A drive to win: How John Duever built his career in wrapping







"It's organized chaos at times," but it's a lot of fun."

John Duever, Vinyl Images

From a modest upbringing in the Midwest, John has helped build Vinyl Images into one of the country's premier designers and manufacturers of fleet wraps. He started the WrapIQ podcast to share his hard-earned insights with other entrepreneurs. And having developed a close partnership with Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions, John is part of the team of talented vinyl wrappers that leads our commercial training classes.

Forging the mind of a competitor

John grew up in a small town near St. Louis, sharing a single-wide trailer with his family, including sister, Destiny and brother, Joe. In school he competed as a wrestler, which helped incubate his drive to win. After high school, wrestling transitioned to mixed martial arts (MMA), where John fought at an elite level for the next decade. "I worked very hard and was good at it," says John. "To me, it's a sweet science. But if you lose focus, or you don't have the fire inside, you get knocked down hard. So you learn very quickly."

At age 19, when not training or fighting, John aspired to go to chiropractic school. To earn some money, he got a job at a local wrap shop where Destiny worked. There, he took out trash, washed vehicles and did a lot of the unglamorous work that kept installers on task.

Opportunity knocked when the business went bankrupt and the owner sold it for pennies on the dollar to Destiny, John and Joe. The siblings reopened the shop, changed its name to Vinyl Images and began a journey that's lasted a quarter of a century.

"I was very naïve," says John. "I thought that I was going to be a millionaire on day one. I didn't realize just how difficult it is to be an entrepreneur. But I've learned over the last 23 years!"

The shop typically relies on Avery Dennison® MPI 1105 Easy Apply™ RS, and has since the early 2010s. They pair the film with either the DOL 1360Z or DOL 1360 Max overlaminate, depending on where in the country a wrap is headed.

"There's nothing better," says John. "The optical clarity of the DOL 1360 is unsurpassed. The self-healing properties are unsurpassed. The overall glossiness is unsurpassed. Then, pair that with the Easy Apply RS technology of the adhesive on the MPI 1105? It's just an unbeatable combination."

WrapIQ: Sharing hard-earned lessons with the next generation of vehicle wrappers

John's seen a lot in his two decades as an entrepreneur. And despite his competitive nature, he's embraced the opportunity to share what he's learned through WrapIQ. The podcast and website offer guidance and perspective to vinyl wrapping professionals at any stage of their careers.

"It's taken me 23 years to get here," says John. "But I think now, people could get here in just 10 years with all the technology and available classes. When I first started wrapping, there was one class per year. Now, there's a class every day somewhere with some manufacturer."

We're not here to just participate

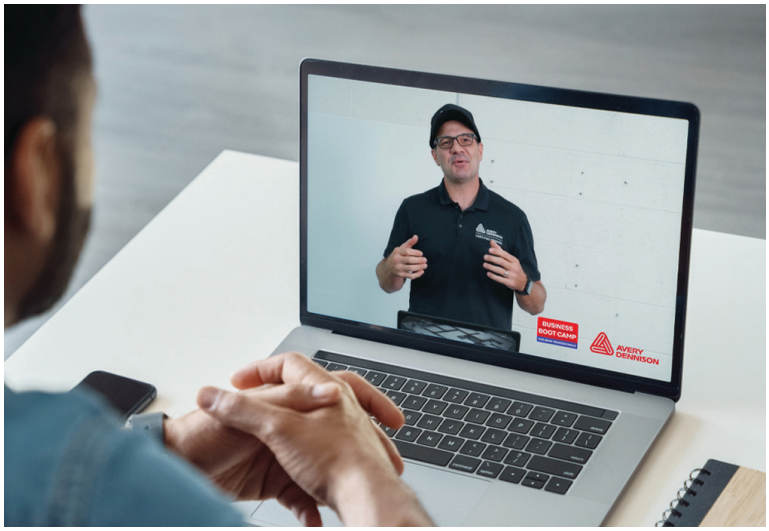
When asked what makes an entrepreneur successful, John's response is that of someone who knows what it's like to get up and keep going after being knocked down.

"I made every single mistake you can imagine," he says. "But every time, I learned from it, took notes on it and made sure that mistake was not made again. It was hard, really hard. I wanted to quit a lot, but I didn't. I listened, got smarter, made some painful changes and began to dominate my life and my industry."

He continues: "Look, I'm not here to just participate, and I'm not here to 'play.' I've been poor, and I'm not going back. I'm here to create a wonderful company and make my clients look good. And at the end of the day, my job is that simple."

John's drive to win has created a lasting impact on his business, his customers, and on the industry. Learn more about his company at vinylimagesusa.com, and view a gallery of its vinyl wraps.

Ready to take your own wrapping career to the next level? Learn more about the "sweet science" from trainers such as John Duever and Justin Pate at an Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions training class at graphics.averydennison.com/training.





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