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8 CorelDRAW Tips: How to Fill an Open Path
by John Mise

14 Video of the Month: Turning Command Bars On and Off
by John McDaniel

17 Artwork for Processes: Introduction to Laser Engraving Photos
by John McDaniel

25 Getting Ahead: Curing Digital Prints with a Heat Press: An Interview with Steven Jackson
by Deborah Saxton

34 Marketing Secrets: How Old Is Too Old?
by Donna Gray

37 Quick Tips: Basketball Numbering Tips

DEPARTMENTS
4 Inside: News from Corel
7 Graphics News Wire Product News Headlines
30 Product Focus Holiday Products
32 Logo-Links
36 Contributing Writers
Every quarter Corel Corp. releases its *ByDesign eNewsletter*. The latest issue was just released, and I want to call your attention to some of the key items that were highlighted. At the end of this article is a link to go straight to the newsletter. Be sure to subscribe so you will be on the list for the next issue.

**Big Upgrade Offer for X7**
CorelDRAW X7 offers the most speed, stability, and compatibility of any version of CorelDRAW, and the company wants to encourage all users to upgrade to this version. To that end, they are making unprecedented offers:
1. If you’re using CorelDRAW X3 or lower version, you can purchase the upgrade version of X7 at the lowest price to date. Price varies by country.
2. If you’re using CorelDRAW X4, X5, or X6, you can receive a full version of CorelDRAW Home and Student Suite X7 for free when purchasing the Upgrade version of X7.

Click the link below to check out the exact details.

**Update 6 for CorelDRAW X7**
Earlier this month, Corel announced Update 6 for CorelDRAW X7 (and Update 2 for the Technical Suite). It is fully Windows 10 compatible. So if you are upgrading your Operating System, you need this update.

**Corel Painter 2016 and ParticleShop**
This new version of digital painting software now offers Dynamic Spreckles that create Natural-Media brushstrokes or realistic splatters by combining bristle thickness control with your touch and Particle system physics on various media. Also, a new Audio Expression feature allows you to “feel the beat of your brushes.”

The new ParticleShop is a way to experience the power of Painter particles in your favorite design product. It is a powerful Photoshop plugin that enhances photos in unique ways. It provides an array of new brushes such as debris, fabric, fine art, fur, hair, light, space, smoke and storm. Check it out online.

**2015 CorelDRAW International Design Contest Winners Announced**
Rogelio Hernandez Garcia from Mexico won the Grand Prize with his artwork “Dragon Queen”. Prizes for the contest were provided by Wilcom, Roland, iStock, CoCut, StockLayouts, and Monotype. CorelDRAWHelp magazine will feature a story on these contest winners in the next issue. You can see the designs online.

**New Webinars and Tutorials**
A new webinar is available online. Its title is “How to use Corel PHOTO-PAINT X7 and a Wacom Tablet to draw an illustration.” It will be presented by CorelDRAW Master Stefan Lindblad.

Three new tutorials include: How to create an editorial illustration for a magazine by Stefan Lindblad, and Playing with blends by Airel Garaza Diaz, and Creating a Party Invitation Card by Suzanne Smith. These are great practical demonstrations that can help you extend your graphics skills into new areas.

**Making Money with Graphics**
Corel also featured a link to our video presentation on Making Money with Graphics which introduces you to 16 production processes and what you need to get started. It also features a bit of history of the graphic products market, and how Corel had a leading role in its development.

**Upcoming events**
Corel Corp. will be offering workshops at the following trade shows: The Print Show 2015 in Birmingham NEC, UK, Oct. 13-15; Viscom 2015 trade show in Dusseldorf, Germany, Nov. 4-6; and NewTech, Kia Arena, London, UK, Nov. 24-25.

**Link**
Click [here](#) to go directly to Corel’s ByDesign eNewsletter.
The mission of the Association of CorelDRAW Professionals (ACDRP) is (1) to help you improve your graphics skills -- and (2) to help you make money with those skills.

This page is being provided as an entry point for the second part of that mission. Here you will find a range of ideas and sources for making your graphics more profitable. Check out all the links!

This presentation gives a short history of graphic products, and outlines the role CorelDRAW played in its development.

Then, for each of 16 production processes, it outlines six things: 1) a definition of what the process is; 2) a description of the types of products that can be made with it (with photos); 3) the type of equipment needed; 4) the general cost of such equipment; 5) the skill level you need to operate this process; and 6) the profit potential with this process.

