



Screen Print + Embroidery + Digital + More

REASON

1

**CPSIA**  
COMPLIANT

\*Specific production locations.

Testing, certification and tracking available for any Youth Apparel order

REASON

2

**Ground  
-2 Days-**

2-Day Ground outbound shipping on Standard Silkscreen & Embroidery Orders

Saves you money and we send tracking information before you even have to ask



REASON

3

Over 34 locations and growing **34**

From coast to coast, we've got your decoration needs covered, even in the case of an unforeseen natural disaster



REASON

4

Unique Decoration? We can do that. Offering a wide array of decoration techniques to make your order stand apart.



REASON

5

1 hour turnaround on Standard Quotes and Virtual Mockups



Clickers in Seattle + Caffeine = the fastest turnaround in the industry

# "Manage your sales, not your decorators."

Reggie

VP Sales

*iClick // ASI Supplier of the Year 2014*



Let our sales team manage your apparel decoration orders, so you can spend more time selling. That's the power of iClick.

## Be Remarkable.®



ASI 62124



Contact us at [sales@iclick.com](mailto:sales@iclick.com) or 800-456-9177 for all your Decoration, USB, Pen and Mobile Accessory needs.

-or-

If you'd like to set up a special Decorate program or integrate with our technology, contact our VPs of Decorate



VP Decorate - Jonathan Irvin

[jonathan@iclick.com](mailto:jonathan@iclick.com)

800.456.9177 x380

970.690.1400

866.583.0172

[www.iclick.com](http://www.iclick.com)



VP Decorate - Roger Burnett

[rogerb@iclick.com](mailto:rogerb@iclick.com)

800.456.9177 x385

810.986.5369

866.583.0172

[www.iclick.com](http://www.iclick.com)



800-456-9177 | [www.iclick.com](http://www.iclick.com) | [asi/62124](mailto:asi/62124) | [cpa/254537](mailto:cpa/254537)



Circle 16 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



Screen Print + Embroidery + Digital + More

REASON

1

**CPSIA**  
COMPLIANT

\*Specific production locations.

Testing, certification and tracking available for any Youth Apparel order

REASON

2

**Ground  
-2 Days-**

2-Day Ground outbound shipping on Standard Silkscreen & Embroidery Orders

Saves you money and we send tracking information before you even have to ask



REASON

3

Over 34 locations and growing **34**

From coast to coast, we've got your decoration needs covered, even in the case of an unforeseen natural disaster



REASON

4

Unique Decoration? We can do that. Offering a wide array of decoration techniques to make your order stand apart.



REASON

5

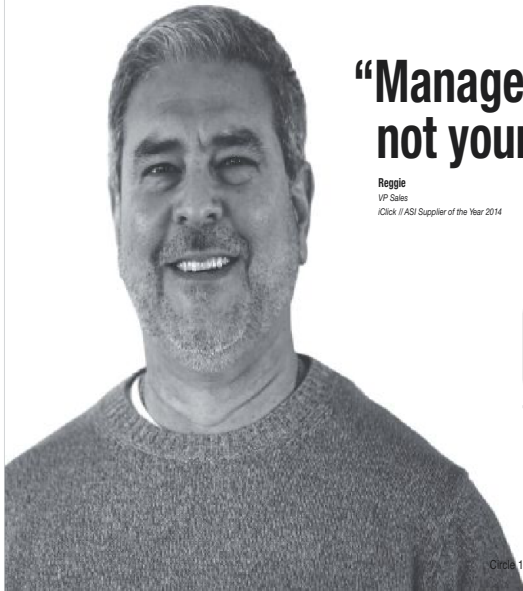
1 hour turnaround on Standard Quotes and Virtual Mockups



Clickers in Seattle + Caffeine = the fastest turnaround in the industry



800-456-9177 | www.iclick.com | asi/62124 | cpsa/254537



# "Manage your sales, not your decorators."

Reggie

VP Sales

iClick // ASI Supplier of the Year 2014



Let our sales team manage your apparel decoration orders, so you can spend more time selling. That's the power of iClick.

## Be Remarkable.®



ASI 62124



Contact us at [sales@iclick.com](mailto:sales@iclick.com) or 800-456-9177 for all your Decoration, USB, Pen and Mobile Accessory needs.

-or-

If you'd like to set up a special Decorate program or integrate with our technology, contact our VPs of Decorate



VP Decorate - Jonathan Irvin

[jonathan@iclick.com](mailto:jonathan@iclick.com)

800.456.9177 x380

970.690.1400

866.583.0172

[www.iclick.com](http://www.iclick.com)



VP Decorate - Roger Burnett

[rogerb@iclick.com](mailto:rogerb@iclick.com)

800.456.9177 x385

810.986.5369

866.583.0172

[www.iclick.com](http://www.iclick.com)

Circle 16 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



# WEARABLES

THE EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY [www.wearablesmag.com](http://www.wearablesmag.com)

April/May 2014

THE  
COMEBACK  
KING

POLYESTER

- ▶ SELLING
- ▶ HISTORY
- ▶ DECORATION
- ▶ SHOWCASE

**SCREEN-  
PRINTING  
SUCCESS**

- EXPERT CONSULTATIONS
- REFLECTIVE DESIGNS
- HALFTONE STYLES

Long-sleeve performance shirt was provided by Hanes Branded  
Printwear (asi/59528)



A woman with blonde hair is wearing a light blue t-shirt that is covered in water droplets. She is holding a white towel against her chest, and another hand is visible, also holding the towel. The background is a light, textured surface, possibly a wall or a backdrop, also covered in water droplets.

# DRIES QUICKER

The **Hanes Cool DRI®** advantage

The Hanes logo, consisting of the word "Hanes" in white serif font on a red, wavy, rectangular background.

**Hanes**®

©2014 HanesBrands Inc. All rights reserved.

Circle 12 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

asi/59528



# PERFORMANCE SPORTSWEAR

by American Apparel®

Flexible workout wear in functional, stylish cuts, featuring our high-performance nylon for maximum agility, support and sweat absorbency. Feel the American Apparel difference.



## RSAAK301 SPORTS BRA

- 90% Nylon  
10% Elastane

XS | S | M | L

	Alloy
	Black
	Cameo Blue
	Factory Grey
	Hot Fuchsia
	Lipstick
	Royal Blue
	US Navy
	White

## RSAAK302 MOTION SHORT

- 90% Nylon  
10% Elastane

XS | S | M | L

	Alloy
	Black
	Cameo Blue
	Royal Blue
	Lipstick
	Factory Grey



**American Apparel is Jobs.**  
At American Apparel we leverage art, design, innovation, and technology to advance our business. Our workers earn fair wages, pay millions of dollars in taxes, and have access to comprehensive medical programs.

— United States / HQ  
747 Warehouse St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90021  
Tel. +1 (213) 488-0226, Option 2  
Fax. +1 (213) 488-0334  
csr@americanapparel.net

Wholesale Imprintable Division  
americanapparel.net/wholesale

asi/35297

Circle 007 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

**STATON**  
corporate/casual  
800.950.6611  
statononline.com

**Bodek and Rhodes**  
HOME OF ULTRA CLUB®  
800.523.2721  
bodekandrhodes.com

**ONE STOP**  
AMERICA'S BEST SUPPLIER  
800.968.7550  
onestopinc.com

**db**  
alphabroder  
800.523.4585  
alphabroder.com

**HERITAGE**  
*Sportswear*  
800.537.2222  
herspw.com

**VAT's**  
VIRGINIA T'S  
VA • FL • IN • OH  
800.289.8099  
virginiats.com



**N2349**

**NW2349**





# ***PRINTABLES***

**100% COTTON TEES**

**AS LOW AS\***

**\$2.55**

asi/30121

# **A4**

pushing the limit

**888 464 3824 | [www.A4.com](http://www.A4.com)**

\*ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS MAY APPLY. CALL OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

Circle 002 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

# COMFORT IN STRIDE



LET'S MAKE  
EXCELLENT  
HAPPEN.

Tempo Men's and Ladies' Performance T-Shirts from New Balance are designed to deliver ultimate comfort, form and function - whatever your routine. Created with soft piqué knit flatback mesh polyester that moves the way you do. Infused with Lightning Dry moisture management and anti-microbial properties to fight odor, you can test your limits and remain focused and fresh.

Visit [NBimprint.com](http://NBimprint.com) to learn more.

asi/56842

Gildan Activewear SRL is an authorized licensee of New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.  
New Balance, Lightning Dry and the flying NB are registered trademarks of New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.

9118 & 9118L

Circle 9 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



WHAT'S YOUR

# FASHIONALITY

SOFT AND LIGHT, OUR WOMEN'S SHEER 100% RING SPUN COTTON TEES FEEL LIKE A SECOND SKIN, WITH A SILKY DRAPE AND MODERN SHAPE. OFFERED IN V-NECK OR SCOOP WITH SHORT OR LONG SLEEVES IN THE BOLD COLORS YOU WANT TO BE SEEN IN.





## DON'T JUST MANAGE MOISTURE. DOMINATE IT.

*Take your game to new heights of comfort with the Gildan Performance™ line. The 100% polyester jersey knit disperses moisture and fights odor — keeps you feeling dry and fresh, so you can focus on bringing the game. Choose from eight active styles for Adults, Ladies and Youth, and including the new Adult Sleeveless T-Shirt and 9" Shorts. Play in comfort, play to win with Gildan Performance™.*

**Aquafx®**

*Wicking action disperses moisture for drier comfort*

**Freshcare®**

*Anti-microbial technology guards the fabric against odors for lasting freshness*

**For complete Gildan Performance™ product information visit [myGildan.com](http://myGildan.com)**

42700 & 44530

**GILDAN®**  
PERFORMANCE™

# UP CLOSE *Softness*



64000 & 64000L

There's nothing quite like the comforting touch of Gildan Softstyle® tees. You'll notice the difference from the very first touch. The entire collection — crews, V-necks, and long sleeves — is knit of soft deluxe 30's cotton yarns. And there's a style for everyone. Gildan Softstyle®: the tee everyone wants to get close to.

Visit [myGildan.com](http://myGildan.com)

Circle 11 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

**GILDAN**  
*Part of your Life™*

asi/56842



# WEARABLES

APRIL/MAY 2014 VOLUME 18, Number 4 [www.wearablesmag.com](http://www.wearablesmag.com)

## FEATURES

### 37 The New Sales Rules

Everything you thought you knew about performance apparel is changing. These are the new rules for selling.

BY C.J. MITTICA AND  
SABRINA LANDRY

### 40 The History of Poly

Once overlooked and regarded with disdain, polyester reinvented itself to become the defining fiber of our age.

BY C.J. MITTICA

### 44 Decoration Solution

The techniques of decorating apparel have to be relearned to success-fully print on polyester.

BY CHRISTOPHER RUVO

## SCREEN-PRINTING SUCCESS

### 50 The Blind Spot

We pair up readers with experts to address their greatest weaknesses in decoration and apparel.

BY C.J. MITTICA, CARA CHERRY  
AND SHANE DALE

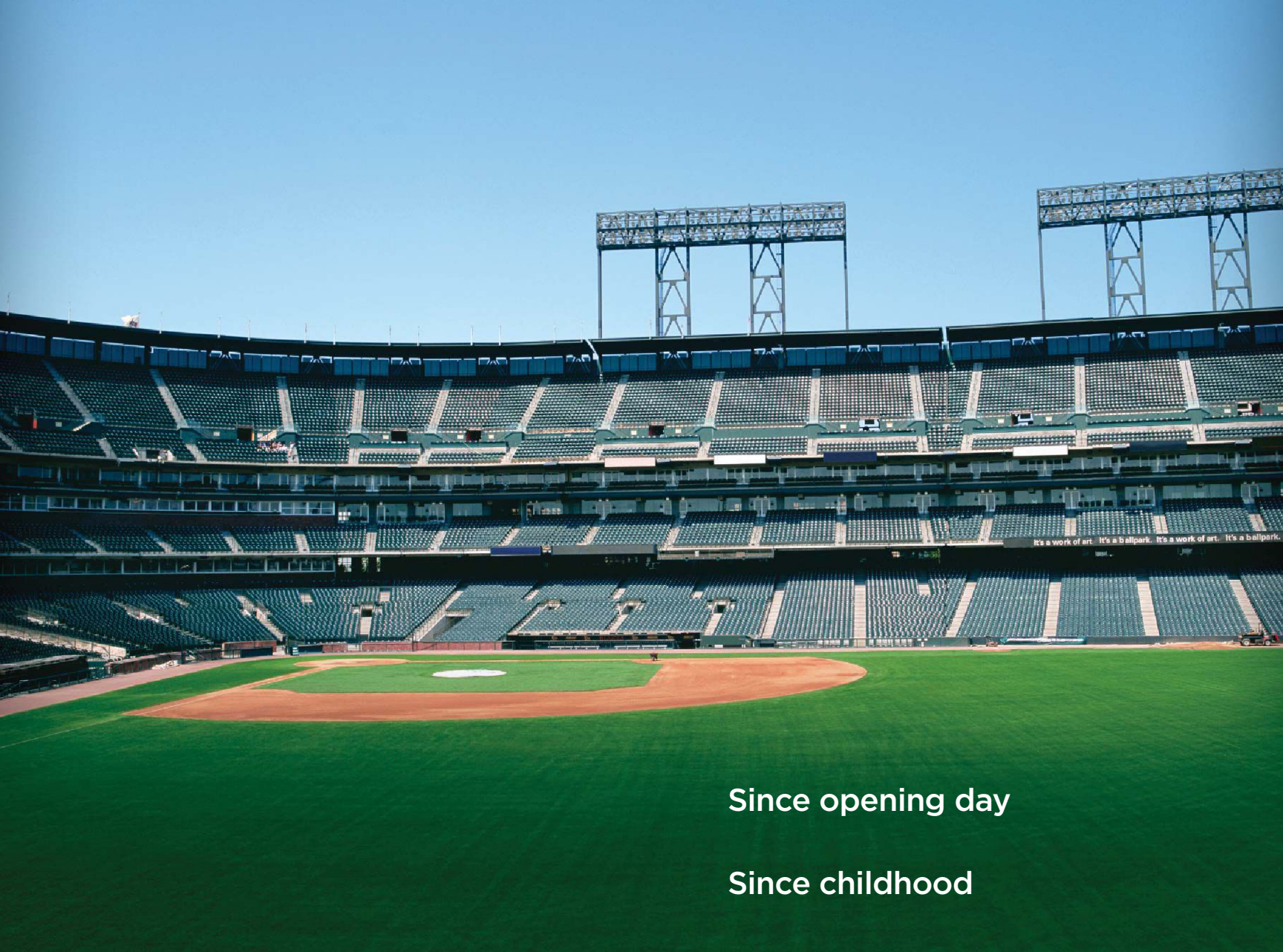
### 56 Choose Halftone Styles

### 58 Reflective designs: safe and stylish

### 60 Equipment Corner



# 36 KING POLY



Since opening day

Since childhood

Since 1919

**Champion**

[Championlocator.com](http://Championlocator.com)



Raglan Baseball T-Shirt  
Now available in youth sizes





## EPSON QUALITY AND RELIABILITY. NOW IN A PURPOSE-BUILT DIRECT-TO-GARMENT PRINTER.

The Epson® brand has long stood for the highest standards in print performance, quality and reliability. Now, we're putting our expertise into an exciting new suite of garment printers. Designed exclusively for DTG printing, the all-new SureColor® F2000 includes an advanced PrecisionCore™ TFP® printhead and specially formulated Epson UltraChrome® DG Inks, delivering superior print quality, along with the world-class service you've come to expect from Epson. The Epson SureColor F2000 series. Better performance. More profit. To learn more, visit [proimaging.epson.com](http://proimaging.epson.com)



Epson SureColor F2000 White Edition  
\$19,995\*



Epson SureColor F2000 Color Edition  
\$19,995\*

\*MSRP, before rebates. Please check with an Epson Professional Imaging Authorized Reseller for actual price, as dealer prices may vary. Epson, Epson UltraChrome, SureColor and TFP are registered trademarks, PrecisionCore is a trademark, and EPSON Exceed Your Vision is a registered logomark of Seiko Epson Corporation. Copyright 2014 Epson America, Inc.

With the widest selection of styles  
across all apparel categories,  
**alphabroder**  
has a fit for everyone.



alphabroder

asi/34063

Circle 003 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

[alphabroder.com](http://alphabroder.com) • 800.523.4585





B9259  
Stretch-Stripe  
Shirt

# S&S

ACTIVEWEAR

**If it's hot, it's here.**

Burnside surf and skate-inspired apparel makes looking good look effortless. Cotton/poly blend, micro-striped fabric complements your every move, while contrast stitching and white matte buttons create a look that's as welcome as a summer breeze.

Carefree is also the hallmark of S&S Activewear. Ordering is fast and easy with one of the industry's largest one and two-day shipping zones.

For a copy of our new 2014 catalog, call us at **800-523-2155**, or visit our website at **ssactivewear.com**.

## RELAXED LOOKS FOR CAREFREE DAYS.



***PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES STARTS WITH***



***Start with JERZEES.  
Anticipate the  
possibilities.***

***Raise the bar within basics.  
Create greatness for  
your customers.***

***Celebrate the outcome.  
Expect a higher standard  
every time you start with Z.***



asi/84257

JERZEES.com • 800.321.1138

***Introducing the new  
Heavyweight Blend™ Ladies' T-Shirt.  
Available in 10 colors, sizes S-3XL.***

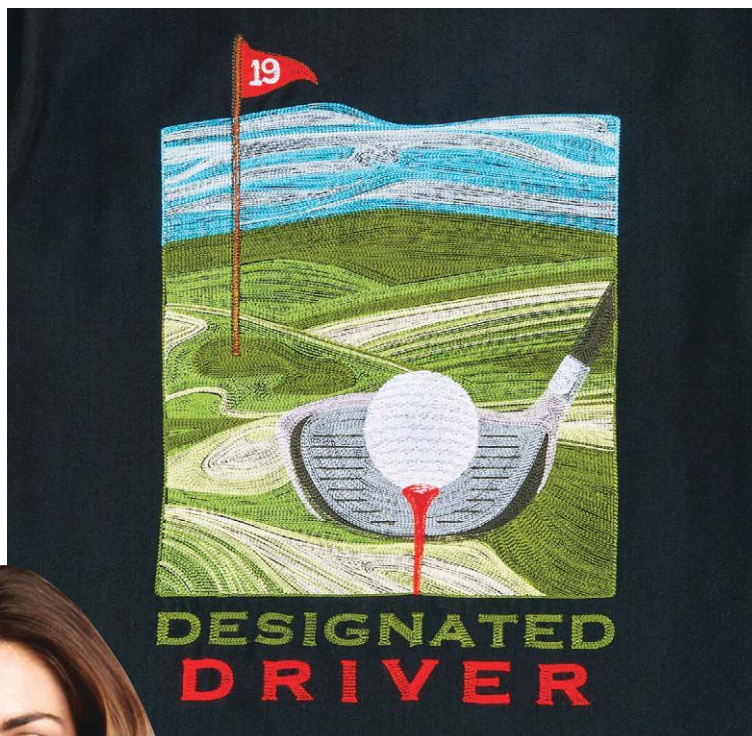
***Style 29WR***

© 2014 Russell Brands, LLC

Circle 022 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



26



34



- 17 About the Cover
- 18 Masthead
- 20 Wearablesmag.com
- 22 From the Editor's Desk

## TRENDS

- 25 Deep V-necks
- 26 Herringbone
- 27 Sandals

## BUSINESS

- 28 Manage client objections
- 29 Get moving with on-site printing
- 30 Q&A: Connie Kurohara,  
Creative Arts Hawaii

## EDUCATION

- 32 Sprinting to sales
- 33 Eco for Earth Day
- 34 Color preferences
- 35 Caps fit the bill

- 62 Reader Service Index
- 63 B-to-B/Classifieds
- 64 Apparel In Action



60

Wearables ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.				
By using eco-friendly paper, Wearables magazine has saved the valuable resources below per year.				
TREES	ENERGY	WATER	GREENHOUSE GASES	SOLID WASTE
95	65ml. BTU	34,642 gallons	10,513 lbs of CO <sub>2</sub>	5,702 pounds

Environmental impact estimate were made using the Environmental Defense Calculator. For more information visit [www.papercalculator.org](http://www.papercalculator.org)

\*Please recycle this magazine.





10 new vintage colors » 5 new silhouettes » nano collection

Hanes®

©2014 HanesBrands Inc. All rights reserved.

