



THE AGE OF CHOICE: SCREEN PRINTING OR HEAT TRANSFER

Posted by Scott McNair (Raised Edge Inc.) on Tuesday, January 26, 2016 @ 09:50 AM

This world is a massive sphere of choice, these days! There are more options than there base products now as markets rush to satisfy the 'Consumers', attempting to express themselves uniquely. The same could be argued for companies, as they attempt to create unique branding to set themselves apart from their competition.

Beyond the branding there is are the basics, such as garment embellishment; easily achieved by more traditional forms of embellishment in recent decades, but now a more educational choice is required as more and more choice becomes possible.

One of the more common decisions with all of this choice is screen printing versus heat transfer. Which method will achieve your goals?

SCREEN PRINTING

Screen printing is a process in which images are created through a type of stencil process. Artwork is separated into its different colors, and then screens are "burned" with all the different color separations. Since the different colors have to be lined up perfectly, the art work is limited to the number of screen any specific printing machine can hold. The average printing shops usually have machines that will hold up to six screens, allowing printing of artwork up to six colors. Ink is then spread over the screen, passing through to the object underneath only in the areas you want it to be. Only one color per screen can be used, so depending on the number of colors in the design, you'll need multiple screens to produce the final item.

In this method, set-up times can be quite extensive, especially for more complex, multi-colored images, and because screen printing is a multi-step process with multiple screens, it is often difficult to achieve smooth gradients or complex multi-colored images. This also means that small variations in a single step could distort the final product.

Small, intricate details are not easily achievable and as such, screen printing is typically only cost effective in large, mass productions. Short runs are not cost effective.

DIGITAL HEAT TRANSFER

Digital heat transfer is a process in which art work is printed with specialty ink on specialty paper and then transferred to a garment by applying heat with a heat press. Because of this process, full color images can be applied to garments.

Digital heat transfer technology is a very good process to use for garment production allowing you to have full colour artwork customized on low quantity orders (including just one piece!) without the hefty price tag. In addendum, the cost of using this method doesn't change based on the number of colours in your design, or how many different designs you have, but rather the pricing is based on the size of the area that needs to be covered. With a digital print your logo is printed out onto special media which is then weeded, masked and heat pressed onto the garment. This process is strongly recommended for today's technical fabrics, and will not fade over natural wear and cleaning.



Being digital, transfers are multi-color and photo quality. The process is capable of hitting over 10,000,000 colors and with the highest speeds in the industry, digital heat transfer offers precise positioning and repeatability, it also utilizes a dry decorating process with no cure time. Just hit it with heat and pressure and it is on; o handling of inks is necessary.

In recent general studies it is assumed that nearly 20% of the global industry have already made the switch to digital heat transfers with approximately 50% expected to be converting as we speak. Are you ready to make the switch to digital?



THE AGE OF CHOICE: SCREEN PRINTING OR HEAT TRANSFER - *Continued*

PRICE COMPARISONS

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| <p>technicolor</p>  <p>Size: 3.50”(w) x 1.34”(h) – Inches Amount of Colours: 15 Digital Heat Transfer Costing: \$39.00 (Setup) + \$3.17 Run Charge Per Location (Based on 200 pcs) v/s Screen Printing: \$450.00 (Setup) + \$2.55 Run Charge Per Location (Based on 200 pcs)</p> |  <p>Size: 2.25”(w) x 2.00”(h) – Inches Amount of Colours: 4 Digital Heat Transfer Costing: \$39.00 (Setup) + \$3.10 Run Charge Per Location (Based on 100 pcs) v/s Screen Printing: \$120.00 (Setup) + \$1.87 Run Charge Per Location (Based on 100 pcs)</p> |
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Raised Edge Inc. has already taken this step as an industry leader, and we are now in the process of taking the next further step to Seamless Digital Heat Transfer. But that is another story for another time...

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