The Videos of the Month from each issue of CorelDRAWHelp Magazine are now archived on the website. The current video is available to all readers in each month’s issue. The archive of all past Videos of the Month is available to ACDRP Premium Members. Click on the link above to see the contents. If a member, you can click right to the archive; if not a member, you will be directed to information about membership. New ones are posted each month.

Visit the ACDRP Online Expo

These sponsors offer equipment, products, and services that will help you make more money with your graphics. Check out the ideas and possibilities.

Visit the Webinars

In 2014, CorelDRAWHelp Magazine joined with Unisub to produce three webinars. These webinars have been broken down into short videos for easy learning, and are available free to all CorelDRAW Users. Click on the link to view each group of videos.

Webinar #1: CorelDRAW X7 Photo Basics
1101-1: Capturing Photos (Digital Camera and Scanning Basics)
1101-2: Resolution Recommendations
1102-1: Simple Photo Retouching (Straighten Image, Crop Tool, Image Adjustment Lab, Touch-Up Brush)
1102-2: Removing the Background (Cutout Lab)

Webinar #2: Shape a Photo to Fit a Product
1102-3: PowerClip… Place Inside Frame
1102-4: Feather the Edge
1201: Introduction to Templates
1201: Using and Saving Templates

Webinar #3: Creating a Sublimated Business Card with Unisub Product 5530
S-101: Finding the Unisub Templates
S-102: Modifying Unisub’s Template
S-103: Set CorelDRAW Page Size
S-104: Save the Modified Template
S-105: Adding & Arranging Text & Graphics
S-106: Creating a Background; S-107: Using Imposition Layout
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Product News Headlines:

- Corel Corp. releases ByDesign e-Newsletter for September
- InkSoft forms strategic alliance with Polyconcept
- Stahls’ offers free product with Heat press in September
- Coastal Business Supplies offers Epson 6200 F-Series Dye-Sub Printer

CorelDRAW® Help

- Stahls’ offers Any Word. Any Way. Standard Text Templates
- Stahls’ offers new video on heat printing varsity jackets
- SAi releases Flexi 12 signmaking software
- ClipArtBoom offers new Dance Pack

NEWS DETAILS
(Click Here)

- Imprintables offers new video on creating new looks with Spectra Perform Clear
- Imprintables Warehouse offers Myogrid women’s long sleeve compressions shirt
- InkSoft offers online video tour of e-commerce solutions
- Wild Side offers The Vape Trail designs
- GoVivid expands its sales team

Calendar (Web Link)
Check out the upcoming training classes and trade shows of interest to CorelDRAW users.

- Duets by Gemini ensures high standards for engraving substrates
- Supply55 launches new website
- Coastal Business Supplies offers new video on how to eliminate press lines

Click ads to go directly to advertiser’s web site.
How to Fill an Open Path

As a drawing program, CorelDRAW is a very powerful tool with many Line Tools to help you create the perfect drawing. When drawing, you create a line (a path) that has a beginning point which sometime later will meet up with the end point to close the path thus creating your drawing. However, sometimes you may not want the beginning point and the end point to meet. This creates what is called an Open Path. Depending on how you have your CorelDRAW options set up, when you go to “fill” your drawing, nothing happens. In CorelDRAW, you can fill an open path but, by default, this option is turned off.

You can change how CorelDRAW handles an open path fill by doing the following:

1) Open the Options dialog by choosing Tools / Options (CTRL + J).

2) Click to expand the tree directory under Document and click General to display the associated options on the right side of the dialog box.

3) Click the Fill Open Curves option so that it is selected and click OK to save and close the dialog.

After choosing this option, the open paths you draw will have an interior area which will allow you to fill in your drawing.
Page Origin... and How to Change It!

In this article we will discuss the page origin in CorelDRAW -- why it is where it is, and how to reset it.

The Default Origin
By default, in CorelDRAW the drawing’s origin is the lower left corner of the page. See picture 1. Its location doesn’t make any difference to output devices because the upper left corner of the page corresponds to the upper left corner of the output device, be it a printer, cutter or engraving machine.

Even though it doesn’t make any difference when outputting, it’s sometimes helpful to have the object’s location reference, in the drawing, match what you would expect on the output device.

Case in point -- most flatbed laser engravers use the upper left corner of the engraving table as the job’s reference point; that is the 0, 0 point. From there, positioning is normally measured down on the Y axis and to the right on the X axis.