Circle 14 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

asi/59528



# AWARD WINNING INNOVATION AND PERFORMANCE

## EXTREME PERFORMANCE



H2X-DRY® Stretch  
Micro Pique with  
Spandex

XBP-1 | XBP-1W

**LASER TECHNICAL POLO**

Best Polo Winner - Wearables Magazine  
Apparel Design Awards

Extreme performance, H2X-DRY®  
Stretch, micro pique construction  
with laser-cut bonded zipper frame,  
offers maximum comfort  
and mobility

## TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE



H2X-DRY®  
Moisture Wicking  
Interlock

TPS-1 | TPS-1W

**CROSSOVER PERFORMANCE POLO**

Extreme performance technical  
polo using H2X-DRY® moisture  
management technology with  
bonded back and shoulder panels

## BASIC PERFORMANCE



H2X-DRY®  
Moisture Wicking  
Interlock

IPS-4 | IPS-4W

**PIRANHA PERFORMANCE POLO**

This H2X-DRY® Stretch polo combines  
classic sophistication with powerful  
performance technology to outfit you in  
style and comfort whether at work or play

# STORMTECH

P E R F O R M A N C E

STORMTECH



MOISTURE MANAGEMENT



STRETCH

Circle 31 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)

SAME DAY SHIPPING • FREE FREIGHT OVER \$300 • IN-HOUSE DECORATION  
**VIEW OUR 2014 SPRING/SUMMER COLLECTION ONLINE**



USA: 89864



CANADA: 89869



260245



Power for Professionals

45204



980709



Image Award Winner for  
Branding and E-Catalog



[WWW.STORMTECH.CA](http://WWW.STORMTECH.CA) • [WWW.STORMTECHUSA.COM](http://WWW.STORMTECHUSA.COM) • [WWW.STORMTECH.TV](http://WWW.STORMTECH.TV)





## Designs On The Crown

The new face of polyester is advanced performance wear that can be worn in all walks of life. To best demonstrate this surging category, we are featuring the new Champion Vapor long-sleeve shirt (CV26) from Hanes Branded Printwear (asi/59528; circle 82 on Free Info

Card). The garment was decorated with new technology by Stahls' ID Direct (asi/88984; circle 94 on Free Info Card) with a logo designed by ASI Art Director Hillary Glen and Art Intern Jess Williams.

### The Shirt

The Champion Vapor collection features advanced fabric developments that make Champion's fastest-drying tees ever, positioning the brand to compete with big names like Nike and Under Armour. The 100% polyester tee is available in five heathered colors, which allows for easy color coordination with other Champion products. The greatest strength of the Vapor Performance shirt is its versatility that transcends beyond sports. "Industry research tells us that more than two-thirds of wear occasions of performance apparel are now for non-performance," says Tom LaPonte, marketing manager for Champion Branded Printwear. "In addition to sports and fitness activities, Champion Vapor tees are perfect for landscapers, movers, or anyone looking to stay cool and dry."

### The Design

The "Comeback King" logo designed by Williams combines streamlined elements with a modern slant – in essence the best attributes of today's performance gear. "I wanted the logo to emulate others that have an athletic feel," she said. "I wanted to work with simplified shapes and simple straightforward bold type, to make sure that the logo packed a punch."

### The Decoration

This design was applied with a heat transfer using the new CAD-COLOR SuperTEK Sublistop from Stahls. It's designed to work specifically with performance fabrics, easily printing and stretching with any garment. "Stahls' patented STiX2 adhesive makes it possible to apply SuperTEK Opaque and Sublistop to any technical fabric," says Marketing and Communications Specialist Andrea Pietrowsky. "It's lightweight, stretchable, activates at low temperature, and sticks and stays to virtually any textile. These garments were all very easy to decorate – no mess, no errors and no waste!"

### Decoration Tip

When working with a heat press for performance apparel, use a fast application time (such as five seconds) and a low application temperature of 300 degrees. "This makes it possible to avoid a heat imprint square from the upper platen that is often a challenge when decorating polyester apparel," says Pietrowsky. "Using a heat printing pillow is an important step, as it elevates the area to be decorated and ensures the transfer adheres to an even surface."

# WEARABLES

## PUBLISHER

Richard Fairfield, MASI, [rfairfield@asicentral.com](mailto:rfairfield@asicentral.com), @RichFairfield

## EDITOR IN CHIEF

Melinda Ligos, MASI, [mligos@asicentral.com](mailto:mligos@asicentral.com), @ASI\_melinda

## EDITOR

C.J. Mittica, BASI, [cmittica@asicentral.com](mailto:cmittica@asicentral.com), @CJ\_Wearables

## MANAGING EDITORS

Joe Haley, MASI, [jhaley@asicentral.com](mailto:jhaley@asicentral.com), @asi\_joehaley  
Joan Chaykin, BASI, [jchaykin@asicentral.com](mailto:jchaykin@asicentral.com), @asi\_joanchaykin

## SENIOR WRITER

Christopher Ruvo, BASI, [cruvo@asicentral.com](mailto:cruvo@asicentral.com), @ChrisR\_ASI

## STAFF WRITERS

Chuck Zak, BASI, [czak@asicentral.com](mailto:czak@asicentral.com), @ASI\_ChuckZ

## INTERN

Sara Lavenduski, [slavenduski@asicentral.com](mailto:slavenduski@asicentral.com)

## COPY EDITOR

Lindsey Strawser, [lstrawser@asicentral.com](mailto:lstrawser@asicentral.com)

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Cara Cherry, Shane Dale, J.P. Hunt, Tonia Kimbrough, Sabrina Landry  
and Alissa Tallman

## EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Carole Seymour, BASI, [cseymour@asicentral.com](mailto:cseymour@asicentral.com)

**ART DIRECTOR** Hillary Haught, BASI, @HaughtArt

**SENIOR DESIGNER** Glen J. Karpowich, BASI, @KarpDesign

**DESIGNER** Melissa Lascala, BASI, [mlascala@asicentral.com](mailto:mlascala@asicentral.com)

**EDITORIAL PHOTOGRAPHER** Mark Priskett, MASI, @marcOphotO

**ART INTERN** Jessica Williams

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PRODUCTION & ADVERTISING OPERATIONS

Haitham Barakat, BASI

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT & ANALYSIS

Debra Brill, BASI

## Advertising Specialty Institute

### CHAIRMAN

Norman Cohn, MASI

### VICE CHAIRMAN

Matthew Cohn, MASI

### PRESIDENT AND CEO

Timothy M. Andrews, MASI

### CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Vince Bucolo, BASI

### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT/SALES

Christine Lovell, MASI

### VICE PRESIDENT/SALES

Ron Ball, MASI

### ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Ed Koehler, BASI

### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Matthew Canamucio, BASI, Vince Deissroth, BASI, Mary Fox, Suzanne Izzo, BASI, Jason Krenzel, BASI,  
Cindi Mann, BASI, Charlene McCaw, Sean McGuigan, BASI, Barry Melito, Phyllis Mutnick, BASI, Jim Padilla, BASI,  
Suzanne Rozick, BASI, Mary Sells, MASI, Krista Taylor, BASI, Pamela Vicik-Smith, MASI

---

## Wearables Editorial Advisory Board

**Marshall Atkinson**, COO, Visual Impressions

**Gina Barreca**, Director of Marketing,  
Vantage Apparel

**David Bebon**, Owner, DBEBZ Apparel

**Anita Brooks**, Owner and President,  
Geiger/ASB Marketing LLC

**Scott Fresener**, Director, T-Biz Network International

**Marc Held**, National Sales Director,  
Bodek and Rhodes

**Steve Kanney**, President & Owner,  
Target Decorated Apparel

**Taraynn Lloyd**, Marketing Director, Edwards Garment

**Ryan Moor**, CEO, Ryonet

**Greg Muzzillo**, CEO, Proforma

**Cris Nigro**, Owner, Proforma Creative Precision

**Tej Shah**, VP, Marketing and E-Commerce,  
Overture Premiums & Promotions

**Michael Snyder**, Vice President of Merchandising,  
Trimark Powered by Leeds





CHARLES RIVER APPAREL

**LOOK GOOD. FEEL GOOD.**  
CHARLES RIVER APPAREL.

## **9489 ZONE PULLOVER**

**GET A SAMPLE OF THIS STYLE FOR \$5 (NET).**

**MUST MENTION CODE Z5. ONE BLANK SAMPLE PER ACCOUNT.** Freight additional. Not valid on web. Applies to style 9489 only. Valid 04/01/14-5/31/14.

800-225-0550 / ASI # 44620 / PPAI #111644 / UPIC CRA  
custserv@charlesriverapparel.com

Circle 6 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)





## ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

### The Making Of

Given your sales these days, you're getting intimately familiar with polyester. But where does it come from? How is it made? *Wearables* examines the manufacturing process and explains how the fiber is improving in this online exclusive to our cover story package this issue.



## VIDEO

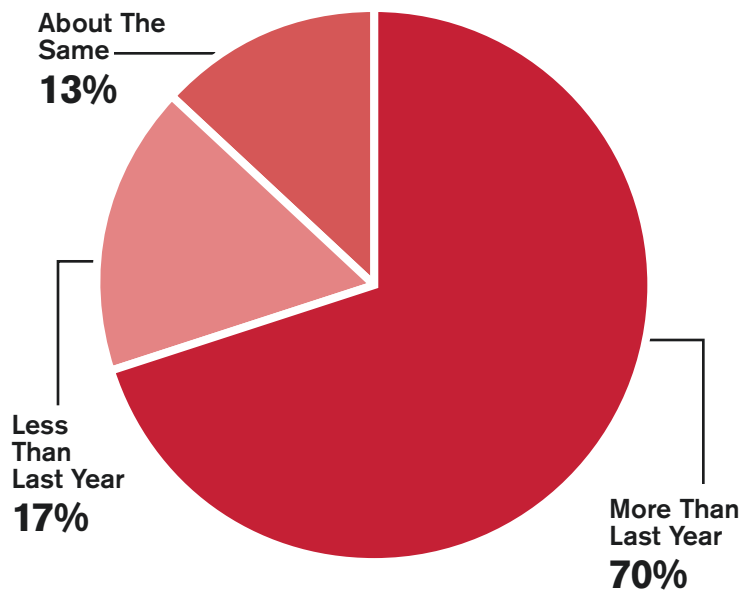
### Simply Sublime

Sublimation produces daring and colorful all-over designs with little hand, and is ideally suited for the performance fabric craze. *Wearables* Editor C.J. Mittica shows off some of the latest sublimation designs and trends in this Trend Alert video.

## POLL

### Now Hiring

On ASICentral.com, we asked: "I expect my first-quarter sales to be:



## NEWSLETTER

### Wrap It Up

As the heat of summer begins to approach, towels are a go-to choice for swim clubs, vacationers and so much more. We examine the latest trends, styles and product features for this popular item.

### Big City Doings

Turn to our *Wearables Style* e-newsletter and ASI's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/asicentral](http://www.youtube.com/asicentral) for full coverage from The ASI Show New York, including cool new products and the latest tips and sales strategies from top experts in the industry.



The  
**SOFT WASH JERSEY**  
Sporty V



asi/73867

## Direct

15730 S Figueroa St.  
Cardena, CA 90248  
310.631.4955

## Distributors

**Bodek and Rhodes**  
HOME OF ULTRA CLUB®

Pennsylvania, California, Florida,  
Massachusetts, Michigan  
www.bodekandrhodes.com

**EVA**  
SPORTSWEAR  
Robbinsville, NJ  
www.evatees.com



**MCCREARY'S TEES**  
Phoenix, AZ  
www.mccrearystees.com



Cainesville, VA  
www.accinfo.com

**TSF** sportswear

Alabama, Florida,  
Texas, Puerto Rico  
www.tsfsportswear.com



Salt Lake City, UT  
www.slactivewear.com



San Diego, CA  
www.missionimprintables.com



San Jose, CA  
www.gsactivewear.com



Honolulu, HI  
www.american-t-shirt.com



Grand Rapids, MI  
www.onestopinc.com



Indian Trail, NC  
www.carolinamade.com



Lubbock, TX  
www.allamericantees.com



**NEXT LEVEL**  
APPAREL

[www.nextlevelapparel.com](http://www.nextlevelapparel.com)

Circle 018 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



---

# MATERIAL IMAGE

---

As I worked on this performance-wear themed issue, I kept a 10 pound spool of polyester yarn on my desk. (You can actually see it in our package opener on page 35). It was an instant conversation piece. One day our administrative assistant Carole Seymour walked by and asked me what it was. When I said polyester, her reaction was visible. Maybe more like visceral. "That reminds me of the housecoats my mother and her friends would wear," she said. I told her things are different today – that polyester is very popular, a much better fiber than what she remembers. It didn't matter. "If I saw anything that says polyester, I still wouldn't wear it," she concluded.

Old perceptions die hard, but for anyone still turning their nose up at polyester, I've got a message for you: Get over it. Poly is back.

Polyester is the number-one consumed fiber in the world, commanding half the market. It's used in hundreds of applications ranging beyond apparel. In clothing, it's at the heart of the performance apparel craze. Even the biggest fashion designers have readily adopted it into their collections.

All of this was inconceivable as little as two decades ago. Polyester carried a reputation as a low-cost fiber that didn't breathe, drape or feel particularly wonderful. After its heyday in the leisure suit '70s, it was regarded as an out-of-style fad that sullied any piece of clothing it came in contact with. It was a joke, a cultural relic.

So what happened? We trace its story in our oral history. Not only did scientists make major breakthroughs with the fiber, but apparel companies got smart by recasting it as a performance fabric for athletes and workers. Sportswear giants Nike and Under Armour lifted poly from the ashes, and the mainstream public wholeheartedly embraced it.

Today, that means performance wear is worn in every conceivable



“For anyone still turning their nose up at polyester, I’ve got a message for you: Get over it. Poly is back.”

setting. It's made the crossover as a trendy streetwear category. Now, apparel sellers have to look at it in a totally different light. There are new

rules for selling polyester garments, and we outline them in our cover story this issue.

Lastly, polyester totally changed the game for screen printers. All the tidy rules they had for cotton went into the shredder as they dealt with issues like dye migration, cracked prints and much more. It's perhaps the most difficult printing challenge facing decorators right now, and our in-depth feature showcases the techniques you need to get it right.

Every prediction for the future has polyester playing a massive part. Its consumption (estimated at 45 million tons in 2013) is only growing. It can play an integral role in dozens of significant apparel advances. And not only are lots of people enjoying the feel of polyester, but they are demanding that their apparel performs to the highest capability.

Cotton had a hell of a run, but polyester is the fiber of our age. It's here to stay.

Thanks for reading,

*Charles J. Mitten*



## WHAT'S IN MY CLOSET?

Each issue, we ask our readers a simple question: What is your favorite branded apparel item in your closet? Send in a photo of you and your favorite garment, and tell us in a paragraph why you love it. We run one submission each issue, and that lucky winner receives a \$25 Visa Gift card.

This issue, our submission comes from John Van De Wiel, creative director at T-Shirt Tycoon Solutions Inc. (asi/87000): "I love the vintage appeal of this shirt. It's accomplished using a special mineral wash that helps to

create a worn look and feel. The randomness of pattern is intentional and adds individuality to the finished garment. Each garment will be unique. Plus, Cadillac is an American-made company; in fact, it's the second oldest American-made automobile manufacturer. Not only is this shirt American made, but it's extremely soft thanks to the mineral wash and discharge inks. American made and vintage – it's just like Cadillac."





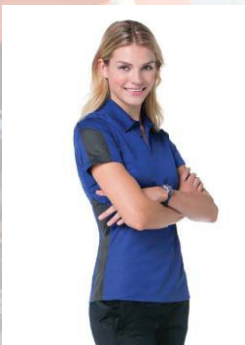
ST300 SPORT-TEK® LONG  
SLEEVE RUGBY POLO



LST61 & LPST270 SPORT-TEK®  
PIPED WIND JACKETS  
& PANTS



ST307 SPORT-TEK®  
POSICHARGE™ REPLICA JERSEY



LST695 SPORT-TEK® LADIES  
ACTIVE TEXTURED  
COLORBLOCK POLO



ST93 SPORT-TEK® DOT  
SUBLIMATION TRICOT  
TRACK JACKET



ST361LS SPORT-TEK®  
HEATHER COLORBLOCK  
CONTENDER TEES

# RALLY AROUND SPORT-TEK

CATALOGS • ONLINE

**Sport-Tek®**

outfits teams  
to practice,  
play, cheer  
and ultimately,  
perform their  
best.

FAMILY OWNED • CUSTOMER FOCUSED • SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE • AWARD WINNING PRODUCTS • DEEP ON-HAND INVENTORY • SALES-BOOSTING MARKETING TOOLS



800.426.6399 • [sanmar.com](http://sanmar.com)  
asi/84863

**SANMAR®**

Circle 24 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



# NEW in 2014

## The Easy-Care Tee

### Product #5350

- 4.3 oz 60/40 Polyester/Cotton durable blend
- High quality, low maintenance
- Super soft, comfortable drape, smooth finish
- Color fast fabric great for sublimation and burnout
- Offered in 7 colors, sizes S-3XL

**Available NOW**  
**Place your order today!**

800.225.1364 west coast  
800.621.6578 east coast  
866.275.7860 canada



[www.alstyle.com](http://www.alstyle.com)





# TRENDS

THE HOTTEST  
APPAREL AND  
ACCESSORIES

## Take the Plunge

### PLUNGING NECKLINES ARE

among the season's most daring trends. Runway designs by Balmain, Sonia Rykiel and Leonard in particular audaciously showcase deep V-necks, a less dramatic version of which has made its way to men's and women's tees. "Once used primarily for evening gowns and fussy cocktail dresses, the plunging neckline is now accepted in casual wear as an alternative to the basic V-neck that both men and women appreciate," says Elyse Bonner, showroom manager for American Apparel (asi/35297). "It's appropriate for the gym or running errands as well as for wearing under a blazer with jeans."

### Heather cap sleeve V-neck (DT2001)

from SanMar  
(asi/84863; circle 76  
on Free Info Card)

Foil screen printing  
by Motion Textile  
(asi/72662; circle 107  
on Free Info Card)

### DECORATION TIP

Printing a decoration over the V-neck is not unexpected, but it's still a dramatic look that only the most capable decorators can pull off. "An ideal graphic will have low to moderate coverage and will be halftone or distressed," says Tom Davenport, president and founder of Motion Textile (asi/72662). "A lightweight garment with a flat collar as well as a low viscosity ink makes all the difference."





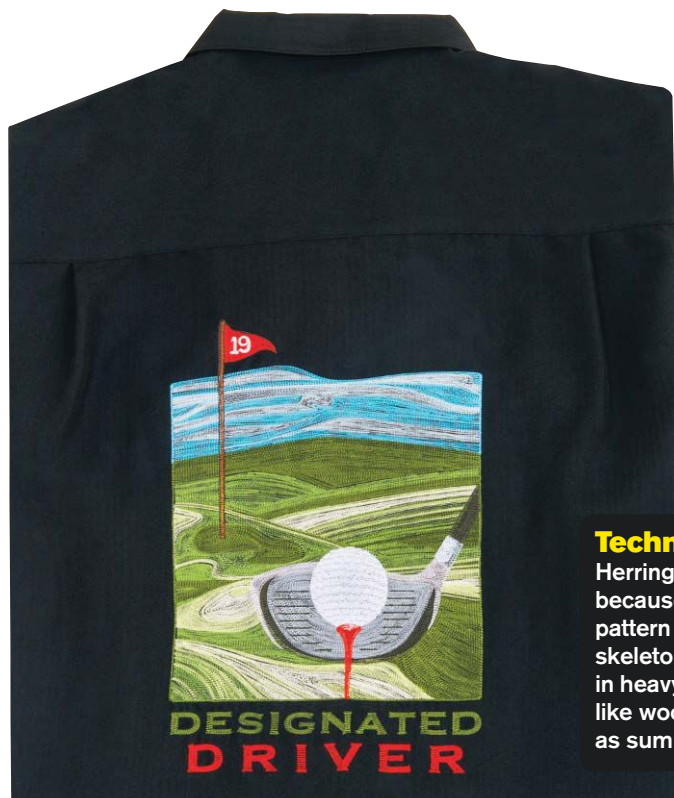
**Cabby hat** (DT621) from SanMar (asi/84863; circle 76 on Free Info Card).



