PRINTINGUNITED
EXPO

OPPORTUNITY POCKET GUIDE:
Apparel Decoration

THE APPAREL DECORATION OPPORTUNITY

Apparel decorators use printing technologies to add logos, graphics, images or other decorative elements to clothing items, fabric, or any other wearable item. Typically, decorators work with pre-made blank apparel items, but may also print on fabric, which is then cut and sewn to produce a final product. Getting started in apparel decoration doesn't require a large investment and it can be a great source of revenue.

MARKET SIZE

According to Grand View Research, the size of the global decorated apparel market was $25.83 billion in 2022 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.9% from 2023 to 2030.

TYPES OF DECORATED APPAREL

Apparel decorators embellish a variety of apparel products, including:

- T-Shirts and sweatshirts
- Workwear (polo and dress shirts)
- Hats, caps, and headbands
- Athletic clothing
- Uniforms
- Accessories (i.e., gloves, socks)

KEY USER MARKETS

Decorated apparel is a nearly universal product type across all industries, and has great revenue potential. However, there are key markets that drive trends:

- Sportswear
- Concerts/Live Events
- Lifestyle Brands
- Corporate/Government Entities

ENTRY INTO THE SEGMENT

The market has low entry barriers as initial investment to offer apparel decoration can range from $10,000 to $250,000 and beyond, depending on a startup business's scope, scale, and equipment requirements.

DECORATING METHODS

- Screen printing is the most cost-effective solution for high-volume runs, and produces high-quality, durable, and vibrant prints on common substrates.
- Direct to garment (DTG) is a process that prints designs directly onto fabric and is ideal for short to medium run orders with variable art jobs.
- Heat applied garment printing encompasses multiple technologies from heat transfer applications to dye sublimation printing. Each has its unique advantages and disadvantages.
- Embroidery involves stitching designs on textiles and garments. Embroidered apparel products are commonly found in corporate apparel, luxury brands, and sports gear.

SUBSTRATES/MATERIALS

Decorated apparel can be produced on a wide variety of materials including cotton, polyester, cotton/polyester blends, rayon, Lycra, spandex, and other natural and synthetic fibers. Whether using finished blanks or roll fabric, the composition of the material is a key factor in how the garment can be embellished.

FINISHING

Finishing is a broad category that can include adding tags, quality inspection, pressing, folding finished apparel, packaging products, and shipping.

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

- Start with existing clients. Review client lists and determine if they have a need for decorated apparel or could benefit from selling it.
- Determine expected volume and investigate equipment options based on it.
- Learn the distinct advantages of each application method.
- Use the resources of associations serving decorated apparel.
- Read/subscribe to apparel decoration industry publications, including *Apparelist* (www.apparelist.com).
- Visit decorated apparel suppliers at the PRINTING United Expo.

LEARN MORE ON THE SHOW FLOOR*

*List may not include all related exhibitors. For a full list, download the PRINTING United Expo mobile app.

About Apparel Decorating
- Apparel Zone — C147
- Future State Community Hub — C107

Equipment
Screen Printing
- Brown Manufacturing Group — C1747
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- Lawson Screen & Digital Products — C3061, C3067
- M&R Printing Equipment — C1308
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- ROQ US — C747
- Vastex — C1024

Heat Applied Graphics
- Advanced Color Solutions — B7057
- Advanced Innovative Technologies — C1367
- B-FLEX America — C547
- Chemica US — C1759
- FOREVER GmbH — C1253
- Imaging Supplies Warehouse — C137
- Melco International — C700
- Siser North America — C1447
- STAHLS' — C1946

Sublimation
- Advanced Color Solutions — B7057
- Advanced Innovative Technologies — C1367
- EFI — C2646
- Epson America — C2847
- Grimco Inc. — C2619, C665
- GSG — C1435, C1643
- Imaging Supplies Warehouse — C139
- IT Supplies — B14119
- Kornit Digital — C1322
- Mimaki USA — C2831
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- Optimum Digital USA — B12073
- PremEx Solutions — C3005
- Roland DGA Corporation — B13071
- TubeliteDenco — C2764

Embroidery
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- Hirsch Solutions — C1012
- MEEVO (Display Source Inc.) — B16073
- Melco International — C700
- Midsouth Digitizing — C564
- OmniPrint — C1046
- Ricoma Embroidery Machines — C737

Direct-to-Garment
- Aeoon North America — C1103
- Brother International — C1633, C1733
- Epson America — C2847
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- Image Armor/i-Group Technologies — C1302
- Kornit Digital — C1322
- Lawson Screen & Digital Products — C3061, C3067
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- OmniPrint — C1046
- POLYPRINT S.A. — C633
- Ricoh DTG — C2137
- Roland DGA Corporation — B13071

Direct Transfer Film
- B-Flex America — C547
- Grimco Inc. — C2619, C665
- GSG — C1435, C1634
- Nazdar SourceOne — C1332
- OmniPrint — C1046
- STAHLS' — C1946

Substrates
Blank Apparel
- AA Mills — C1228
- Alphabroder/Prime Line — C1132
- AXISM — C759
- BELLA+CANVAS — C539
- Citadel Brands/AWDis — C1038
- Delta Apparel — C1126
- EG-Pro — C765
- Greentex America — C2607
- Image Armor/i-Group Technologies LLC — C1302
- J. America Wholesale Blanks — C528
- Lane Seven Apparel — C829
- Los Angeles Apparel — C447
- Next Level Apparel — C659
- Otto International — C746
- Pennant Sportswear — C534
- SanMar — C806
- Smart Blanks — C453
- SUN-FLY Sublimation — C521
- Terry Town — C1646
- Threadfast Apparel — C639

Roll Fabric/Textiles
- Fisher Textiles — C2615
- Greentex America — C2607
- TVF — C2905
- Yarrington Mills — C2003