

Kitting Means Having The Right Decal, In The Right Place, At The Right Time

By Muir Omni Graphics



ENSURING YOU HAVE the right decals, at the right place, at the right time — while avoiding the inefficiencies and added costs associated with inventory shortages and overstocking — can be a major juggling act for the agriculture industry. Missing decals can hold up the production line, so you want to make sure you always have enough on hand. But stocking too many decals can add unnecessary costs and lead to con-

fusion, waste, hoarding and spoilage. Adding to the challenge, many pieces of farm equipment require that a specific collection of decals be applied before shipping, as do certain customers and shipping locations. Changes to bills of material only increase the complexity.

What's The Solution?

In many situations, the answer is “kitting” — choosing either a packaged kit that combines all the necessary decals in one bag, or a sheet consolidation that delivers the decals “kiss-cut” on a single sheet. Either way, by combining a full collection of decals into one convenient package, you can streamline the inventory process, speed up production and application, and reduce costs and waste in your operation. So before you order your next collection of decals, consider the pros and cons of a kitting solution.

The Pros Of Kitting

Kitting's biggest benefit is the huge potential for cost savings. Time is money, and kitting can help you boost productivity and efficiency on the shop floor. Instead of searching for ten decals — and hoping they find all the right ones for a particular piece of equipment — your employees simply grab a single packet. With kitting, they're able to spend more time working and less time chasing decals.

Another key benefit of kitting is improved inventory management and accuracy. Ordering kits versus individual decals streamlines your ordering system. Plus, individual decals are easy to lose or misplace, and with many looking alike, they can often be stored in the wrong locations and then placed on the wrong equipment, which can lead to costly errors and safety hazards. Kitted materials stay together, so you always have what you need, and they're easier to store in a protected environment.

In addition, kitting can provide you with a built-in quality check, because it's an easy way to ensure all the proper decals have been

applied to a specific piece of equipment. Your employees will notice right away if there are any decals left on the sheet consolidation or in the packaged bag.

The Cons Of Kitting

Despite its many benefits, kitting isn't the right solution for every situation. If you're unable to provide your supplier with all the decals necessary for a kit — or if your supplier doesn't have the proper quality checks in place to verify the right decals are included every time — kitting probably isn't right for you. Likewise, if you deal with a significant number of custom orders or variable build requirements, other part consolidation options may be more effective for your operation.

Decals produced in foreign languages present another challenge for kitting. A manufacturer producing equipment for both the

U.S. and French markets, for example, may require decals in both English and French. Including both languages in the kit when only one set is needed for each machine is wasteful. And since many employees are

hesitant to throw decals away, that can lead to inventory space challenges, increased costs, engineering change issues and work station clutter.

Analyzing Your Situation

What's the best way to determine if kitting can make a difference in addressing your shop floor challenges? After you review the pros and cons outlined above, consider conducting a needs analysis assessment on your inventory management system. Regardless of whether kitting is the right solution for your operation, this process — which involves determining how many people access your inventory, identifying what items are stored and where, reviewing shelf life and temperature control requirements, and analyzing stocking quantities — can help you identify all the options available to streamline operations, improve accuracy and save money. ➔

Muir Omni Graphics has more than 40 years of experience providing turnkey production and management solutions for OEM markings and decals, fleet and corporate vehicle markings, corporate identity, control panels and fascias, warning labels and signage, and specialty graphics. The company serves the off-highway, construction, transportation, and farm equipment markets.

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