**Padded laptop tote** (MEWHCS) from Mobile Edge (asi/71854; circle 89 on Free Info Card).

## NOTICE A PATTERN WITH Herringbone

**WHETHER ITS FURNITURE**, fashion, or home décor, the herringbone pattern is a staple of modern design. Fashion designers such as Michael Kors and Calvin Klein have incorporated herringbone into their garment lines, while the pattern has also begun lining the shelves at retailers such as Urban Outfitters and H&M. This repeating V-shaped pattern creates a polished and professional look that stands out against blocks of solid color. While some garments subtly use the pattern within the textured stitching, others display it loudly as the main eye-catching feature of the garment. Either way, the result is elegant and refined.



**Silk herringbone camp shirt** (Mo31437) from Sportailor (asi/88796; circle 91 on Free Info Card).



**Water-repellent canvas tote** (ST-042) from Ame & Lulu (asi/35232; circle 90 on Free Info Card).

### Technical Tip

Herringbone got its name because its zig-zag woven pattern resembles the skeleton of a fish. Look for it in heavy, cool-weather fabrics like wool and tweed as well as summer camp shirts.



# Life's a Beach with Sandals

**SANDAL-FRIENDLY WEATHER** is right around the corner, and there are a number of new sandal styles and trends you'll definitely want to be in the know about this spring.

Patty Geraci, apparel buyer for Hammacher Schlemmer (asi/59444), lists several notable sandal trends for the upcoming spring and summer season. Two that she's seeing for women's shoes are metallic styles and an enhanced heel height. "Metallic features in gold, silver and bronze have proven to be quite strong," she says. "All three hues are being viewed as neutrals in terms of color. We're also seeing the popularity of wedges ... continue to grow."

As far as men's sandal trends, it's all about sporty and casual. "Sport-related styles continue to trend, and the casual/leisure style is doing very well," she says. "Leather sandals in particular look

promising." Finally, Geraci stresses the importance of sandal performance. "The traditional flip-flop offers little to no support," she says. "Sandals with a proper arch support are key so that customers can walk for hours in comfort."



Men's sandals (45697) from **Pro Golf Premiums Inc.** (asi/79680; circle 95 on Free Info Card)

## AS SEEN AT... PARIS FASHION WEEK



◀ Sport sandals were all over the Spring/Summer fashion runways. Name a designer – Helmut Lang, Marni, Stella McCartney, Givenchy (pictured) – and you could find an army of models outfitted in sensible summer footwear. Comfortable fit and affordable price put this right in a client's sweet spot.



THIS IS THE YEAR  
TO CHEER WITH  
**PIZZAZZ!**



New Product Lines • Expanded Warehouse

**SAME DAY SHIPPING!**

See the complete Pizzazz® collection at:

[www.pizzazzwear.com](http://www.pizzazzwear.com)

or call for a dealer near you.

**888.289.7860**

Pizzazz is a registered trademark of Just Basic Sports, Inc.  
© 2014, Just Basic Sports, Inc. All rights reserved.



Scan to see  
our New  
Products!

asi/78230



## THE CHALLENGE

# “How Can I Manage Objections from Prospects?”

Even the best sales pros encounter objections from prospects. From complaints about price to reluctance to switch from a current provider, resistance takes many forms. Nonetheless, a bit of push-back doesn't have to be fatal to a sale. Rather, objections can provide opportunity to expound on value points sellers of imprinted apparel may have failed to convey clearly. So take a proactive approach and heed these tips for managing common misgivings.

**Prep for Objections:** Perhaps the best way to overcome objections is to address them before a prospect does. “When you bring the objections up first, you take the prospect off the defensive and re-frame the interaction as a consultative sale,” says Len Markidan, a sales and marketing consultant who advises fast-growth companies.

Distributor Michael Schnell, owner of Proforma Atlantic Gifts, takes this approach, often researching prospects online to learn about their businesses and what their needs and particular concerns may be. “I try to address those issues,” says Schnell, “before

the prospect does.”

**Add Extra Value:** Frequently, prospects say they're loyal to their current provider and don't want to switch. This is the most common objection Schnell encounters. One way he handles it is to discuss ways that he is uniquely positioned to provide top service and pricing – points that may distinguish him from the competitor.

Meanwhile, David Blaise, a leading ad specialty industry consultant, suggests asking prospects if they'd potentially do a portion of their business with you if you could recommend a results-producing promotion that their existing partner has not. “If they say yes, you're back in the game,” says Blaise, owner of Blaise Drake & Co. “If the answer is still ‘no,’ then give them your card and tell them if there is ever a situation where the existing company can't get them what they need, call you because you have a history of delivering in those situations.”

**Consult, Don't Low-Ball:** “I can get it cheaper online.” “I can get it cheaper from another guy.” You're probably hearing those objections more often these days. Sure, you



can engage in the price war, but savvy sellers say that approach leads to little or no margins and establishes you as a commodity to be discarded when the next low-baller comes along. Instead, construct the conversation about how you can orchestrate unique promotional campaigns involving apparel and other products that will yield the ROI the prospect is after. Be consultative, says Blaise, and focus on the issues prospects are dealing with in their business. Maybe they want to boost second quarter sales. Ask them, “If I could come up with a campaign that would help boost your Q2 sales, would you be interested in talking about that?” They're probably going to say yes.

**Comprehend and Communicate:** If you propose a promotional solution and the prospect dislikes the idea, it either stinks or you've done an inadequate job communicating its quality. If the client objects because the idea is a dud, perhaps you failed to understand the intended audience and/or goals. Reexamine these and other issues to see where you may have gone wrong and come up with something better. If the problem is communication, offer validation and social proof from your past case studies and customer testimonials to which clients can relate. Says Markidan, “You must help your prospects visualize themselves achieving the results you promise.”

– Christopher Ruvo

## Overcome Objections

Jeff Goldberg, a New York-based sales trainer and consultant with 40 years sales experience, offers these step-by-step tips for handling prospects' objections.

**Listen:** “Let the prospect talk without interruption. Let them get the whole objection out.”

**Confirm:** “Make sure you heard the objection correctly and that it is what the prospect meant to say.”

**Acknowledge the validity of the objection:** “You want the prospect to feel like they're not alone. This makes them feel comfortable.”

**Isolate the objection:** “Make sure this is the only thing in the way of doing business.”

**Solve with a story:** “A verbal proof story is about someone else who was in the same situation. Explain what the situation was and how you helped that prospect choose to become a customer.”

**Close:** “After handling an objection, ask for the business.”



## MARKET SPOTLIGHT

# Money on the Move

Beef up your bottom line by performing on-site apparel decoration at events.

**W**ant to make money? Go to where the customers are. Some apparel decorators are taking that adage quite literally, traveling to events to perform on-site embellishment that includes direct-to-garment digital printing and, in at least one instance, screen printing. For some, the market for on-site embellishment is their primary business. For others, it's a niche add-on to their brick-and-mortar operation. Regardless, practitioners say good margins and growing demand make on-the-spot imprinting a good game to be in. "We've been experiencing explosive growth – about 125% last year," says Troy De Baca, owner of Denver-area TCT's Mobile Screen Printing Lab.

De Baca performs point-of-purchase screen printing at happenings that range from networking events and corporate outings to private parties and fundraisers for nonprofits and worthy causes. The serial entrepreneur does the printing on a four-screen manual press that's fitted into the back of a 1985 Grumman Kurbmaster truck that he customized to accommodate the machine, supplies, T-shirts and, for bigger events, a small conveyor dryer. "You need a good truck," he advises, "and you always have to test your equipment prior to an event."

De Baca conceived the business concept based on the belief that buyers are concerned that they'll fail to sell all the shirts they purchase and thus be left with boxes of worthless inventory. As a remedy, De Baca creates one or a number of screens with predetermined shirt designs for clients and then shows up at their events to silk-screen on demand for attendees.

For one huge networking event at the Denver Convention Center, De Baca printed 1,300 shirts in about four hours. On that job, he brought along an additional press that was set up next to his truck and manned by

experienced friends. De Baca has also printed at the Denver Broncos cheerleaders' Sprit Showdown, a competition centered on youth dance and cheer teams, as well as fundraisers close to his heart, including relief efforts for flood-ravaged Boulder County. "I want to use my company to help people," says De Baca, adding that he's interested in franchising. "I'd love to have a fleet of trucks doing this around the country."

As De Baca scores success with mobile screen printing, other decorators are achieving excellent results with DTG printing. For about 10 months a year, Sue Asplin and Gene Wodzicki are on the road digitally printing garments at state and county fairs and other events. The partners behind Color Image Designs/Road Warrior Graphix use an Anajet mP10 digital printer to produce stock and custom graphics on T-shirts. "People will take a pic with their cell phones and we'll print it," says Wodzicki, noting the 100% ringspun cotton shirts he embellishes sell at \$15 to \$20.

Working from a 24-foot enclosed trailer with an awning window for servicing customers, Wodzicki and Asplin also provide signs and stickers, while using a dye-sublimation printer to imprint key chains, mousepads, coasters and more. Being on the road so much, logistics can be an issue, but these traveling pros have it down, coordinating with trusted vendors to ship necessary supplies to events and towing extra shirts in a cargo trailer.

Meanwhile, Seattle-based Chuck Northcutt uses DTG to print T-shirts at everything from local car shows to soccer tournaments. The on-site pop-up exhibit from which he operates helps significantly bolster revenue at his Creative Promotions Inc. company. "At car shows," says Northcutt, "24% to 26% of people exhibiting will buy a shirt from us with a custom image of their car."

What should you consider when on loca-

tion with DTG? Finding a spot next to the power (to plug in directly) is better than running a generator. Tie printers down when travelling, and keep a field repair kit with you so problems can be fixed on the spot. Worry more about cold than heat, though keep the printers out of direct sunlight. And as Northcutt says, "Low humidity is only a problem if you are not printing. When we travel to shows we are so busy printing any wet ink on the heads never has a chance to dry out." – CR

## Product Picks

One of the top-selling tees in the imprinted apparel industry, the Port & Company Essential T-Shirt (PC61) is a perfect canvas for screen printing and direct-to-garment digital printing. Available from **SanMar** (asi/84863; circle 76 on Free Info Card).



This dark, 100% cotton shirt is ideal for use with direct-to-garment printers because it is pre-treated, which expedites the embellishment process – a huge advantage when performing point-of-purchase orders at events. Available from **DTG Ready** (circle 77 on Free Info Card).



# I Believe...

The who, what and wear of industry experts

BY CONNIE KUROHARA, AS TOLD TO CHRISTOPHER RUVO

**... Treating people with 'Aloha':** I believe that if we care about each customer and each employee, the business side will fall into place. When a customer walks into Creative Arts Hawaii, they are treated with Aloha. Aloha is not just a word to us – it is a feeling of warmth, friendliness and welcome that permeates throughout.

**... Paradise is worth the freight fees:** For all businesses and customers in Hawaii, shipping has always been a challenge. But we accept that living in paradise comes with a price. Ocean shipping, freight forwarding and planning ahead to avoid expedited shipping helps.

**... Some sales can only happen in Hawaii:** We have printed shirts for the Merrie Monarch Festival for many years. It is a hula competition that is held here annually and attracts visitors and participants from around the world. The founders of the event normally run the design past knowledgeable and experienced "kumu hula" (a teacher who has earned this prestigious title) for approval. The

“Each year we design and print shirts for a charity of our choice that we sell and donate 100% of the monies.”

design always has meaning and cultural authenticity. A mainland company would not be acceptable to the event coordinators. They are conscientious about keeping their business local.

**... Competition keeps us on our toes:** The downturn in the economy affected us. To compensate, we turned to providing uniforms for our public schools. Now other printers are trying to get the uniform business away from us, but we view competition as necessary and healthy. It stretches us to strive for better quality, customer service and innovative thinking.

**... Faith is my foundation:** I am a Christian and it is Jesus Christ that inspires and uplifts me. As imperfect as I am, I have one who is perfect in every way to look up to and follow.

**... In offering a helping hand:** Each year we design and print shirts for a charity of our choice that we sell and donate 100% of the monies. Two years ago, we donated \$10,000 to the Japan tsunami relief fund. Last year, we raised \$5,000 for our local Food Basket, which provides food to different local organizations that feed the needy. We are currently selling a design to aid the Philippines, in the aftermath of the hurricane that devastated that region.

**... Zumba is cathartic:** I am a Zumba enthusiast! This is not only a great way to stay physically fit, it also acts as my mental therapy!

**... You should experience the hidden Hawaii:** The island of Hawaii is best known for its volcanoes and beautiful, lush scenery, but walking through some of the old towns (downtown Hilo, Honokaa, Kohala) and talking with the locals is probably more educational! Local people are warm and friendly and more than willing to tell legends



## Connie Kurohara

- Vice President/Co-Owner Creative Arts Hawaii (asi/170266)
- Founded in 1972, Creative Arts Hawaii provides screen printing, embroidery, promotional products and graphic design for customers throughout the Aloha State.
- Company named "Best Local T-Shirts" provider for the last 16 years by *Hawaii Tribune-Herald*.

and stories. Hawaii is rich in legends and superstitions and most people have personal tales that are so interesting. You can drive around the whole island of Hawaii in a day and see much more than the tourist stuff!

**... It's important to go local:** We have a separate business called "Aloha Grown" that promotes sustainability and supporting local farmers, ranchers and small business. The store carries locally made goods and food items, as well as apparel we print/embroider. At Aloha Grown, our designs offer customers the opportunity to display their views and pride in their roots on T-shirts!



# The Better Basic Tee

## Order It. Feel It. Love It.



100% Ring-spun cotton

Tear-away label

Preshrunk jersey knit

High-stitch density fabric

Double-needle cover-seamed neck

Shoulder-to-shoulder taping

Keya™

MC180

*Keya feels better than most other t-shirt's in the market!*

Our unique ring-spinning process makes our fabric **softer** to the touch,  
more **comfortable** to wear, and **stronger** to enjoy longer,  
in your choice of 7 styles in 18 colors.

Keya™

feel the difference

855-668-1169 [www.keya-us.com](http://www.keya-us.com)



BEGINNER - 100

## Sprint To Track & Field Apparel

**Springtime welcomes track** and field to many of America's high schools. In fact, as an outdoor sport, track and field is the second most popular athletic program among schools in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). More than 580,000 high school boys and nearly 473,000 high school girls suit up to compete in track and field nationwide. Furthermore, participation is on the rise. "Track and field had an increase of more than 9,100 participants when combining girls and boys," according to a recent NFHS statement, noting that's the best overall gain in any of the high school sports.

Little wonder, then, there's a growing demand for track and field uniforms being met by an increase in availability. Holloway Sportswear Inc. (asi/61430) recently launched a new line of performance track uniforms, which are featured in the new Spring 2014 catalog and are now available for shipment. Uniforms are available in 10 colors with multiple fits in adult, ladies and youth sizing.

Like most athletic apparel, track and field garments have high-performing fabrications to keep the athlete comfortable for peak performance. "All of our track uniforms are made of Dry-Excel performance fabrics that have a smooth polyester surface with high mechanical

stretch that includes superior wicking technology and an odor-resistant treatment," says Jennifer Nixon, marketing manager at Holloway.

When it comes to decoration, you must take into account the likelihood of polyester in the garment and seek poly-friendly imprint methods. "Heat seal and screen printing are ideal,"

**"All of our track uniforms have a smooth polyester surface with high mechanical stretch that includes superior wicking technology and an odor-resistant treatment."**

Jennifer Nixon, Holloway Sportswear Inc.  
(asi/61430)



Get moving this spring with track uniforms, like the performance-enhanced Vertical Singlet (221040) and Approach running shorts (221041) from **Holloway Sportswear Inc.** (asi/61430; circle 85 on Free Info Card).

Product courtesy of Holloway Sportswear Inc. (asi/61430)

### Defining Styles

**Singlet** is a sleeveless, collarless, lightweight shirt worn for track and field sports to keep the athlete cool and comfortable and free of restraint.

**Running Shorts** are lightweight, short in length and designed for free movement. They typically have a side-split seam on exterior of each leg for additional comfort and a wider range of motion.



# All Dressed For Earth Day

**Outfit your clients** in eco apparel for Earth Day and beyond by selecting U.S.-made and organically grown cotton garments. Here are four things you need to know:

**Organic apparel spans markets and demographics.** “Demand remains strong for organic cotton apparel with increased interest in 100% USA cotton and manufacturing,” says Gary Oldham, owner of SOS from Texas. “Interest seems to be wide from X-Gen to the old hippie Baby Boomers – many corporate accounts are also interested for promos.”

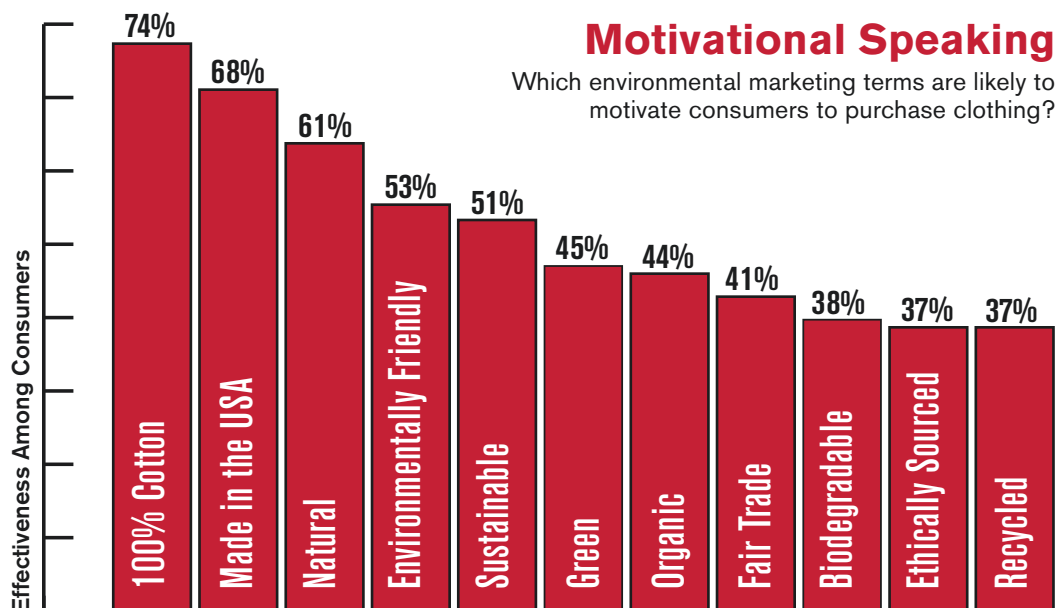
**Certification is important.** SOS T-shirts are made from organic cotton grown on certified organic farms. The supplier has been certified organic by the Texas Department of Agriculture since 1992. Certification information is provided with every garment to show authenticity. U.S. Organic Standards require a three year chemical-free farming period before being allowed to claim “certified organic.” Note: Some farms and com-

panies are essentially organic without the official certification. Exercise due diligence to determine if they are up to snuff. Some clients may insist on the verification.

**The lines between regular and eco apparel in terms of styling have blurred long ago.** Color choice and patterns are often just as varied for organic apparel. “For 2014 we’ll be offering some new direct dye colors to go along with our sun-washed pigment dyed tees,” says Oldham.

**The imprint matters too.** Many customers who choose organic apparel may give little thought to the imprint, but not always. Natural dyes and inks are available, though consistency from shirt to shirt or lot to lot is not always guaranteed. Just note that organic tees offer the same print functionality of anything else. “Organic cotton requires nothing special for printing; print it like you would any other cotton garment,” Oldham says. “Some ask for water-base printing but some studies suggest

this is no ‘greener’ than plastisol inks as there are tradeoffs for both methods.” Talk with your client to determine how important the imprint method is to their campaign.



Source: Cotton Incorporated Supply Chain Insights



Organic apparel and Made in the USA is an enticing combination for customers. **SOS From Texas** (circle 105 on Free Info Card) offers items like this long sleeve organic cotton shirt (102) and this organic cotton thermal baby blanket (TT20).

Photos courtesy of SOS From Texas



ADVANCED – 300

## Gender Preferences

**Demographics is the** rule of planning any promotional program. You want to match the audience to what they find appealing. When it comes to apparel, the selection requires an understanding of color preferences. Sure, you'll want to highlight corporate colors within a logo, but when there's room to help pick the color of the garment itself, you want a choice that will suit the audience's taste.

When you have the luxury of knowing the gender make-up of your client's audience (be they employees or consumers), you've got a leg up on color choice. Many studies and research experiments have been conducted since the early 1900s to figure out what colors men vs. women prefer. Here are a few insights to help you make apparel choices of the right color:

- Men and women both prefer blue when pre-

sented with a basic set of color, such as simple red, yellow and blue.

