Sticker Up

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People like to make jokes about my constant need for new equipment, and yes, they are all so funny. Some of my favorites include, oh look, this board is dirty, I need a new one, or, oh look, my stickers are peeling, time for a new board. But you know what? I hate cleaning that sticker resin off of my snowboards, so when my stickers start peeling or get old and tired, it is time for a new board.

I think sometimes people under estimate the importance of sticker placement to your riding. How you put your stickers, and which ones you choose says a lot about you. If your stickers are cluttered, you obviously have no artistic talent. If you have dumb stickers on your board, like rollerblade and music stickers, or those shiny ones that say 'Player', you are obviously dumb. To be sure that you aren't being classified by where you put your stickers, read on.

First and foremost, stickers must be applied immediately after purchasing a board. This insures that no man made snow grime will prohibit stickers from adhering to the board surface. Many companies make the mistake of having top sheets that don't hold stickers well. This can be solved by simply blow-drying the stickers after they're stuck to fuse the glue to the board.

When choosing stickers, make sure you only use ones that are cool. Stickers are cool if they are of cool companies, they cost more than a dollar (but you got them for free), and you have several of them. It doesn't hurt if the colors match each other and/or the board. Be careful not to choose stickers that conflict, i.e. different snowboard brands, goggle types or shops. To really go for that sponsored kid look, choose stickers that match the bindings, clothing, goggles and snowboard you're wearing.

Once you've decided which stickers are worthy of gracing your top sheet, it's time to apply. First start laying out the stickers, still stuck to the backs on the board in different positions, to see what looks good. Don't be afraid to have stickers overlap or go off the edge. You can always use an exacto knife to cut them later, just make sure there is enough left so that anyone can tell what cause you're representing. I like to cut stickers in half and put one half against each edge, but of course, if you did that, you'd be biting my style. It is important be original. Make sure you work with the graphics, binding position, and if the board has one, the relief core.

Let's take a look at the examples. The Original Sin Team 148 pictured, is difficult to sticker because it's graphics are very busy. There are two ways to solve this, cover the graphics entirely, or work around them.

Photo Credit: Adam PetraskaWe'll start with example A, the lame sticker arrangement. There are many things wrong with this. First of all, it looks like any random sticker was used. There are at least two different shops represented, three snowboard companies, none of which are the brand of the actually snowboard, three different bands, which are all bad, stickers from uncool magazines, and others that are too uncool to leave without description.

Take the Powerbar sticker. The only way it is acceptable to have one of these on your board is if you ride for them. They are not a cool snowboard company. The Swiss Army Knife sticker, also very uncool. Now there is a Dragon sticker, Dragon is cool, right? Yes, but the placement in the center of the tip is very tired. Try something new. Finally, the stickers are in no pattern, just randomly thrown on, with no respect to the design of the snowboard. Don't be that guy.

Now, example B, the cool sticker placement. Notice that there is more than one of every type of sticker on this board. Multiple stickers make you look cooler because you must know someone to get more than one sticker. Notice also the careful placement of each sticker so that it covers up none of the graphics, and where it would, it is cut away. Also, most of the stickers run off the edge, this makes every thing look more balanced. On the tail, there is the Out Of Bounds montage.

It's great when stickers come in different sizes because it allows you to do something like this. The main reason to put shop stickers on our board though, is because if you do, and are faithful to that shop, they will usually let you tune your board for free. In between the bindings we have color coordinating stickers, very cool. I chose Stimilon, because their contests are rad, but if you've never been to one, it wouldn't be cool to have a sticker on your board, it would be fronting. I am a media nerd, so I have both Snowboarder Magazine and Yo Beat stickers on my board. These also match. Finally we move up to the nose. Notice the Dragon dicut, cut in half. I wear Dragon goggles, so this sticker is totally appropriate. There is also another Dragon sticker on the tail. This one is cut from a Dragon light switch cover. It's good to cut up stickers to make other stickers. It assures they will be original. I also give props to my home mountain with the Killington stripe. These stickers are cool because they shine, but they don't stick well, so make sure you have extras incase one falls off.

Since you now know the do's and don'ts of sticker placement, you're definitely ready to do your own board. Once you've got everything laid out, stick them on, throw own a pair of bindings and you are ready to go.