

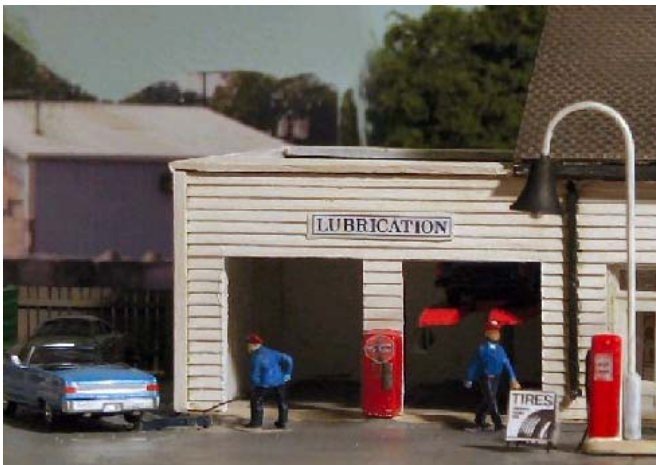
The Basics, a few things to consider.

- Decals are not always the answer. For instance, you have a particular image that you want to use on the side of a building. Most decals when applied directly to a building will give the impression that they were painted right onto the surface.
- Decals applied to sheet styrene, wood or a flat panel would better represent signs.
- You may get the same result by printing to heavy card stock for many of your signage needs.



In the example above the blue letters were printed on white decal paper. Each letter was cut out keeping a small outline of white. The double blue S's were printed on the same white decal paper leaving no white.

The example below shows a Lubrication sign where the letters were printed directly to white cardstock with a blue outline. No decal was needed to build this tin sign.



The Simplot letters on the building were printed on sticky back paper. The letters on the freight car were printed on white decal paper.

Choosing the wrong decal paper will waste your time, money and ink. So with so many to choose from which ones do I pick? This all depends on the project.

Decal paper

- Clear – Clear background paper is good for printing on very light colored objects, such as sheet styrene, railroad cars that are white, or light tan, perhaps silver. A common mistake would be to use clear decal paper to create a nicely colored decal that needs to go on an object that is painted with a dark color. The dark background completely changes the printed color.
- White – White background paper is good for printing signs and decals with lots of colors and works great if the background is white. Well we all know that this is not case much of the time.
- Ink Jet - InkJet paper is specifically for ink jet printers where the ink soaks in the paper to help it dry.
- LaserJet - Laser Jet decal paper is different from InkJet paper and while I have used ink jet paper in a color LaserJet printer I wouldn't recommend the opposite. Remember a LaserJet printer uses heat to dry the toner rapidly.
- Water Slide - This paper is activated by water and is the norm for most decals.
- Chemical Activated - This paper needs a coating of clear lacquer before cutting out the decal and soaking in water. I have one brand of decal paper that changes from a white background to a clear background simply by coating the decal with clear coat after you have applied it.

Custom Decals for your specific project.

Lets say that you have a locomotive or freight car that no one makes decals for. Maybe its your own railroad or perhaps its an old shortline that you are recreating. The easy part is printing the decals on the paper, and applying them.

The very first thing that you will need is the artwork. Personally I use Paintshop Pro to do most all of my art/photo needs. If you have no knowledge or time to create your own artwork then you will have to get some help from someone.



Step two: is to size your artwork to the correct scale of you object and or railroad.

I find that the simplest way for me to

do this is by transferring the object to Microsoft Word.

A simple copy and paste to a new Word document will do fine.

Once the object is in Word you can resize it by clicking any edge and dragging the object with the mouse.

Normally I save these word documents after I have things the way I need them for future printing.

Step Three: would be to print them.

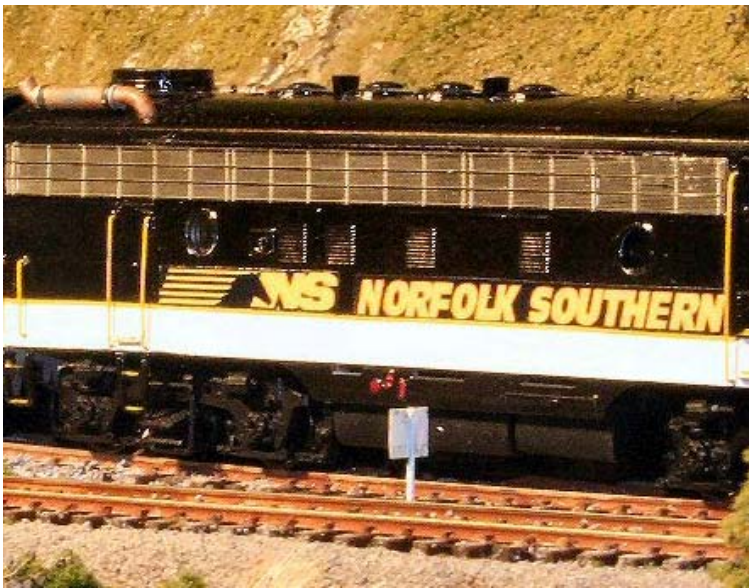
Step four: is to apply them.

Tricks of the trade

Sources for decal images

- Google images – my number one source for finding old signs, images etc.
- Old magazine, cut out images, then scan them.
- Clip art found on the web
- Last resort would be to purchase them. I recommend scanning them before using them.

Matching colors: This can be hard sometimes, and to be honest even if you have the correct colors they might print slightly different depending on the printer, the paper etc.



Several times I have sprayed a section of white styrene, or even primed styrene to replicate the color that I need. I then scanned the painted object. Next using the color dropper within PSP I have the exact color.

If all else fails you can always touch up the decal once it's secured to your object. For instance, recently I had to make yellow Norfolk & Western Decals for a modern Generator car. I created the yellow decals within PSP, using yellow letters on a burgundy background. After printing the decals

I noticed that the burgundy did not quite match the burgundy on the side of the car. I trimmed off as much



of the burgundy from the decal as I could, then secured the decal. Once the decal was completely secured I spray a small amount of the paint that I used into a paint cap. Next using the smallest of brushes I went around and touched any area of burgundy left on the decal. This blended the decal and car side perfectly.

Strengthening the decal prior to installation. I use several of Microscale's decal solutions to help with decal prep/strengthening the new decal. Microscale also makes products for removing an old decal, or getting the decal to blend and lay down better on uneven objects.

Always use sharp blades with cutting out decals, otherwise you run the risk of tearing the decal which will lead to losing some of the original color. Here you would have to touch up the edges as done above.

Be very careful if you decide to dullcoat the decal, this can cause even a sealed ink to smear.

www.decalfpaper.com

<http://www.hyaz.com/>

http://www.beldecalf.com/model_decals.cfm

<http://www.mcgpaper.com/decals.html>

<http://www.decalfgear.com/DG/>

<http://www.railwayshop.com/evan.shtml#dec>

[http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:wUO9U80xMSoJ:www.tangopapadecals.com/prod01.htm+decal+pape
r&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=12&gl=us](http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:wUO9U80xMSoJ:www.tangopapadecals.com/prod01.htm+decal+pape+r&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=12&gl=us)

<http://www.bare-metal.com/Experts-Choice-Decal-Film.html>

<http://www.modeldecalf.com/>