- Women are drawn to blended colors that lean toward the red end of color spectrum (think pink), while men hold fast to the blue end of the spectrum when presented with blends.
- Women respond better to soft colors, while men opt for brights.
- Men will choose shades of color (a color mixed with black) over tints (a color mixed with white). Women choose tints.

So the next time you plan an apparel program, ask your client if the target audience is mostly made of men or women. Knowing the gender and using the right color can improve the odds that the promotional garment will be worn and seen repeatedly.



The soft orchid color featured in this Lilac Bloom blouse (LB751) from **Tri-Mountain** (asi/92125; circle 102 on Free Info Card) illustrates women's preference for pale tints and delicate colors.

Photo courtesy of Tri-Mountain (asi/92125)

## Performance Caps: /pər'fôrməns kaps/

**noun** 1 An effective advertising and stylish headwear combination.

2 Your logo on a cap performs for your brand, the cap performs for the wearer.

#SL-250



#TM-250



#SWM-600



OUTDOOR CAP



asi/75420 [www.outdoorcap.com/promoproducts](http://www.outdoorcap.com/promoproducts)





# Cap It Off With Headwear

**When you need** to top off a promo with memorable headwear, look for styles and imprint methods that make a cap captivating. Begin with the cap itself. For example, Vitronic Promotional Group (asi/93990) offers an array of options that feature embroidered and stitched designs, as well as piping highlights on the cap's bill and/or crown.

Another hot look comes from bold contrast. Any cap that has color-blocked details or stitching that stands out for a smart accent becomes more memorable than the traditional plain version. Check out the new offering (15726) from Norwood US (asi/74400) that creates an eye-catching detail, bringing together both contrast stitching with a color-blocked bill accent.

Even if you source a basic plain cap you can pump up its appeal with decoration. Now it's easier than ever to embroider an attractive cap thanks to Madeira USA's new E-Zee Black Cap Just Right 2.5 oz backing. A medium weight Tear Away, this backing is cut specifically to fit in cap frames. The use of backing when embroidering on caps maintains the machine's tension and insures designs that are clean and crisp in

appearance. The E-Zee Black Cap backing also comes in white.

Give a cap a further boost with 3D embroidery using puff. "Caps are actually one of the best products to run a puff logo," says Drew Coufal, owner of Sew & Sew Embroidery. "Being as sturdy as they are they are much more forgiving to the high stitch counts involved with the puff. The only minor consideration would be the specific cap style chosen; some six-panel center seams can be so bulky and thick on the seam that it creates some production

**“Thick seams, foam and high stitch count all on same spot can cause needle breaks or bird-nesting if not properly digitized to compensate.”**

Drew Coufal, Sew & Sew Embroidery

issues. The thick seam plus the foam plus the high stitch count all on same spot on a cap can cause needle breaks or bird-nesting if not properly digitized to compensate.”

Need more options? Consider distressed embroidery or the addition of studs and rhinestones for truly unique headwear.



This new Contrasting Stitch Cap (15726) features six panels and a tri-tone color scheme. A contrasting sandwich color accent makes this headwear pop. Available from **Norwood US** (asi/74400; circle 103 on Free Info Card). Photo courtesy of Norwood US (asi/74400)



The Fusion Cap (7317) comes already decorated with an embroidered accent on the visor, ready to be customized with your client's logo. Available from **Vitronic Promotional Group** (asi/93990; circle 104 on Free Info Card). Photo courtesy Vitronic Promotional Group (asi/93990)



3D puff embroidery is a popular trend on headwear. The sturdiness of most caps make it a perfect canvas for this technique.

Photo courtesy of Sew & Sew Embroidery

## Fun Facts

- Screen printers are particularly bullish about caps, according to the *Wearables Sales Forecast*. Nearly half (46%) of screen printers predict headwear sales growth this year, vs. 39% of non-screen printers.
- Caps are the third largest segment of the decorated apparel industry according to the 2013 *Stitches State of the Industry* survey.
- ASI's 2013 Global Advertising Specialties Impressions Study found that 42% of cap recipients keep a cap if it is attractively decorated.





# KING POLY

**This spool has** a tale that begs unraveling. It starts as an elusive strand – wispy, plain, insignificant. But appearances are deceiving. Follow the thread all the way to the end and its true qualities are revealed. Remarkable strength. Exceptional versatility.

Overwhelming abundance. It's the story of polyester, the biggest fiber in the world. Once looked down upon as a sleazy cultural relic of the '70s disco era, polyester has reinvented itself as the **defining material of our times** (p. 40), creating the **performance revolution** (p. 48) and changing everything we know about **selling** (p. 37) and **decorating** (p. 44) apparel. It's more than a good yarn.

It's a glimpse into our future.



## TOP TACTICS

# THE NEW SALES RULES

Just for athletes? Not anymore. There are new rules for selling poly performance apparel.

By C.J. Mittica and Sabrina Landry

**Y**ou thought you knew performance apparel. But apparel's dominant trend is growing fast, changing rapidly and throwing more wrinkles than a balled-up cotton shirt. What once was a core set of polyester-based gear for only the most devoted exercise nuts has morphed into a massive collection of product that casts a long shadow over the apparel landscape.

At its most basic definition, performance adds value, promotes comfort and offers something not available in a basic garment. Polyester (along with poly blends) comprises the vast majority of the category, but nylon and spandex are also used as performance fabrics. "Consumers are much more aware and interested in performance apparel than ever before," says Tom LaPonte, senior marketing manager for Champion Branded Printwear (asi/59528). "They understand the benefits of wicking, quick drying and ventilation not just for going to the gym, but for everyday life."

Because of that, the general public has an insatiable appetite for clothing that performs. In the latest *Wearables Sales Forecast*, just 0.3% of respondents thought their performance wear sales would decrease in 2014. A survey of decorators last year by Champion found that two-thirds of respondents rated performance apparel as important or very important to their business. The NPD Group Inc. says activewear sales are growing four times as quickly as the U.S. apparel industry.

All of this makes performance wear the defining trend in the promotional apparel industry. And because so much has changed, the rules for selling these garments must be relearned or taught anew. Start reading, because the ball is in your court.



## Rule 1: Performance Wear Goes Everywhere

Performance wear has transcended its athletic origins and has been embraced as everyday lifestyle wear. "We see a lot of what I've dubbed 'athleisure wear' – athletic clothing worn anytime," says Rob Crowley, senior merchandiser for SanMar (asi/84863). Just as people started wearing sneakers every day, he says, so too has it occurred with performance wear. "It's not uncommon," Crowley adds, "to see someone wearing yoga pants to the grocery store or a track jacket while shopping. These are perfect examples of how performance wear has garnered broad appeal."

Laponte cites research that shows performance wear is worn two-thirds of the time in non-performance settings. "As an industry," he says, "we need to take a much broader view on uses for performance apparel beyond sporting events and teamwear." No matter your pick of programs – corporate stores, uniforms, employee gifts, spirit wear, loyalty rewards, etc. – performance wear has found a home.

So why has performance wear become a lifestyle choice? The significant marketing dollars pumped into the category by Under Armour, Nike and others have certainly helped. Greater participation in fitness activities has also familiarized consumers with these products. That association goes beyond breaking a sweat. "The major influence on the rise in sales, especially in women's, is the desire to look active," says Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst for The NPD Group. In translation, it makes people look like they've just come from the gym, even if they haven't.

But looks aside, people value the qualities of performance wear. As Andrew Varga, marketing manager for Hanes Branded Printwear (asi/59528) points out, everyone sweats, every person wants to feel cool in hot weather and each person has a use for performance wear. "People want to be comfortable and they want convenience," he says. "Great apparel that that works in various aspects of their lives – exercise, leisure, casual activities – addresses the need for comfort and convenience. Additionally, more and more, it's also stylish."



## Rule 2: Women Are Your Next Target Market

Under Armour CEO Kevin Plank has predicted his company's women's apparel revenue will reach \$1 billion by 2016. Its growth is outpacing the company as a whole, contributing 30% to Under Armour's total net revenue as opposed to 18% eight years ago. "One of the reasons we are so bullish on our women's business is that there has been a quiet shift going on, where women are increasingly wearing 'athletic product' outside of the gym," said Plank in a recent conference call. "We think the reality is this shift is more permanent than some may expect, as our female consumer continues to embrace our technology innovation and increased focus on style."

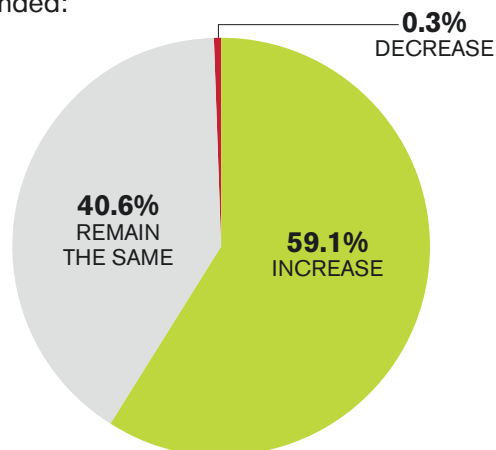
Under Armour's zeal over women's activewear is shared by many. The NPD Group reported the category grew 9% in 2013 (versus 1% growth for the entire apparel industry). And the market is quickly changing to meet those demands. Where once Under Armour and Nike dominated with its male-focused offerings, both companies have dramatically expanded the female side of their business. In addition, the sky-rocketing growth of lululemon athletica (\$1 billion



## HIGH PERFORMANCE

In our *Wearables Sales Forecast*, we asked distributors what they expected for their performance apparel sales in 2014.

They responded:



increase in sales from 2008 to 2013) has spawned a host of female-centric competitors and turned the women's performance category into a crowded and diverse field.

And just like all of performance wear, women are wearing these items on the go, at home and just about everywhere. "As dressing casually becomes more acceptable, women feel they are getting value when investing in activewear, like yoga pants, which they can wear to the gym, in the gym, and from the gym," says NPD's Cohen.

What trends are emerging in women's activewear? Track pants have emerged as a fashion crossover that can be worn with fashionable blazers and other decidedly non-casual couture. Yoga pants are available just about everywhere. Running shorts and sports-inspired tank tops have also been readily adopted. The female presence in performance cannot be ignored.



### Rule 3: Fashion Matters

As the general population embraces performance wear for the everyday, retail companies and fashion designers have been revising and reimagining the category, adding in fashion details to reflect its use in non-athletic settings. Top-line designers like Tory Burch and fast fashion companies like H&M have expressed a desire to get into the performance game. Increasingly, buyers are looking to these companies for fashion inspiration in their promotional purchases. "Even in sweatpants and hoodies, the client wants something that feels more like retail street-wear rather than something that is made specifically for the gym," says Katie Smart, marketing director for Axis Promotions (asi/128263).

So what trends are infiltrating the category? SanMar's Crowley sees an influence of varsity and vintage trends. "Raglan hoodies and old-school rugby shirts are strong examples of vintage styling, and fleece letterman jackets are showing up everywhere," he says.

And while fashion names are exerting their influence on the category, in truth sports and the major players still hold notable

sway over which items are increasingly sought-after. Dark gray and charcoal colors are the latest trend in team colors, which is translating over to performance offerings. Wes Witt, account director for Leaderpromos.com (asi/287087), finds that the latest name-brand looks the pros wear still drive consumer interest. "Mélange patterns (a heathered mix of fabrics) have become increasingly popular in the past few years," Witt says, "and I attribute that to Under Armour, Nike and lululemon's retail designs."



### Rule 4: Big Brands Command Big Price

Under Armour, the pioneer of performance compression pieces, just recorded a 35% apparel net revenue surge in the fourth quarter of 2013, and is forecasting 22%-23% growth in fiscal year 2014. As activewear continues to grow at phenomenal rates, it's the biggest names that are leading the way.

That's not by accident, particularly when the leading sports brands spend billions on marketing and athlete endorsements. Companies like Nike and its pioneering Dri-FIT line have built unshakable brand loyalty and even constructed the performance lexicon in which consumers speak. " 'Moisture wicking' and 'Dri-FIT' are some of the biggest catch phrases being thrown around [from buyers], and everyone wants that type of polo shirt," says Witt.

While Under Armour's availability in this industry is still limited, major brand names like Nike, adidas, Callaway and much more are available. Clients who may normally be price-sensitive still understand they will have to pay more for the name – especially when they request specific brands. "They've seen how the association of price vs. quality works in retail," Witt says, "so it's not a stretch to understand it in ours, especially when we deal with retail brands as well. From the perspective of the recipient (our clients' end-users), they will always associate a name brand with a higher value than a house brand."

But not all budgets can support a brand name purchase. And as the performance category has grown, so has the number of options and price points. In-house brands and other lines can deliver when distribu-

“As an industry, we need to take a much broader view on uses for performance apparel beyond sporting events and teamwear.”

Tom LaPonte, Champion Branded Printwear (asi/59528)

tors need a performance solution for clients clutching the purse strings. “Thanks to brands such as Sport Tek, Badger and A4, we are able to really cater to everyone’s needs,” says Justin Washburn, owner of Full Throttle Marketing powered by Proforma. “I can place a client in an appropriate performance base material in just about any scenario now.”

But a lesser-known name and cost doesn’t always equate to lesser performance. (*Wearables* tested industry and retail garments in 2012 for an article and found that promotional supplier items actually fared better in performance capabilities.) The challenge for distributors is to talk with customers and sample liberally to adjust their preconceived notions. Says Smart, “We are trying to change the perception that performance apparel performs better only if it has a brand name associated with it.”



### **Rule 5: Performance Has A Cotton Complex**

The argument for years against synthetic-based performance garments is that when forced to make a choice, people will ultimately gravitate to the hand and softness of cotton. Throughout most of Under Armour’s lifecycle, Plank declared that “Cotton is the enemy.” But despite all its success in the athletic arena, Under Armour still had trouble replacing someone’s favorite everyday cotton T-shirt.

That dynamic is changing as performance wear seeps into all facets of everyday life. Still, athleticwear companies had to force the issue with advancements made in manufacturing and texturizing synthetic fabrics – particularly polyester. While nylon and spandex have their strong suits, the versatility of polyester has been enhanced through decades of innovation. Polyester garments have gotten softer and more flexible. In essence, they feel more like cotton now and they look more like cotton. “You’re really seeing the next evolution of polyester – something that’s softer with more of a hand like cotton but still the performance of polyester,” says Kevin Freeman, director of product for Gildan (asi/56482).

But the conversion has gone both ways. “A misconception about performance wear is that cotton doesn’t play in the performance world,” says Hanes’ Verga. Three years ago Plank called a truce on his cotton vendetta and unveiled Charged Cotton – cotton/spandex products with performance properties. Suppliers like Hanes are tapping into that consumer preference with cotton/poly blends. The company has launched its X-Temp performance shirt made from a 60/40 ring-spun cotton/poly blend. It marries performance features like moisture wicking and vapor control with cotton’s soft hand. “Where some consumers want performance but don’t want to give up the softness of cotton,” says Verga, “the Hanes X-Temp Performance T-shirt gives them both.”



### **Rule 6: Brand Boldly**

Performance apparel is often sleek and bold, so it’s no surprise that clients often want branding to match the look. Smart has seen a growing increase in larger imprint areas as well as art that goes over the seams of garments. “Clients want 3D embroidery on snapback hats to mimic styles worn by professional athletes,” says Smart, citing one of many retail-inspired techniques

## **EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE**

Performance wear cuts across age, class and markets. For proof, look to StressCrete Group, a company that makes spun concrete poles for things like street lamps. A long-time client of Donna Ferron, owner of Proforma Creative Advertising eSolutions (asi/300091), the company gives a gift each Christmas to the staff, and wanted a high-quality garment the entire staff would use. That equated to performance wear for Ferron, who identified a full-zip bonded jacket from Trimark Sportswear Group (asi/92122). “The client was thrilled with what I presented and immediately placed the order,” says Ferron. “The staff was extremely happy with their gift; we really lived up to the many years of working with them.” Price wasn’t an issue; the jacket rang in at under \$50 even with attributes like a water-repellant finish that was bonded with micro fleece. StressCrete bought 365 jackets.

Performance pieces even function as school uniforms. A distributor started an “achieve-to-reward” campaign for school boards in Los Angeles and Michigan, where students receive a prize for achievements like high GPA, perfect attendance and athletic achievements. The schools and students opted for trendy apparel pieces as rewards, and one of their choices was the Victory fleece jacket from Ash City (asi/37143). “This item was met with such rave reviews,” says Tom Alavi, inside sales supervisor for Ash City, “that some of the school boards are even considering adding them to their uniform program, as it has always been difficult to get the students to appreciate and enjoy their uniform pieces.”

that clients are coming to expect.

The method of decoration certainly matters. Decorators and distributors have shied from embroidery in the past with synthetic garments because the heaviness of the decoration and backing didn’t jibe with an athletic use. As performance wear has spread new to demographics (particularly older), those distinctions have to started to loosen. But most often, options like screen printing, heat transfers and sublimation combine light hand with bold colors and oversized design. There is also room for subtle tone-on-tone looks through laser engraving and other techniques.

In the best scenario, the branding will work with the garment. “A great approach to decorating performance wear is to utilize the style lines of the garment to create unique and eye-catching locations,” says Elson Yueng, product line manager for Ash City (asi/37143). “A well-designed, performance-driven garment is usually complemented with updated styling, which allows for decoration locations outside of the standard left chest.”



### **Rule 7: Remember The Working Man (And Woman)**

Workwear is an ideal landing spot for performance wear because it combines physical exertion with professional image. “Performance actually started in the workwear industry with the requirement of wrinkle-free and stain release fabrics that kept the employee looking sharp and clean,” says Susan Kohout, marketing director for Dickies Occupational Wear (asi/49675). Comfort, easy care, flexibility and range of movement are essential to the employees, she adds, while “the



employer wants their company to be showcased in the best possible way.” Dickies actually observes workers in their place of employment to see how a uniform functions and could potentially perform better.

Be targeted when focusing on specific industries; durability and stretch are important in construction, while stain protection makes sense for restaurants, particularly front-of-the-house staff dealing with customers on a daily basis. And also remember users keep their work-wear on even outside the job. “Workers wear the garments to work because of comfort and functionality,” says Kohout, “and also wear the garments after work with friends because of the brand and styling.”

“We are trying to change the perception that performance apparel performs better only if it has a brand name associated with it.”

Katie Smart, Axis Promotions (asi/128263)



### Rule 8: Focus When Selling

In the early stages of performance wear, the interest was limited and isolated, and it was easy to get a feel for what to sell. Today, a performance item like a technical polo has hundreds of potential markets. With a wide open landscape for choice, it's imperative for distributors to drill down to the apparel's intended usage. “When we're selling performance wear,” says Donna Ferron, owner of Proforma Creative Advertising eSolutions (asi/300091), “the first thing we do is sit down to gather as much information as possible about their event or program, and specifically what fabrics they know about and like.” Armed with that info, Ferron returns for a second appointment with three options that will meet all of their needs. “Generally,” she says, “one of the three options will be selected.”

Like anything, distributors must rely on their service to carry the day. Ferron had a long-time client who entered a marathon and wanted a brand-name long-sleeve performance shirt. Ferron searched high and low for the brand but could only find it in retail. “I sent the client several other options,” says the Ontario-based distributor, “but they had their mind set on this particular retail brand.” Ferron graciously led them to a website to purchase the product, but a delayed response sent the client back her way. This time they chose a long-sleeve New Balance shirt. “We printed an image of a runner and the name of the event tastefully on the back and the name of the company ULC,” says Ferron. The client was satisfied and off and running. *Sabrina Landry is a contributing writer and C.J. Mittica is the editor of Wearables.*

## ORAL HISTORY

# THE HISTORY OF POLY

The most used fiber in the world? It's polyester, whose unlikely comeback is matched by its promising future.

By C.J. Mittica

From the beginning, polyester was overlooked. Sure, it offered tantalizing potential where it was born in the mind and laboratory of Dupont scientist W.H. Carothers in the late 1920s. But when Carothers discovered Nylon, Dupont focused its energy on its new super material, and polyester was put on the back burner.

It took another two decades for Dupont to realize its error, reacquire the material's patent and bring it to market in the U.S. “Dacron” was supposed to be a revelation: an apparel fabric that didn't wrinkle and would ultimately replace more expensive fabrics like wool. Instead, after a surge of popularity, the buying public turned its back on the fabric. Polyester's time as an apparel material had come to an end.

But we know that's not the end of the story. Polyester today has spawned the performance wear craze and been adopted all over. How did we get from there to here? And what's in store for this reinvented fiber? Here are the answers, delivered by the experts who have been with polyester through bad and good.