In other words, for machines calibrated in inches, that have a 12” x 24” table, the table rulers would read 0, 0 in the upper left corner. The Y-axis ruler would show measurements from 0” to 12” on the left, with 0” at the top and 12” at the bottom of the ruler. The X-axis ruler would show measurements from 0” to 24” across the top from 0” at the far left to 24” at the right. See picture 2.

When CorelDRAW outputs to the engraver, the upper left corner of the page will correspond to the 0, 0 point on the engraver no matter what the origin point is in the drawing.

Some Confusion
Some confusion can arise in Y-axis positioning if you don’t change the origin point in CorelDRAW. Correctly locating the drawing in the layout will depend on the page size in CorelDRAW.

Assuming you are working in inches, and that you want the upper left corner of your output to be located 1” down on the Y axis and 1” in on the X axis on the engraving table. That is Y=1” and X=1” in laser-speak.

Let’s also assume you are creating your layout on
a standard 8.5 by 11" page in portrait mode in CorelDRAW. Then, the QUESTION is -- where do you set the upper left corner of your drawing on the page? The ANSWER is -- you will need to set the upper left corner of the drawing to 10" on the Y axis and 1" on the X axis in CorelDRAW. See picture 3.

If you happen to be using some other size page, the number will change. If, for example, you create your layout on an 8.5 x 14" page, in portrait mode, then the correct location will be 13" on the Y, and 1" on the X. If the drawing is on 11 x 17 in landscape mode, then the correct location will be 10" on the Y and 1" on the X.

If you choose to create your layout on a page size that matches your engraver’s table size, 12" x 24" (landscape), then the correct position will be 11" on the Y axis and 1" on the X. See picture 4.

So as you can see, the confusion is on the Y axis. CorelDRAW’s origin is at the lower left corner of the page, and the engraver’s origin is at the upper left corner of the table.

How to Change CorelDRAW’s Origin

Changing the origin in CorelDRAW is easy.

In the CorelDRAW workspace, in the upper left corner, where the horizontal and vertical rulers come together there is a small icon. Left click that icon and drag down into the workspace. Wherever you release the mouse will become the new origin point for this document.

To make sure the origin snaps to the upper left corner of the page, you can use guidelines and then turn on snap to guidelines, or snap to page, or snap to grid, to help you get it right where you want it. See picture 5.

Be aware, that once you change the origin in your layout, 2 things will occur. 1. The origin for this document will always be where you set it. That means in the example in picture 5 we set the origin to be 0 on the x-axis, and 12 on the y-axis. That means if we have any other pages that
12 x 24 Laser Engraving Table

Why did Corel choose the lower left corner?
It has to do with positive reference points for objects in the layout. Picture 6 is a diagram of a 2-dimensional drawing space. Notice the X and Y axis. Where they intersect are different sizes in this document, the 0, 0 point will not be at the top left corner of the page, unless the page happens to be 12 inches tall.

2. Resetting the origin will only be effective for this document. New documents will revert back to 0, 0 point being at the lower left corner of the page.

**Picture 06: Default Page Origin**
is the 0, 0 point. Above the X-axis line Y references are positive. To the right of the Y-axis line X references are positive. That means objects in the upper right quadrant, have both X and Y reference points that are positive numbers.

By relocating the origin to the upper left corner of the page means that Y references become negative. X references remain positive.  See picture 7.

In reality, laser engraver manufacturers have chosen the lower right quadrant by default, and their Y-axis rulers should in fact read from 0 to -12. That aside you can make your layouts conform, if you’d like. Just keep in mind that CorelDRAW will report the Y-axis coordinate points correctly, but as a negative number.

**Conclusion**
Relocating the origin is just another example of the flexibility of CorelDRAW. By the way, this method of origin relocation has been a part of DRAW since the beginning.
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Review
The CorelDRAW workspace is a customizable user interface. It consists of a drawing space, surrounded by tools and reference points to help you quickly create a layout.

Last time, we explored the elements of the Corel PHOTO-PAINT workspace, along with the standard workspaces that are included in that program. This

VIDEO OF THE MONTH
Link to Video Run time: 5:00

Synopsis: Learn how to turn command bars on or off using the right-click method or the Options Dialog method. Learn when the command bars are floating or docked.

Note: The link to this video will be active only until the next issue of the magazine comes out. Archived issues and videos will be available after that to all ACDRP Premium Members.

Turning Command Bars On & Off in CorelDRAW & Corel PHOTO-PAINT

Picture 01: Call Command Bar in CorelDRAW
time, we will show some of the ways that you can customize your workspace to suit your workflow. What we will show applies to both CorelDRAW and Corel PHOTO-PAINT.

