

THE ULTIMATE DISTRIBUTOR Decoration Cheat Sheet

Reference this handy guide to decide when you should recommend the most common decoration methods to your clients.



Screen Printing

Ink is pushed through a mesh screen onto the product surface.

Best for: Apparel, fabric products (bags, hats, etc.) and products with a flat surface

Recommend When: Your clients need a cost-effective way to decorate large-quantity orders with simple logos that only include a few colors.



Embroidery

Thread is stitched into the product fabric to create raised, textured logos or designs.

Best for: Apparel and fabric products (bags, hats, etc.)

Recommend When: Your clients are willing to spend on a high-end and durable way to display simple graphics that only include a few colors and minimal details.



Heat Transfer (Vinyl/Digital)

Vinyl or digitally printed graphics are applied with pressure and heat onto the product surface.

Best for: Apparel, fabric products (bags, hats, etc.) and products with a flat surface

Recommend When: Your clients want an affordable way to decorate small-quantity orders with solid-color designs (vinyl) or full-color and photo-quality designs (digital).



Pad Printing

Ink is transferred with a silicone pad from an etched plate onto the product surface.

Best for: Small or irregularly shaped items (pens, stress balls, etc.)

Recommend When: Your clients need a versatile way to decorate uniquely shaped items with graphics that require precise details but only include a few colors.



Laser Engraving

Designs are permanently etched into hard surfaces using a laser.

Best for: Products made from hard materials like glass, metal or wood

Recommend When: Your clients are willing to spend on a high-end and durable way to display graphics with no ink or color.



Dye Sublimation

Liquid dyes are turned into a gas using heat and then embedded into polyester or polymer-coated surfaces.

Best for: Products made from polyester or products with a polymer coating

Recommend When: Your clients want full-color or photo-quality graphics that won't wear or fade over time.



Debossing/Embossing

Designs are pressed into (debossed) or raised from (embossed) the product surface.

Best for: Products made from malleable materials like leather or paper (notebooks, packaging, etc.)

Recommend When: Your clients want elegant, subtle imprints without color – or, you can add color with foil stamping.



UV Printing

Digital printing method where ultraviolet light instantly cures ink for vibrant results.

Best for: Hard goods with flat or slightly curved surfaces (drinkware, phone cases, etc.)

Recommend When: Your clients need a fast way to decorate a variety of product materials in full color and with fine detail.