By 1961, Dupont looked to position Dacron (polyester) as a fashionable material. A decade and a half later, consumers had soured on it.

## TIMELINE

### 1970s - 1980s



#### A ROUGH START

By the time it was brought into the U.S. in the 1950s, polyester had shown tremendous promise for a number of applications, from apparel to tire cords. It even became very popular in the 1970s in items like casual leisure suits. And while the fabric offered a number of benefits (durability, ease of care), it wasn't without its faults.

**Margaret Frey, associate professor, Department of Fiber Science & Apparel Design, Cornell University:** When polyester was first produced, it tended to be mainly round and fairly large in diameter, which made it a coarse fiber. The way it's produced is similar to making pasta – basically melted and squeezed through little holes. At the outset, since the fibers were large, they tended to be stiff, not feel very nice, rough maybe, and didn't bend that well, so they didn't have very good drape. They also tended to be shiny, so it wasn't similar at all to what a natural fiber would look like.

**Ira Neaman, CEO, Vantage Apparel (asi/93390):** In the '70s, a polyester shirt was the equivalent of wearing a plastic bag. It didn't breathe.

**Mark Stevenson, owner, Proforma Stevenson & Associates, former Russell Athletic sales rep:** Polyester was a low-end product. It was used for things like practice football pants that were solid white. The early days, in Russell's case, polyester was a lot harder to dye because of the temperature and pressure gradient.

**Scott Fresener, director, T-Biz Network International:** Dyes turn to a gas when they are heated, so when you ran a polyester garment through a dryer to cure the ink for screen printing, the dye in the fabric turned to a gas and migrated into the ink. Ink companies back in the early '80s had to develop ink that had blocking agents (peroxides) that would bleach the dye migration as it happened. These were called low-bleed inks.

**Frey:** There was also one very significant issue: polyester tended to retain odors. The washing systems weren't ready for them yet. There was a time period where this fiber was sort of rejected. People didn't like it for awhile.

**Los Angeles Times article, 1989:** The negative stigma remained so strong that in the early 1980s, the Polyester Council petitioned the Federal Trade Commission to try to change the fabric's name, according to spokeswoman Wendy Winters, but their petition was denied.

**Alasdair Carmichael, president, Americas, PCI Fibres:** Polyester now covers a whole lot of end-uses, which the old polyester couldn't really touch. Those changes were really made in the '70s and '80s with the major western chemical companies really originating that development.

**Frey:** Polyester really repels water. They had to learn a whole new way to add colors to it, to dye it, wash it, process it before it started really becoming a beautiful and functional material. A lot of additional engineering and chemistry needed to go on. Since that time, there have been a lot of advances in every direction.

### 1990s



#### REINVENTION

While researchers discovered major improvements to polyester, the negative perception as an apparel fabric remained throughout the 1980s. Adoption started slowly in the 1990s but gained steam, particularly with the launch and growth of Nike's Dri-FIT line for athletes. It helped create the notion of performance wear and opened people's eyes to the potential of polyester.

**Neaman:** At the time, polyesters were termed synthetic or man-made. Probably in the late '70s, '80s, even through the '90s, people liked natural and organic, so cotton was very much in the vernacular.

**Scott Stewart, vice president corporate sales, BrandRPM:** The only thing we had was a basic polyester polo which we called "The Bulletproof Shirt." It was strictly for uniform programs and restaurants because it had some stain-resistant properties. But it was something nobody wanted to wear as a fashion piece. We had some polyester slacks. Back in the '80s and early '90s everything else was cotton.

**Steve Bove, promotional consultant, Active Imprints:** When I started selling, there was probably two levels of cotton and a 50/50, which was a cotton-poly blend. Certain clientele did have those objections, "Oh, I can't have polyester in my shirt, no way. That's cheap. I don't want that."

**Stevenson:** In the early '90s, most of your athletic apparel was being made in the United States. By the mid-'90s, it was almost all being made overseas. It was really quick, a three-four year cycle. It was just about when they went overseas in the mid-'90s when they started making it out of polyester more.

**Stewart:** Nike made a big push with Dri-FIT with the athletes and some of the things they were doing in professional sports. That was the big door opener for these fabrics.

**Kevin Freeman, product development, Gildan (asi/56842), formerly with Nike and Under Armour:** Dri-FIT became the Kleenex of performance wear, if you will. It really became the standard of what people measure it by, especially as a technology.

**Neaman:** Marketing played a part. The word synthetic or man-made weren't necessarily people-friendly terms. When they started using the term performance apparel, and when you compare synthetic to the term performance, all of a sudden it gave it a totally different spin.

**Bove:** I experienced it firsthand. My friend had a small company that fertilized lawns. He needed some help on Saturdays and Sundays. He gave me a shirt, one that I did, it was a 100% cotton white polo shirt. That summer was one of the hottest. We had record highs. I would come back and I was soaked from shoulder to knee. And it stayed wet all day. After the first week, I said "Hey bro, I can't wear this shirt. I have a 50/50 polo in the shop. It won't have your logo on it, but I'm wearing it." I noticed it would dry out. As I was selling it to landscapers after that, there were some old-school guys who said "No, cotton breathes." And I'm like "Trust me."

**Stewart:** There was a difference in light years. It was a much thinner fabric. It had some breathability to it. It was available in a more fashionable fabric look to it than it did before. It wasn't just a straight plain color shirt. You could do some things with it.



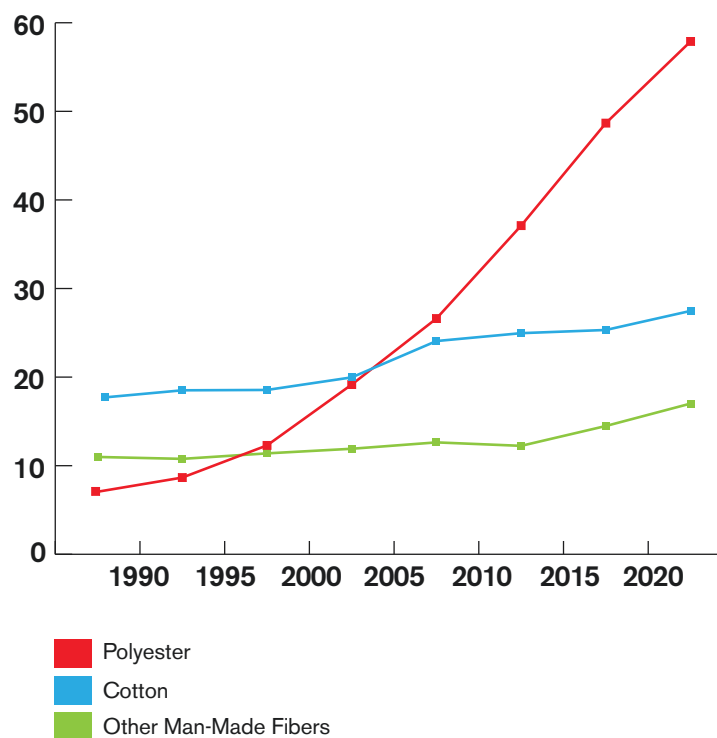
## TIMELINE

2000s

## THE GLOBAL GIANT

In 1990, polyester was an overlooked fiber, spurned by fashion and overshadowed by cotton. Today, poly is the most widely used fiber in the world and dwarfs the combined usage of cotton and other synthetic fibers. Why? Improvements in the fiber and technology, sure. More important, the growing availability of oil (poly is derived from petroleum) plus the assumption of manufacturing by China and others overseas countries kept polyester as the low-cost option for fabric. (China's growing consumption of apparel and its affinity for poly-based clothing is also a factor.) In addition, its versatility is unmatched; beyond apparel, it's used in everything from fiber fill to awning fabrics to tire cords and much more. "There are lots of areas that polyester has grown that cotton hasn't even played in," says Alasdair Carmichael, president, Americas for PCI Fibres, a consulting group that provides market research. With growing demand and consumption for poly, the trend will continue.

## WORLD TEXTILE MILL CONSUMPTION ESTIMATE AND FORECAST (million tons)



Source: PCI Fibres



## THE PERFORMANCE AGE

More people became poly converts in the new millennium, but it took the meteoric rise of Under Armour to cement the notion of performance wear and put it front and center with consumers.

**Elson Yeung, product line manager, Ash City (asi/37143):**

There was a lot of negative association with polyester until the performance aspect started driving it. I honestly think Kevin Plank, founder of Under Armour changed the landscape of performance apparel and how people looked at polyester.

**Freeman:** Compression changed the next evolution of poly to where it could be next to the skin, it can be more than just wicking. It can be more about muscle support and recovery. That's where stretch poly and stretch in general became super popular. That evolved the next step and that's what put Under Armour on the map.

**Stewart:** That's where you saw the advertisements and you saw it in retail, and everywhere basically. The mid-2000s is where everything hit, and everybody turned to the performance fabrics. And once you got customers to try the performance fabrics, most or all of them have really never gone back to cotton or other fabrics.

**Stevenson:** One of the positive things about the performance fabrics, particularly when it came to polo shirts, was it laundered so well, and shrinkage was a non-factor. No fading. They just never wore out. I used a lot of samples. I really was sold on it, just by trying. And I encouraged my bigger users to try it and gave them samples. That usually worked.

**Neaman:** It was the period of the boomers giving way to the millennials, who were a much more active group. You have long-term trends developing of runners, 5Ks, exercise classes. It was almost the concept of golf shirts going from the golf course to the office. Performance apparel developed that crossover appeal.

**Freeman:** I think the fabrics have gotten better, more comfortable, more resilient. Technically, more impressive, because that's where the market's been invested in.

**Frey:** The finishing is really key.

**Yeung:** Even with the moisture wicking, what was next? Antimicrobial finishes. That was important because people realized not only does perspiration on your body need to be wicked away to make you comfortable, but there's a smell associated when you're sweating naturally.

**Neaman:** You had to figure the decoration back out. Color migration, temperatures, substrates are all different. You had to re-educate and retrain yourself based on different substrates. Because there are finishes on the outside of these fabrics, it made it more challenging.

**Mark Trotzok, president, Boardroom Eco Apparel**

**(asi/40705):** Improvements had a lot to do with the texturizing of fiber. If you think of a filament of polyester, if it's round and you knit that together, the feel you're going to have is a normal polyester. What they do is texturize each filament so that the yarn has texture, so it's almost like cotton. When you get something texturized, it's soft.

**Carmichael:** There's been an improvement but also really building up the production capacities, the end uses, the final consumer demand. That's really moved polyester forward. It's a far better fiber today than it was 40 years ago.



## THE FIBER OF TOMORROW

Today, polyester is the most used apparel fabric in the world, commanding 50% of the global fiber market. Its popularity can be attributed not only to its affordable cost to manufacture, but also its sheer versatility in blending with other fabrics and being used in myriad applications outside apparel. Consumers wear it in all aspects of their lives, and decorators must learn the rules for screen printing on it. Polyester is slated to play a part in whichever next apparel innovation arrives.

**Carmichael:** Going out to 2030, we see polyester being a significantly dominant fiber. We don't see anything that threatens it at all.

**Frey:** The properties, the cost and the processability are in the right place. It's able to be mixed well with a lot of other fibers, particularly cotton. All of its properties are in the sweet spot to be a successful apparel material.

**Tony Kozlowski, owner, T Production:** One hundred percent poly material has become quite popular in the last 2-3 years, and decoration shops without the ability to decorate these materials will certainly be left behind.

**Stewart:** I would still say we're in the early stages with printing. You really have to specialize in it. BrandRPM has done the sports market for the last 10-12 years, the bulk of those fabrics are performance fabrics and we had to figure it out ourselves how to print on those. Most printers are still scared to death to print on those fabrics.

**Neaman:** The ability to do sublimation printing to the degree you see on bicycle shirts will be important. Improvements in printing on polyester will be a big space. You'll see the collective ability of the industry to print on polyester get better. Certainly we're focusing on it;

I assume other people are.

**Yeung:** We never stop, we're never happy enough. We're always looking for that next advance in technology. So we try new things.

**Frey:** Improved engineering [makes it possible] to make fibers that conduct electricity, light up or send signals. Polyester will definitely have a component in this smart clothing idea. It may not be providing all of those functions, but it may be adding strength and durability to the materials that can.

**Carmichael:** There is a lot of work to develop bio-based substitutes for the raw materials that are coming out of oil or natural gas. From a commercial point of view now, it's tiny, but there is a lot of effort and research going on.

**Trotzuk:** They're always doing more with polyester and figuring things out. That's easier to do with polyester than any other fiber. You're going to see a lot more advances and new types of textiles, because polyester is so much more versatile.

**Stevenson:** Every year the fabrics being presented are becoming more and more specialized. I really think we're not even close to hitting the point where the demand will ebb on polyester.

**Bove:** I think the old perception has gone away and people are more open to it. It's evolved away from that because people are learning firsthand that it's not cheap.

**Freeman:** The consumer expects technology from most things now. If you're not Dri-FIT or you're not wicking or not offering something like that, in addition to a great-looking tee that's stylish, then in a lot of cases you're left out of the conversation.

**Trotzuk:** I don't think there's a stigma about polyester anymore. *C.J. Mittica is the editor of Wearables. Contact him at cmittica@asicentral.com or follow him on Twitter at @CJ\_Wearables.*

## POLYESTER ASSUMPTIONS: DEBUNKED

Polyester has gathered a reputation over the years – mostly good, a bit bad. Here are three common myths about performance wear and why they aren't true.

**Poly Stinks.** The first polyester performance garments were said to have an odor. (The fact that they were used for heavy activity didn't help.) Today's garments not only feature yarn advancements, but they also offer antimicrobial functionality to inhibit the growth of bacteria – i.e. odor. Still, the garments must be washed, because not all of the bacteria disappears. "A lot of people are probably using polyester more for working out and sweating," says Mark Trotzuk, president of Boardroom Eco Apparel (asi/40705). "So there's a lot more bacteria produced that's left off the garment. If they're not washing it off, it's going to smell more."

**Performance Only Comes in Base Layers.** Wicking shirts and tops are the most common performance options, but the range of performance pieces continues to expand. Ash City (asi/37143), for example, has added moisture-wicking capabilities to its fleece pieces, and even combined wicking with heat reflect technology inside one of its winter jackets. "A lot of the times performance is thought of only in base layers – polos and T-shirts. It doesn't have to stop there," says Elson Yeung, product line manager for Ash City. "Comfort is not just what you wear against the skin."

**Synthetics are Bad for the Environment.** Not necessarily. While there is an impact since petroleum-based products come from oil drilling, polyester doesn't use arable land (which could grow food), and it doesn't require heated washing or drying, where most of the consumer energy usage with clothing occurs. Plus, it can be recycled and made into apparel again, as Boardroom Eco Apparel is doing. (An estimated 5 million tons of polyester was produced last year from recycled PET items like disposable water bottles.) "It's a lot more sustainable than what cotton is," says Trotzuk. "The word is out on that."



## SCREEN PRINTING

# DECORATION SOLUTION

Poly garments: loved by consumers, tough on screen printers. Make your prints reach peak performance.

By Christopher Ruvo

**S**creen printing has an air of alchemy about it. It's a thrilling mix of art and science, resulting in a bit of magic: that evocative print that pops off a garment. But achieving this alchemy is no simple task – and it's gotten even more challenging with the explosion in popularity of polyester performance wear. From dye migration to shrinkage, there is no shortage of potential problems when it comes to printing these sought-after fabrics.

Nonetheless, as the popularity of performance wear continues to surge, it has become increasingly important to create client-pleasing prints on 100% polyester and poly blends. "It might be nice to say, 'Hey, we only print cotton T-shirts,' but consumer buying patterns have changed and we have to adapt," says Steven McKee, president of Heritage Screen Printing (asi/700490). With practical strategies and technical know-how, the only sweating over poly should come at the bench press, not the printing press.

## Printing a Solution

Polyester performance fabrics are the rising star of the imprinted apparel industry. While traditional cotton T-shirts dominate market share, performance wear has soared in popularity more than any other wearables category in recent years. From teams, race events and fitness centers to corporations, small businesses and schools, buyers across industries are purchasing moisture-wicking, odor-resisting poly shirts in unprecedented volumes. Given such dynamics, printers can expect to see even more poly in the months and years ahead. Says McKee: "It's more than just a trend."

While having hot products to sell is great, the unfortunate fact is that polyester fabrics are more sensitive to heat than cottons. Temperature levels often used to cure screen-printing inks can shrink or scorch poly garments. What's more, polyester is prone to dye migration issues, which occur when heat in the curing process converts dyes in the polyester into a gas. The chemical reaction results in dyes from the garment permeating the print ink, altering its color – a

huge pitfall during these times in which perfect color-matching is expected. As if that wasn't enough, new-wave poly gear is made to stretch. While that facilitates movement and comfort for wearers, it's a challenge for decorating shops because finished prints can potentially crack if the inks lack the requisite elasticity.

To begin combating these issues, an effective option is to print



Screen prints must be flexible to move with stretchy compression tops, like this poly/spandex tee (N3130) from A4 (asi/30121; circle 83 on Free Info Card).

with a bleed-resistant ink made especially for polyesters and polyester blends. These types of inks offer enhanced stretch and cure at lower temperatures – below 300 degrees Fahrenheit in some cases. At Visual Impressions, a high-volume contract printer in Milwaukee, WI, the shop's crew often uses Wilflex's 11005PFXPSW Epic Performance White. Providing high opacity, bleed resistance and elasticity, the ink's suggested cure temperature is 290 degrees. Meanwhile, McKee and his Heritage team are fans of International Coatings' 7113 Performance Pro White, a creamy, bleed-resistant ink with exceptional stretch that prints through a variety of mesh counts and cures at 285 to 300 degrees.

While selecting an appropriate ink is important, it's only one aspect of printing on polyester successfully. During pre-production, for example, a variety of considerations come into play. Screen printing guru Ray Smith, a technical field support specialist for PolyOne, notes that these fabrics typically require multiple layers of ink (two underbases, perhaps) to prevent dye migration, so art should be prepared with that in mind. Furthermore, to prevent "grain-through," screens should be created with good emulsion-over-mesh – basically stencil thickness – to help the ink cover the nap of the fabric while creating a solid layer of ink.

Since poorer garment quality and certain dye colors can exacerbate migration, many shops evaluate the poly wear itself and make necessary tweaks to production plans before going to press. Culture

Studio (asi/700559), a Chicago-based shop, analyzes the shirts and uses two underbases if a garment is over-dyed or a color more prone to migration, like red or neon. At Heritage, printers rub lint-free cloths on apparel to test its quality. "If the dye comes off on the cloth," says McKee, "we know there will be more chances for migration and we'll plan accordingly." Additionally, some shops inquire with suppliers if garments are first-dye or not to get a handle on potential migration problems. "Multiple dye will increase migration possibility," notes T.J. Stepper, education operations manager at Ryonet Corp. (asi/528500), a supplier of screen-printing equipment and supplies.

When it comes time to print, decorators say it's wise to test the design with a pre-production sample, a process that could include washing to check for durability and adherence. Keeping a close eye on the performance of critical equipment, especially your conveyor dryer, is essential as well. "I always recommend using a Thermo-Probe to ensure that the ink film is reaching the required temperature to cure," says Smith. "Then set the oven accordingly." Savvy shops also pay close attention to flash dryer temperature. "If you have a guy who likes to run hot flashes," says Joey Santo, vice president of production at Culture Studio, "he should probably take them down a bit. Do a test run to make sure you're not over-flashing."

As alluded to, printing an appropriate underbase can prove an important barrier to blocking dye migration during and after printing. Both Wilflex and ink-maker Rutland, which provides Culture Studio's oft-favored EL9746 NPT Super Poly White for poly printing, suggest printing with an underbase gray to thwart bleed. "The gray will act as a filter to stop certain dyestuffs before it reaches the white ink," says Smith. "The white ink can then better handle the dye that does make it through."

Depending on the ink, recommendations for things like mesh count and squeegee pressure will vary. With the Wilflex Epic Performance White, for example, mesh count is suggested at 86-230 t/in (34-90 t/cm) with suggested tension of 25-35 n/cm<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the recommendation for Performance Pro White is 60-305 t/in or 24-120 t/cm. As for the squeegee on that International Coatings ink, the advice is to go with a 65-70 durometer and sharp edge. The Wilflex offering is similar on squeegee but not entirely the same, calling for a square or sharp edge and a durometer of 60-70. Regardless, it's important to follow manufacturers' instructions and to eschew or strictly minimize the use of additives and reducers, which can detract from opacity, stretch capability and dye-blocking properties. "You don't want to counteract the elements that make the ink good for printing on polyester," says Marshall Atkinson, chief operating officer at Visual Impressions.

