

Screen Printing

Screen Printing is one of the most commonly used methods in apparel decorating and was first patented in 1907 in England by Samuel Simon Matthew Atere-Roberts. With screen printing there are setup fees unlike direct to garment printing. The fees are needed for setup due to a screen needing to be burned for each color in the design. Once the screens are burned there will be an ink charge for each color used in the design and for any dark items there is a white under base that needs printed first. Screen printing is best used for larger orders that do not require a very detailed design.

Pros of Screen Printing

- Cost effective & high quality
- Professional looking.
- Long lasting & durable.

Cons of Screen Printing

- Setup fees for customers.
- Minimum quantity orders are needed.
- Can not do just one shirt. (Nobody will do just one shirt.)

Left is an image of a basic screen printing press.

Direct to Garment Printing

· Direct to garment printing is the process of printing directly onto a garment or any other type of printable object such as a mouse pad or coaster to name a couple. Direct to garment printing is fairly new and a great option for small run orders. Unlike screen printing direct to garment printing typically has no setup fees which is why this is great and the only option for low run orders. The reason for this is to print a shirt or any other object all that has to be done is load the design on the CPU, send it to the printer, print it, and then cure it in the heat press. It is that simple. With direct to garment printing the color palette is unlimited which allows you to have anything printed with any colors. Therefore you could have a photo printed on a t-shirt and give it to grandma. Another bonus is name dropping on each item. This can not be done with screen printing since a screen would have to be burned for each name and this is just not feasible. Most direct to garment printers do not print white ink therefore your design/image must be printed on a light colored garment. With technology emerging, printing on dark shirts is now possible but due to the pricey nature of these machines there are not many out there. I am sure this will change as it always does with technology.

Pros for Direct to Garment Printing

- Specializes in low run orders.
- Can print one at a time.
- Prints full color prints that have intricate details.
- Designs are not felt on the garment.
- Garments are easily customizable and little tweaks may be made.

Cons of Direct to Garment Printing

- Many direct to garment printers do not print white ink therefore your garment will need to be printed on a light colored shirt. Some do print on dark colored shirts.
- They take longer to print than screen printing.
- Ink is a little more expensive than inks used for screen printing.

Below is an image of the Brother GT 541 Direct to Garment Printer which we use here.

