

mactac® product spotlight



Challenge

Create a lightweight, custom, color change flexible film and adhesive solution that is easy to install for a low-surface energy blimp and ensures strong adhesion and long-term removability.

Customer

Central Graphics, Akron, Ohio

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Akron, Ohio

Application

Blimp easy to install color change

Solution

Mactac custom cast vinyl with removable adhesive and air-egress liner



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Project Summary

Goodyear, an Akron-based global mobility company, is known for its tires, service, and technology – and its iconic Goodyear Blimp. The blimp has a rich history of making aerial appearances at the biggest events, from the World Series to the Olympic Games and Academy Awards. To celebrate the aircraft's 100th anniversary, Goodyear wanted to pay homage to its first blimp by bringing back the original branding. With project parameters that included the need for a lightweight solution that would hide the aircraft's current appearance for one year, Goodyear turned to Akron-based Central Graphics.

Having past experience with the blimp, Central Graphics started with products they'd previously used. However, they found the timeline was too tight for the specific colors and characteristics needed, such as proper adhesion, repositionability, air release and removability to the specialty material used to keep the blimp airborne. Central Graphics called the experts at Mactac® to try their hand with the challenge.

"Mactac offered quick turnaround and their R&D team was invaluable," says Dave Soulsby, President and CEO of Central Graphics. "We needed a partner who would deliver personalized support throughout the process and provide an innovative team who could work through the testing and special needs of the film."

Against a tight, three-month timeline, Mactac immediately created custom samples for testing on the blimp's challenging exterior, which is made of painted low-surface energy Tedlar®. The Mactac team hit a home run on the first sample, matching the grey throwback color and meeting the easy application and stringent adhesive requirements. After modifications to opacity, thickness, and repositionability, Mactac formulated a conformable cast vinyl with a custom adhesive and air-egress liner that performed exceptionally.

"Mactac ensures that we have the best product and the right product," says Managing Director at Central Graphics, Jeff Loofboro. "For this project, color match was important, opacity was significant to ensure the paint underneath didn't show through, and clean removability was key because the blimp is going back to its original format in one year. Mactac hit the sweet spot with a solution that wouldn't remove the paint on the blimp under the vinyl."

Another unique caveat was that the material needed to be micro-perforated to allow small amounts of helium from the aircraft to continually escape, without creating air pockets. When it was all said and done, the Mactac custom solution was promptly approved by Goodyear as well as Zeppelin, the blimp's Germany-based manufacturer. Knocking the project out of the park, approximately 350 pounds of Mactac cast vinyl was applied to the blimp in time to kick off the 100-year commemoration.

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