

THE PERFECT MATCH:

E-Commerce and On-Demand Garment Decoration

The recent downturn of the economy may prove to be an unlikely force in future growth of the direct-to-garment printing industry. Garment decorators everywhere are rethinking the traditional way of producing high quality decorated garments.

Today's customers are ordering smaller and smaller quantities to improve their inventory turns and control spending. Even large box stores are ordering in units of 12 or six pieces. These new ordering trends have made traditional screen printers reexamine their operating methods, procedures and costs.

Every manufacturer now has the daunting task of seeking out new, smarter and more efficient ways to produce product. The need to reduce operating costs, maintain smaller inventories and at the same time attempt to grow business has never been more apparent. The impact of e-commerce matched with on-demand digital printing in the decorated apparel industry has never been more important than it is today.

Advertising capabilities to the entire planet through the World Wide Web can dramatically increase the opportunities for success. But with this potential, one must be prepared to handle an influx of work, to automate the process of taking and tracking orders in order to maximize profitability. Online design programs allow customers the ability to design their own graphics or upload stock designs and add individual personalization to make each purchase unique. Truly a dream come true to customers.

But the processing and producing of

those garments can be a nightmare for the printer using traditional decorating methods. Enter digital printing that channels

“THE FIRST TIME I SAW A KORNIT PRINTER IN PERSON IT WAS OPERATING IN A PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT. I WAS SO BLOWN AWAY BY THE QUALITY OF THE MACHINES CONSTRUCTION AND OVERALL FUNCTIONALITY THAT I WROTE A CHECK THE NEXT DAY.”

a stream of limitless one-off designs to a direct-to-garment digital printer.

Kevin Kelly, owner of Blue Heron Industries, Inc. of Little Falls, N.J., and owner of two **Kornit Thunder 932** Direct-On-Garment printers, has done beta testing site for the **DecoNetwork Online Shop Solution** from Wilcom (www.deconetwork.com), and now uses this system for his online business.

After years of sitting on the sidelines

waiting for direct printing technology to develop, Kelly decided it was finally time to get involved. “I realized that just being a screen printer was not enough,” he says. “I intuitively knew that I needed to get into the industrial direct-to-garment market despite my aversion to the process as a career screen printer. It seemed less than natural but I did it anyway.” According to Kelly, that decision has proven to be both timely and lucrative.

Kelly reported he did a lot of market research before choosing the Kornit. “If there was a stone to turn over I turned it over. So when our machine finally arrived we had some idea of what to expect. The first time I saw a Kornit printer in person it was operating in a production environment. I was so blown away by the quality of the machines construction and overall functionality that I wrote a check the next day.”

Kelly also got involved with Wilcom DecoNetwork during much earlier versions of the software. After being a beta tester for a year and a half, Kelly operates a seamless, highly productive online business that is continuously expanding to new geographical markets. Of the program, Kelly states: “I did the same research on DecoNetwork as I did on Kornit. It was a work in progress that has really fleshed out to be a state-of-the-art solution for online marketing of decorated apparel. The development of the DecoNetwork software is fluid. New upgrades and releases are pretty frequent at this point. Their goal is to be as user-friendly for the customer and the subscriber as possible.

The product offers comprehensive front- and back-end capabilities. The fulfillment center is the brain of the software that runs your business and it really does an incredible job. The back-end of the software controls the business side of the operation and it actually reduces the number of employees processing orders”.

Kornit direct to garment printers all have the ability to accept images from an automated image input source. The files can be sent directly to a “hot folder” for processing and then automatically store them in a designated location on your internal computer network. The Kornit printer can then take the images and process them in any order determined by production requirements. With the ability to print many different fabrics and various weights of garments, all with preset “wizards” for optimal results, operators can be sure to apply the proper amount of pre-treatment with the Kornit Pre-T™ automatic pre-treatment system. This versatility and the robust industrial construction make the Kornit a perfect match for e-commerce business.

“The Kornit and DecoNetwork combination is a powerful professional toolkit. DecoNetwork is very straightforward and so is Kornit,” Kelly reports. “We can actually get an order out of DecoNetwork and print it on our Kor-



nit machines in less than five minutes. The customers love the print quality of the Kornit and the automated customer-service side of the DecoNetwork software. The experience for the customer is perfect!”

When asked to compare his business before and after putting the Kornit-DecoNetwork solution on the job, Kelly says: “We are a different company. We have the three major custom T-shirt disciplines of decorating covered under one roof. We are adding customers at a rate that is like nothing we have ever experienced.”

E-commerce provides the vehicle to change your business from what may be a seasonal, local business to a year-round business with an unlimited client base. This business model allows easy tracking of trends in sales and marketing. It helps to monitor the colors and styles of garments as well as the designs on them that are selling and can separate the hot items from those that are not selling. You can add more “virtual” styles and designs

to pretest your ideas before ever producing a single print, saving you hundreds of dollars per each design.

By watching these market trends and by printing on demand you can purchase smaller quantities of product freeing up more of your capital for other investments or necessities.

The Kornit-DecoNetwork solution will be demonstrated at SGIA 2010 in Las Vegas, at the Kornit stand # 3227. For more information visit www.kornit-digital.com.

ABOUT BLUE HERON

Blue Heron Industries, Inc. is a full service industrial apparel decorating company that produces screen printing, embroidery and direct-to-garment printing in house. The company services public customers as well as major entertainment clients. In addition to decorating, the company provides warehousing and tour support for national entertainment productions. www.goblueheron.com.

kornit
DIGITAL
Following the Drop of Success

DecoNetwork by WILCOM