procuring a drink at the hotel bar during Game 7 required navigating through a more densely packed and frenzied crowd than any I've experienced at a Super Bowl gathering. So, although May usually triggers Americans to initiate summer plans, in Canada, it means

the NHL playoffs have hit high gear. The Philadelphia Flyers, Detroit Red Wings and other top teams vie for Lord Stanley's Cup and the ceremonial drink of champagne from the championship trophy's bowl.

Pro Hockey Life (PHL) is a Canadian equipment and apparel chain founded in 1973. In 2007, its parent company, Sports Gilbert Rousseau (SGR), decided to expand PHL's presence as a hockey-gear megastore across Canada. The theme: "Live the Game." Marc Chapleau Designer, SGR's commercial design firm, recommended Groupe BO Concepts (GBC) Anjou, QC, Canada, an environmental-graphics fabricator, for the project.

Since the plan's inception, GBC has completely rebranded five existing stores, and produced signage and graphics for 15 new locations. Each of the 20 store's environmental-graphics package required 175 signs, which ranged from 5-in.-diameter, NHL decals to 12 x 80-ft. banners stretched over aluminum frames.

"The goal of the project was to create an innovative, commercial design, while working with such major partners as Bauer, Nike, Reebok, CCM and Warrior, to enhance the consumers' shopping experience," said Pierre Lachapelle, GBC's sales and marketing director.

Each graphic evolved from more than 100 image files, supplied by the respective vendors, which GBC cropped to fit each store's configuration for each brand's display spaces. The team used Adobe Illustrator and customized PSD (Austin, TX) information-management software to craft the campaign's content.

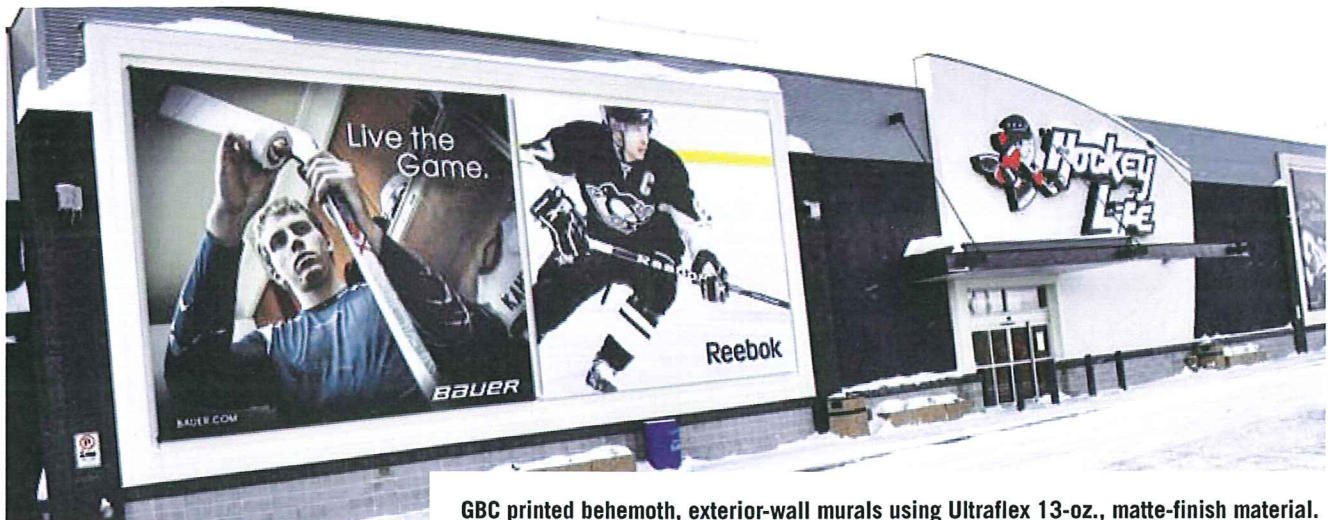
For curb appeal, GBC created more than 2,000 sq. ft. of murals for the store's exterior. The shop printed graphics on Ultraflex 13-oz., matte-finish, frontlit banner material on an HP Scitex XP2700 UV-cure-ink, roll-to-roll printer. Lachapelle says the shop does no full-solvent-ink printing because of the inks' high VOC content. To support the exterior murals, GBC implemented its in-house Meli-BO framing system that, according to the company, allows even tension across the banner's surface and seamless graphic changeouts.

