

BROTHER DTG TESTIMONIAL



DTG Plays Key Role in Company's Reputation for Quality as a One-Stop Shop

For Broken Arrow Wear T-Shirt Printing and Embroidery, Des Moines, Iowa, adding digital direct-to-garment printing has enabled this high-volume shop to offer more services to existing customers as well as attract new customers who can't meet a traditional minimum quantity requirement.

And, it has found that the ability of DTG to print high-quality, finely detailed artwork in unlimited colors has, on occasion, trumped screen printing as the best choice despite the fact that the quantity was 1,000 pieces.

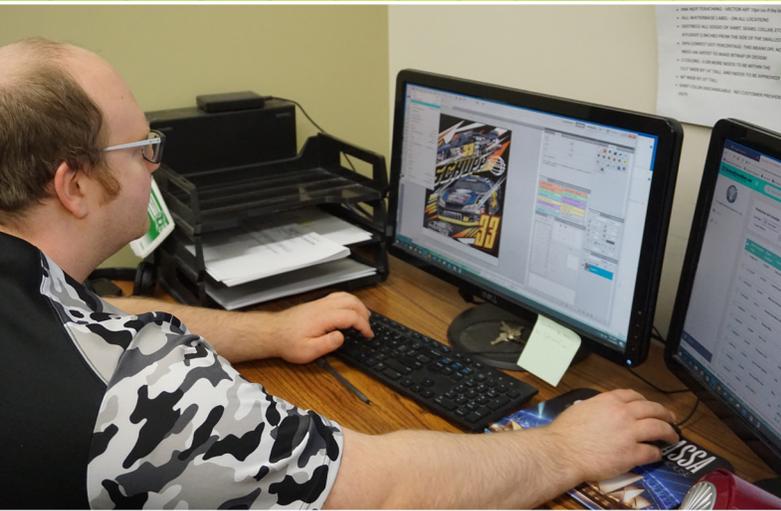
This full-service shop now can cater to just about any client who walks in the door no matter what size the order, how sophisticated or simple the design, and no matter what type of fabric or product is desired. Instead of sending the job away or trying to make a less-appropriate decorating method work, Broken Arrow has brought every process in-house making it the ultimate one-stop shop in its area.

PAUL LETO

"Our biggest competitive advantage is our turnaround time," says Paul Leto, production manager. "Because we control everything in-house and are centrally located, we can deliver anywhere in six days using the standard delivery services. The fact that we do everything in-house allows us to meet our deadlines."



This family-owned operation got its start in 1989 by Kurt and Mari Stocker. with screen printing done in-house and embroidery contracted out. Today, it runs four automatic presses including one oversize press, two manuals, 15 embroidery heads (running 20 hours a day), and heat applied graphics using a printer/cutter.



It also offers DTG, sublimation, rhinestones, stickers, banners, relabeling, folding, bagging and fulfillment. All of the production is housed in a 30,000-square-foot building with a 3,500-square-foot showroom and sales office located only a few miles away.

According to Leto, who has been with the company for the past 20 years, DTG was initially considered for the most obvious reason: it a way to service customers who only needed a few shirts.

“When I first started here, we did any quantity for screen printing, even one piece. Eventually we got to the point where we made the minimum six. So the DTG process allowed us to regain the smaller clients by allowing us to do single pieces,” he says.

“And obviously, multicolor is a big advantage,” he continues. “You can do more colors with the DTG than you can do with screen printing.”

“We have some amazing artists in-house who are able to make any design work, screen printing wise, but the big thing about digital is the quality of the image. There’s just things you can do in digital you can’t do in screen printing.

“One of our larger customers is very particular about a design featuring his seven favorite guitars. We had to hit every one of those perfectly. So it made a lot more sense to tell him that we could only guarantee the detail using digital. That type of job is easier on digital than with screen printing,” he explains.

Most digital jobs are printed on fabric that is at least 80% cotton and that includes T-shirts, sweatshirts, aprons and tote bags. Leto estimates that the majority of his DTG orders are between one and 12 pieces, and higher than that goes to one of the manual or automatic screen printing presses.

When choosing which brand to purchase, Leto was the decision maker. “I read reviews and talked to people who owned DTG printers. And I had a lot of referrals who told me Brother was the way to go.



“You never know the quality until you buy a machine; however, other people were saying that Brother units were really solid and dependable. But what I felt the most comfortable about was the support I heard about from Brother,” shares Leto.

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“Individuals told me, ‘You can find out what’s wrong with your Brother by searching Google or by a simple phone call.’ I compared that to people with other brands saying, ‘Well, I’ve had a machine down for two weeks, and I still can’t get an answer about it.’”

“We bought our first Brother machine, the GT-782, in 2011. And that was quite a good machine for us all the way up until this year,” says Leto. “But about three years ago I realized it was not offering the color gamut I wanted. There were certain colors I was having a hard time matching”

“Now that we have the GTX, it’s so much better. The quality and the feel are about the same, but the color gamut has expanded; and it has more features, functions and speed, which is a big jump,” says the production manager.

“We see our digital printing continuing to grow. I don’t have the numbers in front of me, but I feel like we’ve been increasing about 30% a year,” he adds. “And part of the reason is because the DTG process itself is getting better, which allows us more options for using it.



“So I decided to go with another printer to get the wider gamut. That was the biggest mistake I’ve ever made as far as anything I’ve ever purchased. That printer is sitting in a crate right now in my shop, because I have no use for it. It doesn’t operate like it’s supposed to, and the support was horrible. Between the Brother and this machine, it was night and day deal.”

“If someone were to ask me whether or not to buy a Brother DTG, I would say ‘Yes, do it!’ I recommend not trusting other brands. I’ve had too many bad experiences, and I’ve talked to too many other people who have had bad experiences. I have been happy and pleased that we went with Brother.”

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