## Hot off the Press

Post-production, the potential for dye migration remains present because the shirts are still heated. Careful handling of the garments is thus important. If, for example, the hot shirts are deposited directly into shipping boxes, there's a strong chance that migration will occur. To prevent this, shops will often cool the shirts with a fan after they come out of the oven and then stack them strategically – a tactic implemented by Visual Impressions. "Let's assume we're stacking four piles," says Atkinson. "You use the first shirt to start pile one,





# “Consumer buying patterns have changed and we have to adapt.”

Steven McKee, Heritage Screen Printing (asi/700490)

the second shirt to start pile two, etc. Then the fifth shirt becomes the second shirt in pile one, the sixth shirt gets stacked as the second shirt in the second pile. We do that until we have stacks of twelve. By the time we're done, the shirts are cool when they go in the box.”

When a poly printing job finishes successfully, top printers will document the specifics of what they did so they can replicate the output. “It's important to test and record,” says Santo. “Just keeping a log of temperatures, what you used on what type of garment, the time it took – that will save struggles in the long run.” Given the special inks, unique post-production handling requirements and other complications of printing polyester, printers should consider charging more to fulfill poly orders than they would on comparable jobs done on standard cottons. “You need to look at the requirements of the job,” says Atkinson, “and discuss price up front so everyone is on the same page.”

For many clients, the additional cost will be worth it because the combination of a trendy polyester shirt and expertly executed print will resonate most desirably with intended end-users. In fact, having a true penchant for printing poly helps shops expand business with current clients and attract lucrative new accounts.

Not long ago, Visual Impressions earned the business of a large advertising specialty firm after it succeeded on a polyester print job where others had failed. Before coming to Visual Impressions, the client went to two other screen printers to have a black performance wear polo printed with a distinct orange color. Each time, however, dye migration caused the print to come out muddy brown. Exasperated, the ad specialty company contacted Visual Impressions for help. Atkinson and his team nailed the print, bringing the bright orange color to life without garment dye infiltration. The client was so impressed that it started turning to Visual Impressions for a range of apparel decoration work, including screen printing and embroidery. “They now spend over half a million dollars annually with us,” says Atkinson. “It's a giant pile of work that we got because of technical know-how with performance wear.”

Similar acumen has served Heritage and Culture Studio well, too. Of late, the latter shop deftly delivered a complicated six-color print of a tennis racket with a blue skull on a red performance polo shirt. Created for a tennis club, the 400-piece order was a nice chunk of business. Heritage, meanwhile, recently produced a white, full-front oversize print on short-sleeve navy shirts for a fundraiser related to an Ivy League university. “Screen printing,” says McKee, “is a constant education process, especially with all the new fabrics. But if you keep learning and improving, you're going to be a better resource for clients.”

*Christopher Ruvo is a senior writer for Wearables. Follow him on Twitter at @ChrisR\_ASI and contact him at cruvo@asicentral.com*

## THE CHOICE IS YOURS

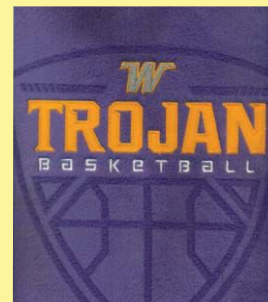
When it comes to decorating polyester apparel, you have options beyond screen printing. Here are three top mediums to consider – and technical tips for maximizing their effect.

**Heat Transfers:** While there are a number of different types of heat transfers that work on poly, manufacturers have developed vinyl transfers with added stretch and a softer hand specifically for performance wear. Applied to pre-heated garments at a heat of 305 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 15 seconds, such transfers prove a real boon when doing team numbers, lettering and one-color designs on 100% polyester or poly-blend polos, T-shirts and jerseys.



**Heritage Screen Printing** (asi/700490; circle 80 on Free Info Card) used a digital heat transfer to create the sleeve lettering on this 50% polyester/50% cotton hooded sweatshirt.

**Laser Engraving:** While laser has its difficulties on cotton, it's ideally suited for poly because the fabric melts in a clean and controlled manner. To avoid burning all the way through the fabric, perform test runs on swatches to find the correct setting for your laser machine; this is especially important given the range in garment quality you're likely to encounter. Often, high speed and low power leads to desired results. Keep in mind, too, that laser engraving can be combined with screen printing and other decorating techniques to create unique multimedia designs.



**Dubow Textile** (asi/700107; circle 81 on Free Info Card) combined laser etching and appliqué to create a unique multimedia design with this print.

**Sublimation:** Sublimation printing is only compatible with items that contain polymers, so it's a perfect match for polyester apparel. Garments are breathable, and vibrant all-over prints can be created for small-volume runs at a low price not possible with screen printing. For best results, flatten the garment to reduce press folds, align the transfer paper over the garment and, crucially, select the correct temperature, time and pressure to heat press the image. Know, though, that you are basically limited to printing on white or light-colored garments.

Sublimation creates vibrant all-over prints on poly, like the design on this performance polo (A1SJBP) made of 100% spun polyester from **Vapor Apparel** (asi/93396; circle 79 on Free Info Card).





DRY WICKING

DIGITAL CAMO

**BAW**  
Athletic Wear

MEN'S / LADIES / YOUTH

[www.bawonline.com](http://www.bawonline.com)  
[sales@bawonline.com](mailto:sales@bawonline.com)  
800.493.3745

asi/37689



Circle 032 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



# PERFORMANCE APPAREL

By Chuck Zak

**THE EVOLUTION OF** polyester has allowed for so many functional wearables that it's hard to remember the ambivalence that the fabric once inspired. Today's performance wear, however, is unimaginable without it.

The ability of these garments to combat moisture, odor and shrinkage is just part of

what makes them so desirable. Less tangibly, perhaps – but no less real – is the increased perception of value a high-quality performance garment has, due not only to its properties, but to the lifestyles that these items have become associated with. This apparel is the choice of proactive individuals: doers

and achievers, the healthy, hard-working and, frankly, the good-looking, too.

Performance wear has come a long way. Finding a great example of what the category has to offer, as these samples prove, is no sweat.



Color-block performance polo (78691) with embossed print as well as moisture wicking and UV protection from **Ash City** (asi/37127; circle 106 on Free Info Card).



Lightweight, form-fitting performance tee (CS-7050) with stain, odor and microbial resistance from **Vapor Apparel** (asi/93396; circle 79 on Free Info Card).



Women's polyester V-neck tee (483V6A) featuring 50+ UPF rating and a ribbed collar from **Hanes Branded Printwear** (asi/59528; circle 82 on Free Info Card).



Relaxed fit performance polo (CSP-4) featuring raglan sleeves and a self-fabric collar from **Stormtech** (asi/89864; circle 84 on Free Info Card).



Semi-fitted adult shirt (228100) made of 100% performance polyester with all-over sublimation print from **Holloway** (asi/61430; circle 85 on Free Info Card).



Adult color-blocked pullover (NW3260) made from 100% polyester birds-eye mesh with odor resistance from **A4** (asi/30121; circle 83 on Free Info Card).

## HEAD TO TOE

When you work out (or merely stand in the hot sun), sweat comes from everywhere, which underscores the importance of making sure all areas are covered in performance gear.



◀ Custom sublimated camo cap (CP50 Camper Hat) with wicking mesh crown and hi-viz safety orange stitching from **CF Headwear** (asi/43456; circle 86 on Free Info Card)



◀ Performance lacrosse sock (S50004) is made with a poly/stretch-nylon/elastic blend from **Sports Solutions** (asi/88876; circle 87 on Free Info Card).



# THE BLIND SPOT

Readers with gaps in their knowledge turned to *Wearables* for help. We paired them with experts to deliver business-generating ideas.

BY C.J. MITTICA,  
CARA CHERRY  
AND SHANE DALE





**K**now what you don't know. Sounds simple enough. But will you address your faults head on and even potentially turn them into a strength?

That's our plan at *Wearables*. We asked readers to volunteer their greatest gap in decoration and apparel knowledge – their blind spot – with the intention of helping them get better. We paired them up with leading experts in the field to teach them the strategies to overcome their obstacles. And the best part is we chronicled these meet-ups so that you can take away the most important points for your business. Check your Blind Spot – there's something worth knowing.

## Pressed For Direction

A start-up shop seeks guidance.

### THE READERS

Shelly and Alex Breton started TS Screen Printing nine months ago. What began as a casual interest for the Shelton, CT-based couple turned into a consuming passion as they watched tutorial videos and researched more. "That was the first reason we got into this business," says Alex. "It was fun."

But an initial burst of success has given way to stalled sales and feelings of doubt and helplessness. Their needs are varied: finding ways to get their name out, generating consistent sales and identifying the path to meet their goal of opening a storefront within five years. The couple has invested their life savings into the business and are trying to fight the sense of desperation. "That's where we're at right now, where I feel so beaten down," says Shelly. "I'm terrified we're not going to succeed."



Roy Marques met with Alex and Shelly Breton of TS Custom Printing to assess the state of their business and formulate a game plan for the printer.

### THE MEET-UP

It's a chilly March morning at the Bretons' home, an old farmhouse built by Alex's father and set far back from the street. Roy Marques trudges up the outside stairs on the side of the house to the upper floor entrance. The screen printing and embroidery consultant lives on the road, constantly visiting decorators large and small. He's prepared for anything on the other side of the door, only because the industry veteran of four decades has seen it all.

What lies in the Breton's upstairs studio is a collision of worlds. The personal effects of their lives (drums and guitars from Alex's band) and the hallmarks of the cluttered domain of screen printing (screens, presses, ink) readily intermingle. The couple's four-color press sits on top of a vintage Leslie rotary guitar amp. "Have you ever seen a press mounted on a vintage amp?" asked Alex as Marques first scoped the room.

"I've seen much crazier," Marques replied.

The founder of the MCN Group typically spends three days minimum with a screen printer

optimizing specific areas for peak efficiency. For this visit, his challenge in the span of a few hours is to gather as much information as he can about TS Custom Printing, assess all areas of the operation and give the Bretons actionable advice to set them on course.

The conversation in the first hour ping-pongs from equipment needs to local competitors to branding ideas. While all of that is important, said Marques, there is one essential place to start from. "You have to get a game plan, a structure," he said. "What you want to be, how you want to get there."

An essential part of that structure is coming up with a formulated plan for sales. Leads from friends and family as well as Facebook have begun to dry up. Marques points out the myriad of potential clients available to them. Sikorsky, the world's largest helicopter maker, has its headquarters nearby. Schools, such as the elementary school attended by their daughter Brianna, the printer's "quality control expert." Hospitals that are perfectly suited to Shelly's past career as a surgical assistant.

### Alex and Shelly Breton, TS Custom Printing



**Blind Spot:** Increased customer awareness

### Roy Marques, The MCN Group



**Solution:** Focus on top local prospects

Pricing is another issue. The Bretons have been quoting as they go, and inevitably discount to win business or please a friend or relative. Shelly has capable graphic art skills and has been able to reproduce logos originally on a business card. For multiple hours of work on a logo, TS has charged \$25 for an art fee. "You left money on the table with that," said Marques, pointing out they could be charging \$25 an hour, and probably more. "If you spent three hours creating something, have an hourly rate you stick by."

The consultant says an established pricing grid is essential. Last Halloween, TS created shirts for a haunted attraction ride that went from a one-location print to multiple locations with a glow-in-the-dark image. The screen printer never upped the price



enough to match the increasing complexity of the work and took a financial hit. A pricing grid and quotes that are written down or e-mailed will set the boundaries on price. "If you can put some stuff in writing where you see it in black and white, establish some gridded pricing, you'll be in good shape," said Marques.

Branding has been an issue. Shelly and Alex's original company name was Tomb Service, and while it was a hit with certain clients like those in the music industry, it spooked other customers, like a dental practice they worked with. "It was a friend of a friend, and once they found out the company name, they were put off and they didn't come back to us," Shelly said. "So now we're TS Custom Printing. We were scaring off too many people – more than I initially expected."

Other marketing efforts have either fallen flat or been too expensive to undertake. Marques recommended the book *Guerilla Marketing* and insisted they should be exploring low-cost avenues to promoting their name and brands.

Shelly and Alex have been eyeing upgrades to their current press and flash dryer. Shelly has her heart set on a 10-color Riley Hopkins press, but there's no space for it. Marques insisted it's overkill. "A manual press six color is very versatile to start with," he said. "You grow into the levels." The screen-printing veteran also recommends a quartz flash dryer over an infrared model – it will maintain heat better and be more cost effective.

Regardless of potential future upgrades though, Shelly and Alex have to keep their focus. "All this other stuff will come into place," said Marques. "It means nothing

until you start getting sales."

#### THE TAKEAWAY

Marques thought Alex would benefit from spending a day in a shop to see how another operation is run, and promised to hook him up with a close contact. The Bretons vowed to work immediately on leveraging their contacts at Sikorsky and other local places to get sales. They agreed they need to establish their pricing. There is a lot to do, but Shelly is encouraged. "At least I have some objectives," she says, "and an idea of where to go from here."

– C.J. Mittica

**DTG:**  
**Desire To Grow**  
Printing company aspires to bigger apparel sales.

#### THE READER

Parker Morgan is the sales manager for Morgan Printers Inc. Based in Greenville, NC, the company is a second generation family-owned business with over 55 years specializing in full-service paper printing. Tired of outsourcing apparel requests from customers, Morgan Printers invested a year and a half ago in a direct-to-garment printer. "We haven't used it as much as we'd like to," says Morgan, "but it has helped us to get more business, even large orders." Morgan is looking to increase his company's orders, raise their margins and become more consistent with their pricing.

#### THE MEET-UP

Morgan sat in for an online video presentation with Joe Longtin, the marketing director for AnaJet (asi/16000), the largest seller of DTG printers. By coincidence, Longtin is familiar with Green-

ville; his wife is from the area. He inquired about a number of facets of Morgan Printers' apparel business, including marketing (word-of-mouth, cold calls and local radio spots) and top clients (two colleges in the area as well as large networks of hospitals). Besides its Mesa DTG machine, Morgan Printers uses a power sprayer to pretreat the shirts and a heat press to cure them. "You got all the right equipment with the power sprayer and the heat press," said Longtin. "You're going to be a lot faster with a heat press than a tunnel dryer, so you have a head start there."

Greenville is home to East Carolina University and its 22,000 students. With two established screen printers in town and multiple copy shops, Longtin think it's foolish to try and compete with those decorators head-on, particularly with shops that crank out a couple thousand shirts in a day. "I would take the opposite approach and leverage the screen printers whenever the situation permits," said Longtin. "Our most successful customers from my experience are the ones who have a good handshake relationship with a couple of screen printers." Ask them to refer the short-run orders they don't want, and agree to send over the larger orders that are ill-suited for DTG.

A publishable price list was Longtin's next recommendation. Though it can be scary to let competitors know what you charge, it can set the right expectations for the customer and keeps the bargain hunters away. When someone comes in for one shirt and tries to drive down the price by threatening to go to another screen printer, you can hold your ground. "Let them comparison shop if they want,"

#### Parker Morgan, Morgan Printers



**Blind Spot:** Consistent pricing, increase DTG sales

#### Joe Longtin, AnaJet



**Solution:** Create a price list, sample aggressively

said Longtin.

To that end, spend one day a week delivering samples to potential customers along with a price list. Simply delivering a custom sample to 10 customers in a day can lead to a 30%-40% conversion rate. "It's going to open doors for you and build awareness and you're also educating your market at the same time," Longtin said. "It's a killer technique, and not enough people do it."

Morgan has expressed interest in creating or integrating an online design studio. "I've talked to an athletic director at a community college," he said by way of an example, "and I'm trying to

figure out a way for people to go on and order something like soft-ball T-shirts in whatever size they want it.” Longtin warned against building one from scratch, indicating it is much more cost-effective to integrate an e-commerce option and online designer from an industry company. Bigger customers can merit their own custom websites for ordering. “Be prepared to plant the seed and spend six months really making it grow,” said Longtin. “It’s not going to happen by itself.”

### THE TAKEAWAY

Morgan found the meeting gave him concrete ideas to grow the DTG side of his business. He plans to be more diligent about visiting companies and bringing printed T-shirt samples to give them. “We did print a shirt that said we print shirts,” says Morgan, “and put the shirt on a wooden frame and stand out front to draw business in the door.” Morgan Printers is also in the process of setting up a store front for a local school to link to their athletics website for fans to order shirts.

— CJM

## Trying on Apparel Programs for Size

Distributor wants a comprehensive approach.

### THE READER

Alisa Coleman of Marali Promotions was a distributor with Kaeser & Blair Inc. (asi/45103) for over 10 years. After switching gears for a few years, she recently returned to the promotional products and ad specialty market. Based in Troy, MI, she has mainly been distributing pins and non-wearable specialties, but her clients have started to request more



Taraynn Lloyd, marketing director for Edwards Garment (asi/51752), demonstrates measuring techniques for apparel during her meeting with Alisa Coleman of Marali Promotions.

apparel items especially polos. Selecting the right size has been a challenge, and she would like to get ordering tips from the experts and learn proper measuring techniques.

### THE MEET-UP

Coleman met with Taraynn Lloyd and Steve Mott of Edwards Garment (asi/51752) on a snowy day in Michigan to go over popular items in Edwards Garment’s product line and to discuss sizes. Both Lloyd (the director of marketing) and Mott (Midwest sales representative) are well versed in sizing techniques and they know how important style is. Together they have almost 30 years of experience in the apparel industry.

Coleman explained that she is currently working with a number of different churches, and fundraising is one of their biggest activities. She is finding that many of the churches she deals with are looking for items that they can sell to promote their church, of which hoodies and T-shirts are very popular choices. However, polos and button-downs, which can be worn by church staff, are also in high demand. She really would like to

be able to recommend items that look good and fit well, too.

“Putting the right garments and uniforms on people is what we do,” said Lloyd. “While some are more scripted like those in the hospitality industry, we all wear a uniform of some type.” She added that when it comes to getting the right fit, it’s important to remember that there are many different body types. Selecting clothes for an apparel program that will work for a majority of body types is crucial.

Lloyd said that looking at the measurements in the catalog is a good way to start. Supplier catalogs generally list different sizing charts for men and women based upon the type of garment. Since sizing can vary from company to company and garment to garment, it’s important to measure. Men should have their arms, neck, chest, waist and inseam measured in order to ensure the correct size and a comfortable fit. Anyone over 6’1” is usually considered tall; however, this too can vary among manufacturers. Ladies should have their bust, waist and hips measured for sizing.

If getting measurements isn’t

### Alisa Coleman, Marali Promotions



**Blind Spot:** Learning how to select sizes properly

### Steve Mott and Taraynn Lloyd, Edwards Garment



**Solution:** Proper measuring techniques and fit lines

always possible, Mott said look to retail for help. “Many suppliers try to offer sizing that is similar to retail, which can make ordering a little easier,” he said. “Since most people know their retail sizes, ordering apparel wear isn’t that different.” Lloyd added that “fit sizes” should also be taken into consideration for different groups. For example, younger men usually prefer a more tailored fit with modified spread collars and French cuffs. More mature men are looking for boxed pleats on the back of shirts and extra room in the stomach areas. Women are generally looking for



apparel that will give them a better silhouette. Tailored shirts and strategically placed darts allow for a more flattering and professional look at any age.

Mott encouraged Coleman to have fit lines available. A fit line is selection of garments chosen for each individual program in different sizes that clients can try on. Fit lines can be easily rolled into the program cost. Coleman could then schedule time with each client to allow their employees to look over the options, try them on and determine what they not only like, but feel comfortable wearing. Coleman felt that this would be very helpful and something her clients would appreciate. Mott added that fit lines also help to reduce returns.

#### THE TAKEAWAY

Coleman felt she learned a lot during the meeting. While initially she had felt a bit overwhelmed at trying to put an apparel program together, the meeting with Lloyd and Mott showed her the most important aspect of any program is to make the customers happy and feel comfortable in what they wear. "I feel confident that this meeting has helped to give me the tools I need to be able to put the right clothing on my customers," Coleman says.

— Cara Cherry

## Appeal for Apparel Help

Distributor knows a lot — just not fabrics

#### THE READER

Alan Chait is the president of Greenway Print Solutions (asi/213247) in Scottsdale, AZ. After serving in Air Force Intelligence from 1969-73, including

a year in Vietnam, he worked for Standard Register from 1974-80 before founding Greenway in 1981. A decade ago, Chait added promotional products and apparel to his product mix — but he says he has a lot left to learn on that side of the business, especially on the apparel end.