Creating customer buzz inside the store required a multifaceted plan as aggressive as a power-play surge toward the goal. A bright-red, 22-ft.-diameter, suspended ring hangs high above store shelves. GBC decorated the rings with the logos of all 30 NHL teams using FLEXcon's BusMark



Groupe BO Concepts (GBC) Anjou, QC, Canada, fabricated a comprehensive environmental-graphics program for Pro Hockey Life (PHL), a Canadian hockey-equipment and paraphernalia chain. Each store's graphic focal point comprises a 22-ft.-diameter, red ring, which GBC decorated with NHL team logos using FLEXcon's BusMark film.

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**GBC printed behemoth, exterior-wall murals using Ultraflex 13-oz., matte-finish material. It output the graphics on an HP Scitex XP 2700 UV-curable-ink printer. GBC's Meli-BO banner-framing system secures the graphics.**

vinyl. PHL's corporate logo, was applied underneath.

GBC also fabricated several suspended, 5-ft.-diameter, rotating cylinders with aluminum frames covered with flexible, digitally printed, PVC panels. A small motor rotates the cylinder.

"We produced the graphics with the understanding that they would be retrofitted frequently," he said.

For many of the stores' interior perimeters, GBC implemented its proprietary Magne-BO graphic system, which comprises a permanent, magnetic backer covered with magnet-receptive, printable media. The printed film rolls over the backer (both the backer and media are laid flat for at least one hour at

room temperature prior to installation) and can be replaced quickly with new graphics. Altogether, the shop used the magnetic-graphic system to create more than 3,000 sq. ft. of murals per store.

For the textured, concrete walls, GBC used 3M's IJ-8624 textured-surface film. The shop used Clear

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**Many of the PHL's interior, POP graphics comprise GBC's Magne-BO proprietary, magnetic-media system. The company prints the graphics on magnetic-receptive media, and covers the wall with a magnetic backer before rolling the substrate over the surface.**

Focus Imaging's ClearVue 40%-perforated film with the Magne-BO system to decorate windows and glass panels. The Vanier (QC) PHL location required 3,000 sq. ft. of perforated vinyl.

"The biggest challenge of the job was coordinating the logistics of graphics for all five sponsors to make sure all were handled efficiently," Lachapelle said. "With so many different types of signage and graphics in one location, we consider this job a showcase of our capabilities."

To supplement the branding provided by the vinyl-graphic system, GBC also fabricated such pieces as Nike's signature swoosh as a 7-ft.-long, 5-in.-thick piece from high-gloss, white acrylic, and



letters for PHL's skate shop with lettering router-cut from PVC sheet and laminated with mirror-finish, pressure-sensitive film. GBC also incorporated LED-lit, 1.5-in.-thick, POP lightboxes that highlight PHL's broad product repertoire.

GBC required five- or six-week turnarounds to deliver each store's graphics, and DesignGold Contracting Inc. (Toronto) installed each store's graphics in approximately one week. ■

### Got Apps?

ST's Vinyl Apps column displays distinctive, digitally printed vinyl (or vinyl alternative) graphics monthly. We're seeking cool applications. Whether it's a funky vehicle wrap, an impressive mural or an eye-catching banner, please send us your best work. Contact Senior Associate Editor Steve Aust at [steve.aust@stmediagroup.com](mailto:steve.aust@stmediagroup.com) or (513) 263-9308 to send information.