

Decorating Your Garment . . . Explained

Decoration Options

There are several ways to add an image, text or a logo to apparel and promotional products, but what should you use where and why? The following gives a very quick overview of some of the techniques and the artwork needed to get the best results.

Embroidery

A sewn logo has a high perceived value and creates a smart look that maintains its vibrant colour for the life of the product. Text needs to be a minimum of 5mm in height for crisp reproduction and there are several hundred colours available. Creating an embroidery file is a manual operation using a mix of art and science and has to be created separately for each size required, as unlike a graphic file – you can't stretch a stitch! Pricing is based on the number of stitches and the complexity of the job, as these affect the length of time that the job takes on our machines.

Screen Printing

Screen printing is cost effective especially on large volumes, where solid block colours and large images are required on flat surfaces. Ideal for printing on a wide range of surfaces, ranging from apparel through to plastics, ceramics and metals, coloured inks are forced through a fine mesh to create the final image. Great for solid colours where a Pantone colour match is required.

Digital Direct to Garment Printing (DDGP)

With 16 million colours, DDGP can achieve quick delivery with no minimum quantities. It works like a desktop printer (but much bigger!) and can print on white and light coloured garments, using special permanent dyes that will last the life of the item. Ideal for garments, towels and some promotional products.

Dye-Sublimation Printing

Full colour process using sublimation inks to print on polyester and treated products. DSP may be used on light coloured polyester garments, but is ideal for reproducing small runs of products such as mouse mats, jigsaw puzzles, dog tags & mugs.

Digital Print Vinyl Transfers

Full colour vinyl transfers are heat applied to garments to offer an alternative to screen and digital direct to garment printing and can also be reproduced on dark coloured garments. The modern super stretch materials are bonded to the product and maintain their colour and glossy appearance for the life of the garment.

Computer Cut Vinyls

Cutting out complex shapes with a digital vinyl plotter makes for creative, textured designs and is ideal for adding names and numbers for sports

teams. A wide range of colours, metallic, flock & glitter effects can add real impact to your apparel.

Pad Printing

Used mainly for promotional products where the product is an irregular shape or curved. A rubber pad prints the image onto the surface of the product and is normally limited to 1 or 2 colours. Products include, pens, golf balls, stress shapes, etc.

Laser Engraving

Used for metal promotional products, a laser engraves an image onto the surface. Limited to the engraved surface colour, the effect is classy and will not get rubbed off.

Artwork and File Types

It is important to understand the types of artwork file formats required for the various processes as they make a big impact on the quality of the finished product. In general layered vector formats (EPS, PDF) are best, JPGs can be used for some processes, but a decent resolution image is required, not something taken from a web site for example.

JPG is a compressed image file and is fine for creating embroidery files and some digital print options, but a high resolution image is generally required for a better result.

Use for: Embroidery, Digital Direct to Garment Print, Dye-Sublimation Print, Digital Print Vinyls.

Artwork PDF or Layered Portable Document Format. This has the original design artwork saved in a form that can be read on most computers. Artwork may be extracted and the colours separated out for use in screen and pad printing, it also gives better digital print results, with more saturated colours.

Use for: Embroidery, Screen Print, Digital Direct to Garment Print, Pad Print, Dye-Sublimation Print, Digital Print Vinyl Transfers, Computer Cut Vinyls, Laser Engraving

EPS or encapsulated post script files are exported from the design software. A layered vector format, the size can be altered without any change in quality of the final image. Colours may be separated out and used for imaging screens and pads. It can only be read by design software, though is often saved as a PDF for ease.

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