"Those product lines are becoming a larger and larger percentage of our product mix," he says. "I'm the one with the mental block on apparel. I can create websites, build databases, design for print and web, and help build complex bar code systems for customers. But I just don't understand fabrics."

#### THE MEET-UP

Dave Schneider, is the sales manager for McCreary's Tees (asi/69885), an apparel supplier in Phoenix. A 15-year veteran of the company, he made the short trip to Scottsdale to give Chait and five other members of Greenway's staff a presentation that went over key apparel terms and styles.

Schneider opened by explaining the differences in various types of cottons — carded, combed, ring-spun, and open-end — and which of the nation's leading shirt companies (such as Gildan and Hanes) primarily use which type. Schneider noted that ring-spun fabric has a softer feel, making it "the best stuff on the marketplace" right now.

Schneider brought dozens of samples to the presentation to allow the Greenway employees to get a look — and more importantly, a feel — for each type of shirt that McCreary's offers. For example, he had everyone feel a 5.1-oz. shirt, followed by a 5.4-oz. shirt. Each employee could notice the difference in weight.

"They say you can feel with your hand the difference of a quarter of an ounce," he said.

Schneider also explained the differences between woven and knit fabric, and the kinds of embellishments that are conducive to each. "There are different kinds of knits, but the end result is a really stable fabric," he said. "Golf shirts are knit. That's why they're more comfortable to wear to play golf and other activities."

By contrast, he said, "a tablecloth is woven. It can print great, but it's not going to be great to wear. It just doesn't have the stretch to it and the feel. Just because it's perfect for printing doesn't mean it's perfect for wearing."

Toward the end of the presentation, Schneider passed around more samples from multiple suppliers. The item that drew the most interest from the Greenway crowd was a popular 100% cotton Code V camo shirt from L.A.T Sports-wear (asi/65948) that Schneider showed off. "Whether it's hats, bags, shirts — camo is one of the hottest things going," he said. "There are all kinds of applications for it. It's a big retail look."

Schneider's final message to Greenway was to not be afraid to use this new knowledge to suggest new, fun ideas to potential and current clients. "We're all doing the same thing, but you have to set yourself apart by what you do," he said. "If you have an idea, run with it."

#### THE TAKEAWAY

Chait says he now has the knowledge and the confidence he needs to discuss apparel basics with clientele. "I think we all learned a lot," he says, "I never even knew the difference between knitting

### Alan Chait, Greenway Print Solutions



**Blind Spot:** Apparel styles, knits vs. wovens.

### Dave Schneider, McCreary's Tees



**Solution:** Show variety, lots of touch and feel

and weaving. I had no idea.

"It's like anything else — when you start to sell a product and you're not familiar with it, you're a little bit hesitant to talk to people because you don't want to sound foolish and you don't want to be selling a product that you don't know a lot about. So, having an educational event like this really helps."

— Shane Dale

Cara Cherry and Shane Dale are contributing writers and C.J. Mit-tica is the editor of Wearables. Follow him on Twitter @CJ\_Wearables or e-mail him at cmittica@asicentral.com



# Join the most successful people in the ad specialty industry. **Join ASI.**

---

## **Powerful Tools**

Source products faster with ESP®, the #1 product sourcing tool. Create a fully customizable ESP Website™ and provide a world-class shopping experience for end-buyers.

---

## **Powerful People**

Grow your professional network when you attend industry trade shows and events.

---

## **Powerful Knowledge**

Sell more and work smarter. Participate in online or live education sessions.

---

## **Powerful Savings**

Save thousands of dollars annually on discounted business services from UPS, OfficeMax and more.

---

**Become a powerful force in the industry. Join ASI Today.**  
**Call (800) 301-9158 to get an exclusive offer today!**



Promoting Success™



## HOW TO

# Choose Halftone Styles

BY THOMAS TRIMINGHAM

Screen-printed halftones, when properly printed, create additional colors from just one screen by developing the optical illusion of space between smaller pieces of the color. Our eyes visually combine the pieces (dots, shapes, or lines), which creates the impression of a different hue of the color. The effect changes depending upon the distance, size or frequency of the colored halftones.

Halftones work in all sorts of the mediums, but the challenge is exaggerated for apparel because the dots tend to be bigger than when printed on paper. Bigger dots mean that the edges of graphics, type and small details can be affected if larger halftones are used to recreate them. If the right style of halftone is matched with a design that has the proper qualities, the result will often be a higher-quality finished product.

There are three prevailing styles: traditional, stochastic, and line halftones. Each method has good and bad qualities and a specific approach to using them well. Learning how to manipulate the halftones – while keeping in mind their limitations – will enable a screen printer to achieve consistent results on future prints.

## TRADITIONAL HALFTONES

A traditional halftone pattern is considered an amplitude dot, which shrinks or enlarges as the value of the image changes (Step 1). The reason that this is important is that some screen printers have trouble holding dots between 2-4% depending on the screen mesh and exposure method used; enlarging the dots make them easier to hold and print. But be careful when going too large, because these dots can become too close together at a high percentage. Significant dot gain will make a 70-90% halftone look like a solid 100%.

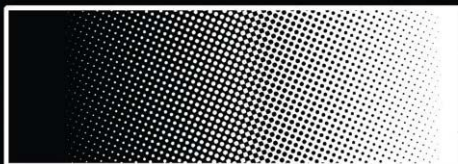
Traditional halftones are the most common halftone and they provide great standard results – as long as the halftone

screen doesn't interfere with the weave of threads in the screen mesh (resulting in a frequency pattern called moiré or blocked dots). A good rule of thumb is to have at least three threads per dot. A 50 dpi halftone, for example, should at least have a 160 mesh count screen. (Common dpi,

or dots per inch, for screen printing are 32-65.)

The best artwork for a traditional dot is art that has a lot of soft gradations in value and subtle, photographic rendering. An amplitude dot works well with soft changes in value because the dots can shrink dimensionally to add to the optical illusion in smooth graphics, such as increasing the dpi from 20 to 40 in this car graphic (Step 2). If your artwork has a lot of shadows and smooth gradients it will work better as a traditional dot.

### Traditional Halftone



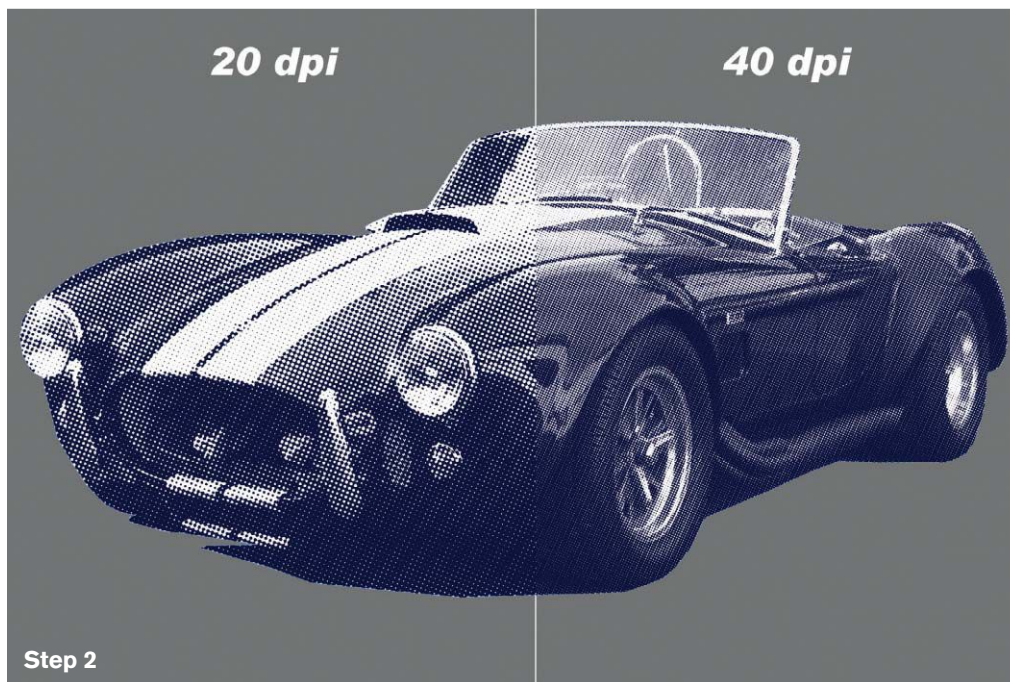
Step 1

## STOCHASTIC HALFTONES

A stochastic dot is also called a square dot because it typically is created from the resolution of a digital image. The size of the dot here is equal to one pixel square of an image's resolution, so a 150 x 150 image would have a dot that is 150th of an inch square. The important quality to remember about stochastic dots is that they are a frequency halftone. This means that the dots

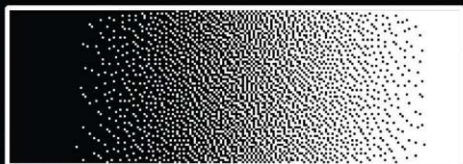
20 dpi

40 dpi



Step 2

### Stochastic Halftone



Step 3



Step 4

will get closer or farther away from each other but they all will remain the same size (Step 3).

There are several ways of creating these dots using software, but not all RIP programs will create stochastic dots; this may be one of the reasons that these dots are not used as much as traditional ones. Certain screen printers actually prefer stochastic dots, which provide better consistency with less dot gain than traditional halftones for certain types of art. Since a square dot creates its illusion of color change by distance from other dots, the images that work best with this style of halftone tend to have a visible grain to them and very short blends or gritty, hand-drawn styles. The square dot's ability to recreate a texture will work well with artistic style images and designs that are flatter in subject style,

without a lot of rendering (Step 4). A final advantage worth noting is that a frequency dot doesn't require as many holes in the surface of a printed area, so small details and typography often retain better clarity than traditional dots.

“A good rule of thumb for traditional halftones is to have at least three threads per dot.”

### LINE HALFTONES

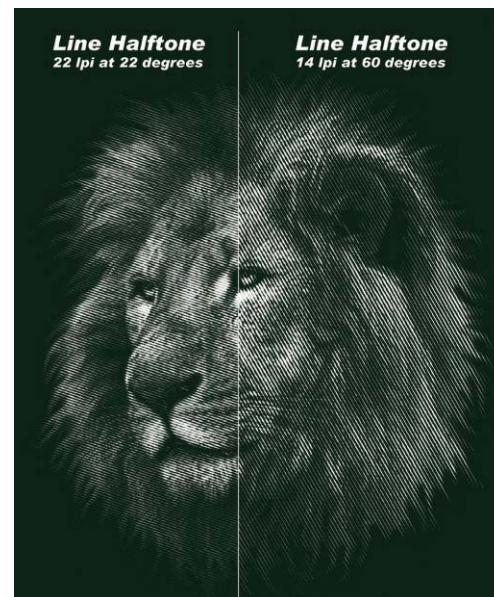
There has been a revival of using line halftones for the past few years in printed graphics for a wide variety of products, including T-shirts. Part of this halftone's resurgence in popularity may involve the vintage look of character that it creates to designs. An image that is recreated using a larger line halftone can look like an old lithography print or a vintage postcard. It has a friendly, almost stamped look.

This design style is an amplitude halftone that shrinks or enlarges with its value, but of course it is constructed of lines in a specific angle rather than dots (Step 5). A lot of the popular applications for line halftones use smaller numbers of lines per inch so the image looks like a design that was etched or carved. A smaller number of lines per inch makes each line bigger and the gaps between the lines are more visible, giving a vintage, antique look. Common halftone sizes for this effect vary between 12-45 lines per inch (Step 6). A minor production concern with this style of half-

### Line Halftone



Step 5



Step 6

tone is that lines that are parallel with the squeegee blade in a screen printing press may have bleeding issues, so it's advantageous to angle the lines so the ink doesn't smear as easily.

There are many more styles of halftones to use for screen printing but the three popular styles (traditional, stochastic, and line halftones) can provide the majority of design solutions for creating more colors from a single screen. The more you practice with halftones and learn about their specific qualities, the best your designs will reproduce when you use them properly. *Thomas Trimmingham is a contributing writer for Wearables.*



## DECORATION TREND

# Reflective Moment

From safety to fashion, reflective designs light up apparel decoration.

BY CHRISTOPHER RUVO

**M**ore buyers of decorated apparel want their wearables to light up the night – literally.

Savvy screen printers are capitalizing on the growing demand, using specialty inks and heat-applied transfers to create reflective designs on apparel for a wide array of clients. “We have certainly seen an increase in interest in reflective and there’s a lot of potential for growth,” says Matthew Veley, production manager at Red Alert Screen Printing.

Calls for reflective applications are far from isolated to the Tampa, FL-based shop Veley runs. Ryonet Corp. (asi/528500), a distributor of silk screen equipment and supplies, reports that sales of Optilux 505 Direct Print Reflective Ink increased three-fold over a recent four-month span compared to the same time-frame the prior year. Meanwhile, heat-transfer specialists Siser North America reveal that sales of ReflectAll Heat Transfer Vinyl jumped approximately 20% in 2013. And Stahls’ ID Direct (asi/88984) – a global provider of heat-printing supplies and equipment – says that sales of reflective transfer applications skyrocketed 50% within the last year. “The market for reflective,” says Stahls’ Chief Sales Officer Dave Wheatley, “is really just beginning.”

## SAFETY FIRST

A number of factors are driving the proliferation of reflective decoration. For one thing, more apparel decorators are simply discovering the applications and working them into designs. As importantly, emergency responders and other entities – construction companies, road crews, security firms, landscapers, utility providers – are increasingly having jackets, safety vests, T-shirts and more embellished with retroreflective applications. (Retroreflection reflects a light back to its source.) Additionally, a range of buyers, including start-up clothing brands, are now investing in reflective for unique fashion effects along with potential safety applications. Says

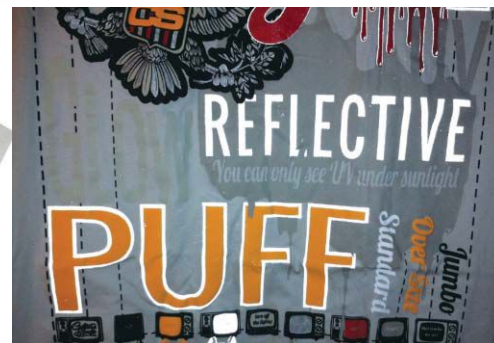


This special effects shirt from Culture Studio (asi/700559; circle 92 on Free Info Card) shows how reflective works – normal during the day (left) and then lighting up when a light shines on it during the night.

Wheatley: “Kids are wearing their monogram on backpacks, teams are incorporating reflective numbering to mimic what the college and pro athletes wear, and running and cycling clubs and individuals are adding reflective to items they train and race in.”

One clear benefit is the enhanced visibility in low-light conditions that the applications afford. When exposed to automobile headlights, flashlights and other focused beams, elements in these applications return the light back to the source. Reflective vinyl transfers, print experts say, tend to be brighter than inks and are more often the choice for occupational workwear. “Most printers that I know that do a lot with reflective use reflective vinyl,” says Ryan Moor, CEO of Ryonet.

Top providers of reflective vinyl transfers include Siser, Stahls’ and 3M. Using these transfers, which can be created in-house and applied with a heat press, printers can whip up anything from striping to logos and graphics that pop brightly. Popular transfer materials include 3M Scotchlite 5807, which applies



at 325 to 350 degrees and meets retroreflective workplace performance standards such as ANSI/ISEA 107. Like the 5807, ReflectAll from Siser applies to cotton, polyester, cotton/poly blends, nylon and spandex, though isn’t certified for ANSI/ISEA.

“Police, fire and other emergency responders will add the embellishment for extra visibility to garments that already have safety striping, as well as other garments,” says Kathleen Servais, who oversees Siser’s North American sales. “People also use it for fashion too, which includes adding it to mixed media designs with screen printing and embroidery.”

Another retroreflective material that can be heat-pressed onto garments – Reflectra from Specialty Materials (asi/88583) – is also becoming more popular for adding a bit of pizzazz to apparel. Introduced to the market about a year ago, Reflectra comes in 23 different patterns and 17 solid colors, including neon and frosty clear. “We’ve seen it used for everything from dance troupes to Halloween costumes,” says David Saunders, owner of Specialty Materials.

At Red Alert, the print crew creates graphic transfers – a kind of hybrid application that involves transfers and screen printing. Essentially, Veley’s talented team screen prints an adhesive onto a sheet of retroreflective lenses. He then heat-presses the graphic that the printed transfer carries onto a garment. “It takes more time and effort, but the margins are better than what you make on traditional screen printing,” Veley says.

## TIME TO INK

Notwithstanding the popularity of transfers, reflective screen printing inks are also used with success by many shops. Optilux 505 and 3M Reflective 8010 Grey are the options Des Moines, IA-based Broken Arrow Wear (asi/146656) works with to create reflective embellishments for clients that include those in the bicycle business. "We're using these inks more and more," says General Manager Kortni Remer. "Requests for reflective are increasing."

Containing light-reflecting microspheres, Optilux 505 cures around 325 degrees and is intended for use with open-weave fabrics and tightly woven nylon and polyester fabrics. The 3M Reflective 8010 Grey is a water-based offering that generates retroreflection through exposed, wide-angle lenses; it comes with a coupling agent that is mixed with the ink, which is recommended to be force-dried at 340 degrees for at least two minutes.

Printers also turn to Wilflex ImageBrite, a plastisol application in which the base is combined with aluminum-coated glass beads to create reflective effects. It's often cured at temperatures of 340 to 350 degrees.

When printing with reflective inks, "you have to be careful not to lay too much ink or base down," says Moor. "If you do, you will bury your reflective beads and nothing will show up." Paul Leto, production manager at Broken Arrow, additionally advises to mix the ink thoroughly to prevent the reflective elements from settling at the bottom of the bucket. A good mix and even application can help prevent another issue that sometimes arises: lighter coverage in random areas of a print, especially on larger designs.

In Leto's experience, a 60 durometer squeegee is best suited for reflective. Since different mesh counts can drastically change the finished appearance, it's important that mesh counts be exactly the same through a job.

Reflective heat-transfer material, like the 3M Reflective Scotchlite 5807 seen here, helps keep workers more visible and safer on the job. Available from Stahls' ID Direct (asi/88984; circle 94 on Free Info Card)

Photo courtesy of Stahls' ID Direct (asi/88984)



"While printing," says Leto, "you must keep an abundance of ink in your screen, while also scooping the ink on the side of the screen every 30 or so prints (depending on image size) back into the image area to minimize the separation of the glass beads and the base and to make sure it floods properly."

## REFLECTING SUCCESS

Once you get a handle on printing with reflective inks and/or producing the applications with transfers, windows of opportunity can open for your business. Because of its expertise with reflective, Red Alert has forged a strong partnership with Snarly Dog Moto, a motorcycle lifestyle clothing brand. For several years, Red Alert has produced the company's cool Snarly Dog logo in reflective on items like T-shirts, jackets and tank tops. Red Alert's deft ability with reflective also helped the shop win business from PODS, the international moving/storage company that's headquartered in Florida.

Up in Iowa, Broken Arrow has printed reflective logos on jackets and T-shirts for construction companies, while also providing the service to law enforcement and firefighters. For military personnel returning from overseas, Leto and his crew have cranked out shirts that commemorate the troops' service with graphics that include reflective ink. On some jobs, the shop can get extra creative — like the recent one for a bicycling brand in which reflective accents were featured in the wheels of a print that depicted a skeleton riding a bike.

Working with 3M reflective transfers, Tonopah, NV-based SafeTEE Connections has logoed safety vests in reflective for trash companies and produced other retroreflective designs for miners, teams, contractors building a solar plant and others. "We even did a logo in hi-viz green on black T-shirts for a volunteer group working to restore a courthouse," says Co-Owner Patty Winters. "Business has been amazing." Christopher Ruvo is a senior writer for Wearables. Follow him on Twitter @ChrisR\_ASI and contact him at [cruvo@asicentral.com](mailto:cruvo@asicentral.com).

## GET EQUIPPED

You can order pre-cut reflective vinyl transfer designs from vendors and apply them with a heat press. But if you want the added control and flexibility of cutting and heat-applying retroreflective vinyl transfers in-house, here's a look at the equipment you'll need.

**Cutter:** Cutters are computer-controlled machines that enable you to cut shapes, letters and designs from the vinyl transfer material. Quality offerings like the Roland GX-24 Vinyl Cutter or Graphtec 24" Cutter offer speed, versatility and the ability to cut for diverse media. Note: With cutters, the blade wears over time and needs to be replaced.

