

“**BROTHER DTG TESTIMONIAL**”

Tee Shirt Palace

Online Fulfillment Company

Family Online Business Thrives with Brother's Automated Digital Printing System

If you've ever wondered if you could build a decorated apparel business completely on digital processes, Tee Shirt Palace, Livonia, Michigan, is living proof that it can be profitable as well as self-sustaining. This family-owned and operated company has seen growth as high as 100% in recent years with an anticipated increase of at least another 50% in 2019.

All decorating processes are completely digital with the lion's share of production being on T-shirts printed on nine Brother GTX printers paired with the Synergy + Firefly Production System.

With this configuration, bar-coded orders flow smoothly through pretreatment to the printer and then to the multi-lane Firefly conveyor dryer where they are cured and moved on to the shipping department. And it all takes place in one seamless, efficient production line.

It is this high degree of automation that has been key to the company's success, according to Jeremy Katty, Vice President of Operations and Development. While the company had some false starts in its early years due to less reliable digital equipment and using heat presses for curing, the current system can easily handle the company's current orders, even during peak holiday seasons.



JEREMY KATTY

“When we were shopping for the machines we currently have, I was asking manufacturers, “Can you make this automated?” says Katty. The fact that Brother was able to automate the process in conjunction with Brown's Synergy + Firefly system and its Linx software is the reason we went with Brother.””

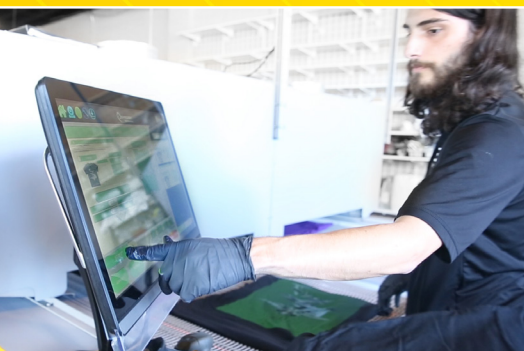
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“The automation has made all the difference in our business,” he continues. “It helped us speed up production like crazy in a 5,000-square-foot production area.”

While the company, founded by Sal Katty, started out as a sports memorabilia business that offered T-shirts as a side business, the entrepreneur quickly recognized that selling online was the key to the future. After closing the store, attention was turned to selling shirts primarily on a large online retailer as well as to a much lesser degree on the company’s website.

Through the use of a “rules engine,” each style, size, brand, and color of shirt offered is programmed into the software. The barcode tells the machine how much pretreatment to apply, in what areas, and how many seconds to cure it.

“One of the drawbacks of other equipment we used,” says Katty, “was the difficulty in training people. With the Linx software, all the operator has to do is scan the barcode and load the shirt. The rest is all preprogrammed to result in the optimal print on the shirt.”



After the large online retailer changed its business model, effectively shutting down the company for three full weeks, the family realized it was no longer safe to put all its eggs in that basket and at that point decided to shift their focus to generating sales on their own website.

Today, www.teeshirtpalace.com offers approximately 26,000 designs in all the popular categories including holidays, charity causes, children’s, humor, floral, schools, political and many more. Customers choose the design they like and the style of garment they want it printed on. Shirts range from infant to adult sizes and include T-shirts, hoodies, tank tops, sweaters and more. All are digitally printed.

While there are orders as high as 500 pieces, the majority are typically onesie-twosie in size. What makes this low-quantity business model viable is the capabilities of the Linx software that works with the all-in-one production system.

Shirt sales are supplemented by other digital processes that are used to print on mugs, posters, hats, pillow cases, towels and more.

“We really love the Brother GTX,” says Katty. “It is fast, the color is really good, and it prints great overall quality. There are always going to be some issues with equipment and when there are, Brother’s support has been unbelievable. More than I actually expected. If you need something right away, they ship it overnight.”

Katty credits Brother equipment with giving his company the ability to get shirt orders out in one to two days and with the level of quality his customers demand. “We don’t sell anything we would not wear ourselves,” he says. “I believe that thanks to Brother, production wise, we have the fastest, most efficient way to get shirts printed and out the door.”

GTX

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