

# CONSIDER



## THINGS **TO** CONSIDER

Direct To Garment (DTG) has been one of the fastest growing decorated apparel technologies for the past several years, and for good reason.

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# DTG

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### DTG

DTG unlocks the potential for incredibly detailed printing, on a variety of substrates like hoodies, hats, and even shoes, as well as a cleaner and less labor-intensive process, compared to screen printing. But, like any technology, it has its great strengths as well as its limitations. If you're reading this, you're probably trying to decide if DTG is right for your business. Before investing in the equipment, here are some things to consider.



## COST OF ENTRY

Getting in the game means more than just buying a printer. You will need a method of pretreating (preferably a pretreat machine) and a way to cure the chemistry (pretreat and ink), such as a heat press or a conveyer dryer. It's also important to find a dealer that will provide thorough training on the entire process - from start to finish.

### *NOW LET'S LOOK AT HOW MUCH IT CAN COST.*

Entry level DTG Printers can range between \$10,000 to \$25,000. Plan on another \$5,000 to \$7,000 for a pretreater and heat press, and you're looking at anywhere between \$15,000 to \$32,000 to get yourself properly equipped. The good news is, most dealers have financing programs available to help ease you in. Do some number crunching on how many shirts you expect to produce on a monthly basis with the machine and figure out your ROI before making a decision on your equipment purchase. If the ROI is not where you want it to be, look at outsourcing the work to an existing DTG shop until your business grows.

No need to guess. Our **ROI Calculator** makes it super easy to see how quickly your own shop could break even. Simply plug in your own numbers, and the calculator does the rest.

**CALCULATE NOW**



## THINGS TO CONSIDER



**NOW LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK  
AT YOUR EQUIPMENT NEEDS.**

### THE PRINTER



First of course is the DTG printer itself. Some important things to look for in a DTG printer are print speed, print size, maintenance and its ability to print on other items. Not all DTG printers are created equal. Select a printer that not only handles your current needs but can support your growth in the future. Also, for any investment this size, it's important that you understand the warranty and get a copy in writing!



GTX is the "X-Factor" in direct-to-garment printing.

**SEE WHY**



### THE PRETREATER



When it comes to pretreating your garment, consistency and repeatability are vital, making the pretreat machine a must-have for most companies. Spraying by hand is simply too inefficient and unreliable - especially if you are going to have other employees do this process. There are a variety of options, from small, single-sprayer units to great big industrial machines with conveyor belts. Some can hold multiple tanks for pretreat, and some are equipped with barcode scanners. Calculate how many shirts a month you expect to be making and consult with a dealer or DTG specialist to get an idea of what kind of machine best suits your needs. And again, keep future growth in mind.

See the different levels of pretreating to get some real-world context on which equipment would best suit your business.

**READ UP**



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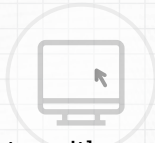


### THE HEAT PRESS

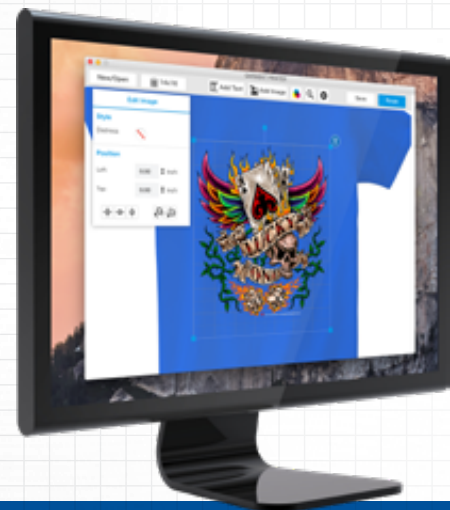


You'll need a heat press to cure both the pretreat and the ink. Make sure you understand what the recommended process is (time, temperature and pressure) for curing both the pretreat and ink. It may require you to have a press that can adjust the pressure quickly from light to heavy pressure or have the ability to hover over the garment without touching it. A conveyor dryer is also effective for larger shops, but for just getting started, a heat press is smaller, uses less electricity and is more affordable.

### DESIGN CENTER



And lastly, you'll need a computer with graphic design software. The type of graphic software program depends on the type of designs your customers may provide and the type of artwork you want to create. Some DTG printers will come with a printing software that will allow you to import in artwork for printing. Ask the dealer to show you all the features in the printing software so you can understand its capabilities and limitations.



Brother provides an intuitive artwork prepping software with their GTX that is fully integrated with the printer driver.

**SEE IT IN ACTION**

### OTHER USEFUL ITEMS

Some additional things that come in handy include parchment paper, for pressing, and spare parts for your machines (such as nozzles for your pretreater). DTG printers also require controlled environmental conditions, specifically temperature and humidity, to run at their best. A simple hygrometer and humidifier can help monitor and maintain the DTG printer in the recommended ranges.

