009 DIY Front Panel Foils

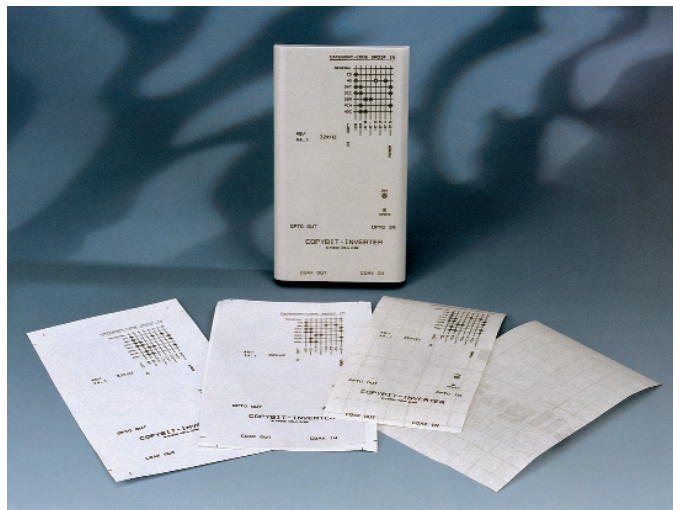## Using an inkjet printer and self- adhesive foil

W. Foede

It is fairly easy to produce professionally looking, permanent front panel foils ('decals') for use on electronic equipment if you have a PC available along with an inkjet printer (Hewlett-Packard DeskJet or similar). Plus, of course, matt transparent sheet of the self-adhesive type as used, for instance, to protect book covers. This type of foil may be found in stationery shops or even the odd building market. One foil brand the author has used successfully goes by the name of Foglia Transparent. The production sequence is basically as follows:

1. The decal is designed at true size (1:1 or 100%) with a graphics program or a word processor, and then printed in black and white on a sheet of white paper (do not use the colour ink cartridge). Allow the ink to dry. Cut the foil as required, then pull the adhesive sheet from the paper carrier sheet. Keep the carrier paper handy, it will be used in the next phase.

2. Once the ink has dried, the transparent foil is placed on top of the decal. The foil is lightly pressed and then slowly pulled off the paper again (see photograph). Because the adhesive absorbs the ink to a certain extent, the mirror image of the decal artwork is transferred to the adhesive side of the foil.

3. For further processing, first secure the foil on the carrier paper again. Next, cut the decal to the exact size as required by the equipment front panel. Finally, pull off the carrier sheet again and apply the transparent foil on to the metal or plastic surface.

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