**Heat Press:** This machine enables you to imprint the image from the transfer to an apparel item with the application of heat and pressure. Options include the Auto Open Clam Heat Press (pictured) from Hotronix (circle 95 on Free Info Card), which features a patented "Auto Open" feature that facilitates multi-tasking while helping to avoid over-application and ruined garments.



**Cover Sheets:** During the heat-pressing process, a cover sheet not only protects the garment, it guards the upper platen of the heat press from stains, inks, adhesives and scratches. Options include the Kraft Paper Cover Sheet from Stahls' and Siser's Heat Transfer Cover Sheet.

**Weeder:** A weeder looks a bit like a dentist's plaque scraper. It allows you to remove excess material when you're done cutting your designs. Options include the Siser Weeder and Stahls' EZ Weeder.



# EQUIPMENT CORNER

The latest in machines and  
decoration products

## PRESSES AND PRINTERS

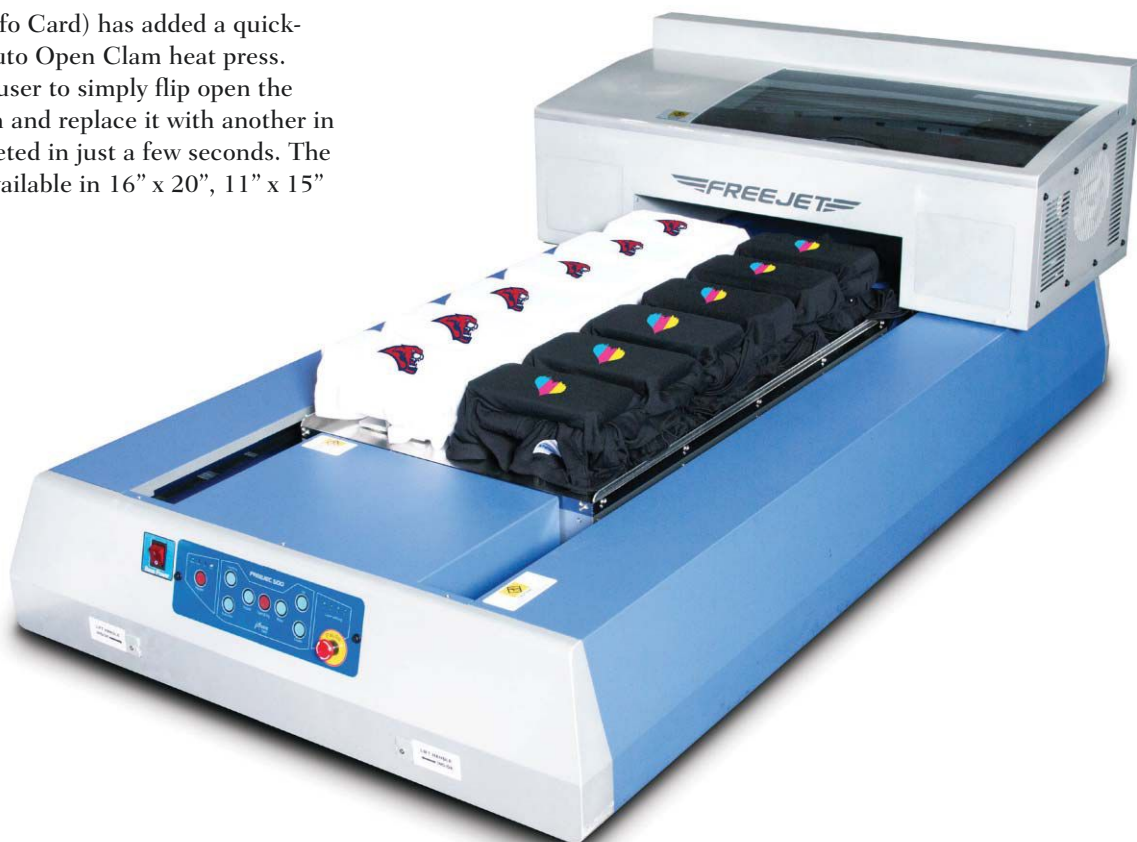


### ▲ Hotronix Auto Open Clam Heat Press – Stahls' Hotronix

Stahls' Hotronix (circle 95 on Free Info Card) has added a quick-change platen to new models of its Auto Open Clam heat press. The quick-change feature allows the user to simply flip open the quick-change latch, lift out the platen and replace it with another in a tool-free process that can be completed in just a few seconds. The Auto Open clam shell heat press is available in 16" x 20", 11" x 15" and 16" x 16" sizes.

### ► FreeJet Direct to Garment Printer – Omni Print

The FreeJet line of printers from Omni Print International (circle 109 on Free Info Card) features a moving gantry system which allows the print area to stay fixed in one location while the print head passes over the product. It also features a bulk ink system and a wet cap maintenance system designed to maintain and preserve the life and quality of the print head.



### ▲ Riley Hopkins Manual Screen Printing Press – Ryonet Corporation

Ryonet Corp. (circle 96 on Free Info Card) offers the powder-coated, super-durable 2014 Riley Hopkins press, available in matte black and iconic neon Riley green. It features JoyStick Registration for easy registration with minimal effort. The new Wheel Detent holds the platen in place to ensure quality printing, and each press features sturdier construction with minimal weight increase.

## SOFTWARE



### ◀ CADlink Digital Factory Apparel – Brother International Corporation

Brother International Corporation (asi/12600;

circle 100 on Free Info Card) has announced that CADlink's Digital Factory line of garment printing software now includes specialized support of Brother's popular GT-3 Series Direct to Garment printers. Digital Factory Apparel - Brother Edition includes features that maximize color management and optimize workflow by including garment print specific production tools directly within the print software interface. In addition, Brother announced that Miami-based Microgeo-USA – a South Florida and Latin American distributor of quality graphic arts, CAD, digital technology and finishing equipment and supplies – is now an authorized distributor of the Brother's GT-3 Series and PR Series of embroidery machines.

### ▲ Art Approval Tools – Inksoft

The Art Approval tools from Inksoft (circle 99 on Free Info Card) establish a company-wide procedure for greater consistency, faster training, and a streamlined art-to-production process. The management functions ensure that once art is created, it is labeled and archived in such a way to make it searchable by a variety of details. Approved art can then be quickly converted into a quote or an invoice without having to re-enter any information.

## MACHINES

### ▶ Tajima TUMX-C Single-head Embroidery Machine – Hirsch International

Hirsch International (asi/14982; circle 98 on Free Info Card) now offers the TUMX-C Singlehead Embroidery Machine, the latest release from Tajima. It accommodates apparel merchandise that will not fit under the needle of a traditional compact embroidery machine. Tajima has opened up the area on either side of the sewing head to enhance the use of a larger hoop or frame. It features a Windows CE operating system, LCD color monitor and a smaller needle plate with a built-in LED lamp positioned overhead for optimal viewing.



### ▲ D-1000 Compact Infrared Conveyor Dryer – Vastex

The D-1000 Compact Infrared Conveyor Dryer from Vastex (circle 97 on Free Info Card) cures 110+ plastisol-printed garments or 50 discharge-printed garments per hour. Available in 120V or 240V, it's equipped with a 20" x 16" 2050 watt heater that carries Vastex's standard 15-year warranty on all conveyor dryers. It also offers variable controls for both heat intensity and conveyor speed, which allows the user to modify the drying process according to ink type, ink coverage, desired cure temperature and printing rate.



RSN #.....Page #	RSN #.....Page #
A/4 Moshay Inc asi/30121.....2.....2, 3	Hanes/Champion asi/59528.....14.....15
alphabroder asi/34063.....3.....11	Hanes/Champion asi/59528.....15.....CV1
Alstyle Apparel & Activewear asi/34817.....4.....24	iClick Decorate asi/63125.....16....Bellyband
American Apparel asi/35297.....7.....1	Jerzees.....22.....13
Anvil® asi/36350.....10.....5	Keya USA asi/64602.....17.....31
BAW Athletic Wear LP asi/37689.....32.....47	New Balance asi/56842.....9.....4
Charles River Apparel asi/44620.....6.....19	Next Level Apparel asi/73867.....18.....21
Delta Apparel Inc asi/49172.....5.....CV3	Outdoor Cap Co asi/75420.....19.....34
Dynomite asi/51185.....8.....63	Pacific Sportswear & Emblems.....28.....63
Epson DTG.....30.....10	Pizzazz asi/78230.....21.....63
Fawn Embroidery Services Inc asi/702575.....27.....63	Pizzazz asi/78230.....33.....27
Fruit of the Loom.....29.....CV4	S & S Activewear asi/84358.....23.....12
Gildan asi/56842.....11.....7	SanMar asi/84863.....24.....23
Gildan Performance asi/56842.....1.....6	STORMTECH Performance Apparel asi/8986431.....16
Hanes/Champion asi/59528.....12.....CV2	Stouse Inc asi/89910.....25.....63
Hanes/Champion asi/59528.....13.....9	Stouse Inc asi/89910.....26.....63

*Wearables* APRIL/MAY 2014; Vol. 18, No. 4. (ISSN 1096-3766) (USPS 18113) is published monthly except bi-monthly in April/May and November/December by Advertising Specialty Institute, 4800 Street Road, Trevose PA 19053-6698. Periodical postage paid at Langhorne, PA and additional offices. Subscription rates: free and controlled circulation to qualified subscribers. Non-qualified persons may subscribe at the following rates: USA, 1 year, \$35, 2 years, \$69. Canada, 1 yr, \$39. Outside USA and Canada, 1 yr, \$41 (\$96 airmail delivery). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Wearables*, PO Box 2197, Skokie, IL 60076.

## APRIL/MAY 2014 WEARABLES READER SERVICE NUMBERS

For products in editorial content

### SUPPLIERS.....RS #.....Page #

A4.....83.....44, 49	Hirsch International.....98.....59	Sportailor.....91.....26
Ame & Lulu.....90.....26	Holloway.....85.....32, 49	Sports Solutions.....87.....49
Ash City.....106.....48	Hotronix.....95.....57	Stahls' ID Direct.....94.....57, 58
Brother International Corporation.....100.....59	Inksoft.....99.....59	Stormtech.....84.....49
CF Headwear.....86.....49	Mobile Edge.....89.....26	SOS From Texas.....105.....33
Culture Studio.....92.....56	Motion Textile.....107.....25	Tri-Mountain.....102.....34
DTG Ready.....77.....29	Norwood US.....103.....35	Vapor Apparel.....79.....46, 48
Dubow Textile.....81.....46	Omni Print International.....109.....58	Vastex.....97.....59
Hanes Branded Printwear.....82.....Cover, 17, 48	Pro Golf Premiums Inc.....95.....27	Vitronic Promotional Group.....104.....35
Heritage Screen Printing.....80.....46	Ryonet Corp.....96.....58	
	SanMar.....76.....25, 26, 29	

# CLASSIFIEDS

**dynomite**  
apparel

In stock tie dyes  
ship same day

From  
**\$5.45**

[www.dynomite.com](http://www.dynomite.com)  
888.777.1916

Tie Dyes. Custom Footwear. Garment Dyeing.



No. 8

asi/78230

**Pizzazz**  
Performance Wear

Same Day  
Shipping!

[pizzazzwear.com/v17](http://pizzazzwear.com/v17)

Scan to  
view our  
video



No. 21

**stouse**

★★★ MADE IN THE USA ★★★

**DECALS!**

[www.stouse.com](http://www.stouse.com)

DECALS • STATIC CLING • ROLL LABELS • KWIK-SHIP  
DOMED DECALS • APPAREL TAGS • BUMPER STICKERS  
CALENDARS • HARD HAT DECALS • INDUSTRIAL DECALS

**877-764-5757**  
ASI: 89910 • PPAI 113066 • SAGE 53848 • UPIC STOUSE



No. 25

**CUSTOM**

EMBROIDERED &  
RUBBER PATCHES,  
DOG TAGS & PINS

(800) 872-8778  
[quotes@DoctorPatch.com](mailto:quotes@DoctorPatch.com)  
[DoctorPatch.com](http://DoctorPatch.com)  
Small Ads = LOW Prices!



No. 28

**stouse**

★★★ MADE IN THE USA ★★★

**MAGNETS & PLASTICS**

Save The Date Magnets  
LHS 2013-2014  
Clear Cards! 5 STAR 2013 PAPER  
KILLEY MARKET  
SILVER RIVER CARD

[www.stouse.com](http://www.stouse.com)

MAGNETS • HANG TAGS • PLASTIC CARDS  
RULERS • MINI MAGNETS • BADGES • ID TAGS  
LARGE VEHICLE MAGNETS • SHELF DANGLERS

**877-764-5757**  
ASI: 89910 • PPAI 113066 • SAGE 53848 • UPIC STOUSE



No. 26

**Custom Embroidery**  
SINCE 1983

Fawn Industries  
[www.fawn.com](http://www.fawn.com)  
P: (800) 388-FAWN  
E: [info@fawn.com](mailto:info@fawn.com)

Contract Embroidery, Emblems  
Applique, Tackle Twill, 3-D  
Digitizing & Art Services

**50% OFF**  
(First Design By New Customer)

1537 Main Street P.O. Box 230 New Park, Pa 17352  
ASI / 702575 SAGE / 66020  
UPIC# FAWNEMBR PPAI# 195913



No. 27

## ERIK WAHL INSPIRES AT ASI CHICAGO!

### IT'S UNLIKE ANY OTHER KEYNOTE YOU'VE EVER ATTENDED!

During this unconventional program, internationally-recognized graffiti artist and successful entrepreneur Erik Wahl will ignite your creativity, giving you the power to become the visionary leader you need to be in this ever-changing economy. While bringing the stage to life, Erik will teach you how to:

- Embrace the future by becoming more innovative
- Become the visionary leader your team needs to succeed
- Work smarter, not harder, and achieve better business results
- Challenge the conventional wisdom and industry models that have defined your world

VISIT  
[WWW.ASISHOW.COM/ERIKWAHL](http://WWW.ASISHOW.COM/ERIKWAHL)  
FOR A SNEAK PEEK!



Register for ASI Chicago, July 15-17 at McCormick Place, at [www.asishow.com](http://www.asishow.com).

© 2014, The ASI Show®. All Rights Reserved.

**ASI**  
**SHOW**  
CHICAGO





## Up to the Challenge

**The thud-thud of** bouncing basketballs on hardwood, the high-pitched squeaking of sneaker tread and the cheers of excited fans floated high up to the fluorescent lights on the NBA court in downtown Dallas.

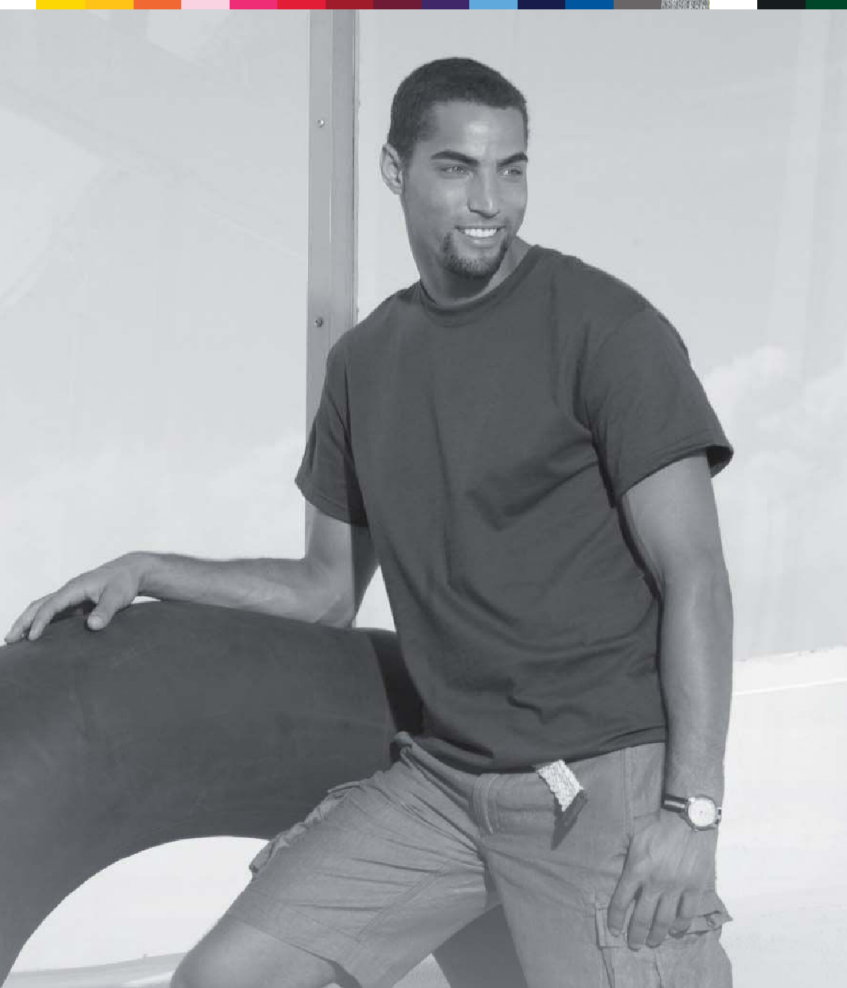
But there weren't professional basketball players on this floor. Instead, kids aged 9 to 14 from across the southern U.S. had convened on the court to show off their basketball skills in a regional iHoops Skills Challenge, hosted by the NBA and iHoops, the official youth basketball website of USA Basketball.

Over 30 kids took to the floor during the NBA All-Star weekend in Skills Challenge performance tees. Their goal: to show their skills in dribbling, shooting and passing in timed obstacle course drills. All of them had already impressed the judges at local Skills Challenge events across the country. Those who excelled this night would qualify for the national competition in Orlando.

Jennifer Maceyak, an event organizer representing the Atlanta-based sports marketing agency that promoted the Skills Challenge, is now a senior account manager with The Icebox (asi/229395). The creative promotional agency (which is also based in Atlanta) created and distributed the shirts used at the event. "The Icebox had the opportunity to bid when it came time, and they did so very competitively," she says. "They screen-printed tees with the official Skills Challenge logo and a Right Guard sponsor logo on the sleeve. Polos for the staff included left chest embroidery."

The Icebox printed approximately 1,500 tees that year for the participants and volunteers at regional Skills Challenge events across the country. About 75 polos went to Skills Challenge and marketing agency staff. And in Orlando that spring, wearing those shirts, one boy and one girl from each age group were named iHoops Skills Challenge National Champions. — Sara Lavenduski

# magnum weight



**65000**

## adult short sleeve tee

6.0 oz. (203 g) 100% PRE-SHRUNK COTTON

- Short set-in sleeves
- Seamless rib knit collar
- Coverseamed front neck adds durability
- Taped neck and shoulder seams for durability
- Two-needle hemmed sleeves and bottom won't unravel



**65900**

## youth short sleeve tee

5.5 oz. (186 g) 100% PRE-SHRUNK COTTON

- Short set-in sleeves
- Seamless rib knit collar
- Taped neck and shoulder seams for durability
- Two-needle hemmed sleeves and bottom won't unravel
- CPSIA certified

Our promise is to consistently deliver quality, value and innovation at a price that meets the challenges of today's marketplace. We specialize in 100% cotton, comfort fabrics in various styles and silhouettes complemented by an industry leading color palette for youth and adults.

### Global sustainability is a priority at Delta.

We are committed to making top-quality T-shirts with an unmatched printability for screen printers and promotional product suppliers.



## Delta Apparel

2750 Premiere Parkway, Suite 100 - Duluth, GA 30097

T 800.285.4456

F 678.775.6992

800.588.0199

www.deltaapparel.com

asi/49172

Introductory pricing begins at \$1.99

**Please call 1-800-285-4456 for quantity discounts!**

Circle 5 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)



**“WHEN HE ASKED  
HOW THE DESIGN  
WOULD LOOK  
ON HIS SHIRT,  
I POINTED TO THE  
ARTWORK  
IN HIS HAND.”**

Introducing 6 new colors in all sizes up to 6XL  
throughout the Heavy Cotton HD® collection.

Seriously. The printability of our Fruit of the Loom HD™ shirts is that good. It's due to fine gauge yarns that are knit tighter than ever. So whether you're printing on our ladies' V-neck, our new tank top, or any style in between, Heavy Cotton HD brings designs to life.

FruitActivewear.com • 888.378.4829



FRUIT OF THE LOOM®  
**HEAVY** HD  
cotton

© 2014 Fruit of the Loom, Inc.

Circle 029 on Free Info Card or visit [www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo](http://www.wearablesmag.com/freeinfo)