If you're interested in printing more than just t-shirts, you can look into a variety of additional platens for printing on hats, shoes, sleeves, and more. Just make sure that the manufacturer of the DTG printer provides instructions on how to print these items to ensure no damage will come to the equipment.

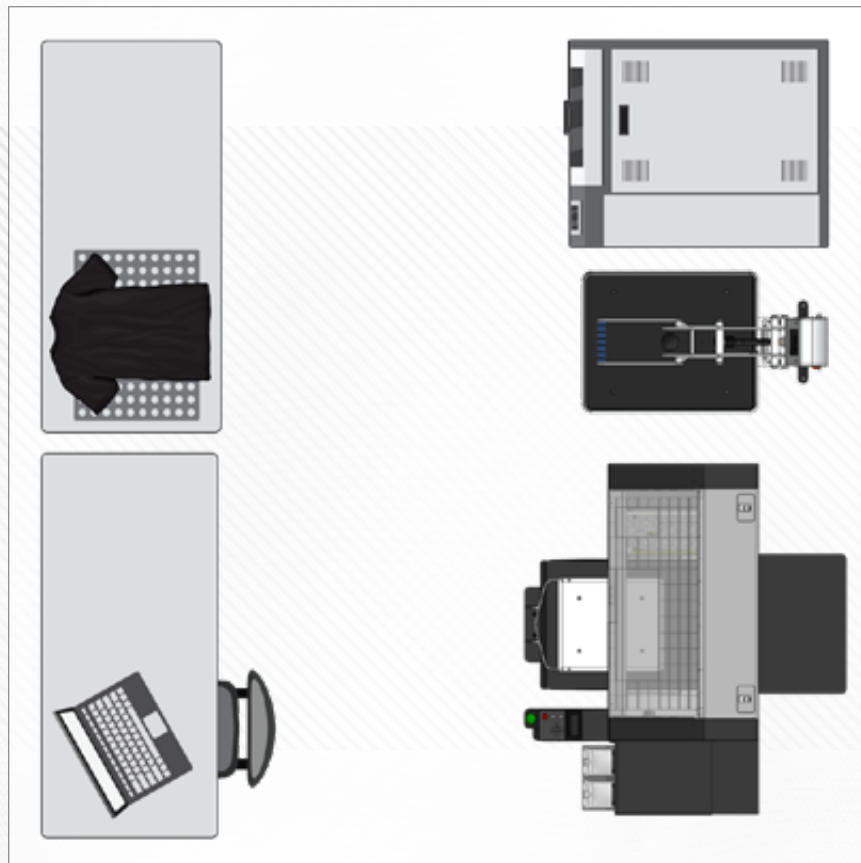


# THE SHOP SPACE

When planning your shop space, it's always smart to think ahead. You don't need a whole lot of space for just a printer, heat press and pretreater. But you should also take into account storage space for blank shirts, samples, supplies and plenty of room for your team to move about. And - as always - keep growth in mind. If your business takes off and you decide to add more or larger equipment to your shop, you want to make sure you're not limited in growth potential just because of space. Also, as we mentioned above, the printer runs best in a specific humidity range, so it's best to have a shop space that is climate controlled.

12'

12'





# THE LEARNING CURVE



## *SO, WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME PROFICIENT WITH DTG?*

Part of this depends on your artwork skill. You can have all the equipment in the world, but a great t-shirt needs great art. Take the time to learn a graphic software or get someone on your team with some artistic flare.

Brother's **DTG Learning Center** is a wealth of information and training resources, available online 24/7.

**START EXPLORING**

Next, mastering the pretreat process will be a crucial element to making great garments. The pretreating process really is key, and taking the time to learn it and practice it will help you have more control over the quality of your prints. Make sure that the dealer you purchase the equipment from will train your team thoroughly on the proper pretreatment method for all colors of garments.

It's also important to understand the proper maintenance procedures for your printer. Just like when you buy a nice new car, you want to take care of it so that it runs long and strong. Create a maintenance schedule that matches up with the recommendations from the manufacturers of all the equipment.

Most new users will be printing shirts the first few days they have the DTG printer. Like any new decorating process, questions and challenges will come up. Make sure either the dealer or manufacturer of the equipment you purchase has documentation and resources to help you find the solutions.

Ask to see what documentation they have prior to finalizing your purchase.



We take our "At Your Side" motto to heart. Our installation process includes 2 days of personal, hands-on training with one of our DTG Technicians, covering all the fundamentals of DTG printing from machine maintenance to artwork preparation.



# CONCLUSION

To wrap up, let's do a quick review: DTG Printing requires a significant investment on the front end, but can unlock a level of art detail and ease of use that is unrivaled by most traditional garment decorating techniques. Be aware that you'll need more than just the printer and find a dealer that can provide thorough hands-on training for all your equipment. Once you've invested, take the effort to get to know your machines, and be willing to pay attention to the small details of the printing process to get the best results possible.