**Turning Command Bars On & Off**

There are a couple of different ways to turn command bars on and off. The first is simply to right-click in a blank area on an existing command bar. This action will call the command bar dialog screen. See picture 1, for CorelDRAW; and picture 2, for Corel PHOTO-PAINT.

The dialog screens contain a list of available command bars. Those bars that have a checkmark next to them are being displayed. To turn a command bar off, if it’s on, simply left click on the check box and that will turn it off. To turn a command bar on that is off, left click on the check box and that will turn it on.

The first time a command bar is turned on, it will appear in a floating state. See picture 3. Picture 3 shows the text command bar turned on in a floating state.

To dock it, just drag it to the edge of the workspace where you would like it to be positioned. Once a command bar has been turned on and docked, if you turn it off and then on again, it will appear where it was last docked.
The 2nd method of turning command bars on and off is to do it through the options dialog screen. To access the options dialog screen, click on Tools/Options. In the options dialog screen, click on Customization/Command Bars. See picture 4, for CorelDRAW; and picture 5, for Corel PHOTO-PAINT.

Using the options dialog screen method, you can turn on and off several command bars at one time. Just keep in mind, that any changes you make in the options dialog screen will be abandoned unless you click OK to exit.

**Conclusion**
In the next video, we will continue our exploration of customizing the workspace to suit your workflow.
Introduction to Laser Engraving Photos

Our Background
As some of you may know, engraving photos was the initial process that launched our personalization business, circa 1989.

What most of you probably don’t know is that many years prior to that, John worked in the photography business. Before he got involved in the computer industry, he spent one summer working as a portrait photographer, taking mostly children’s pictures. Another summer, he worked for a photo studio taking and processing photos for automotive ads.

In addition, Judy’s training in art provided her an appreciation of lighting, composition, and other elements of pictures that give them artistic appeal. In short, we came to engraving photos with more than a little experience in the world of photographic art.

At first, we started by taking live black and white pictures with a video camera. In that environment, we controlled the composition, lighting; and then immediately produced the product using a rotary engraving machine.

During that era, a few people brought us a favorite photo, perhaps of a pet or loved one who was deceased, and we copied the photo using our video camera and a copy board. After a while, we moved into scanning photos. At first only black and white scanners were available, and of course now, full color. Picture 1 shows one of our early projects from a scanned photo.

Over the years, we’ve taken photos with film, live video pictures, digital camera pictures, and scanned photos. In our business, all of these image-capture methods were used to produce engraved photographic products.

Engraved Photo Products
Over the years, most of what we produced was in acrylic. We’ve offered other mediums -- wood, tiles, etc. However, our customers seemed to prefer photos engraved in acrylic. They preferred acrylic because it had the look of glass or crystal.

We’ve also offered photos on t-shirts, coffee mugs, mouse pads, dolls, and jewelry. All of these product offerings added to our retail business,
but none of them reduced the popularity of engraved photos. The engravings have an elegant look all their own.

As we mentioned above, we started with a rotary engraver, and continued with that process until the early 2000s, when we transitioned almost all our photo engraving to the laser.

**Picture 2** is an example of a memorial we created from several scanned photos. You can see the detail we were able to achieve with laser engraving.

**What Makes a Good Photo for Engraving?**
Many of today's laser engravers come with specialized software for engraving photos. They try to take the guesswork out of the process.

That said, the photo you start with has a greater impact on the finished product than any other element. (Garbage in…Garbage out) Therefore, in this article we’ll take a look at what makes a good photo for engraving. Whether you take the photo, or your customer supplies one, it should meet certain basic criteria which will make your life a lot easier and the product you produce much higher in quality. We refused to engrave certain photos customers brought us.

If you want a reputation for producing quality products, and want your customers to be pleased with their purchases, then starting with a good photo is essential for creating any photo product.

1. **Focus** – it seems rather elementary, but the picture you start with should not be blurry or out of focus. No matter how long you struggle with it, focus isn’t something software can correct. On rare occasions we’ve

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**Online Training**
For Premium ACDRP members we have a complete online series of training videos covering the following subjects:

1. Lesson 21 – Simple Photo Retouching
2. Lesson 22 – Removing the Background
3. Lesson 23 – Add a Background
4. Lesson 24 – Size and Shape of Photo
5. Lesson 25 – Halftone a Photo
6. Lesson 26 – Create a Tile Mural

All of the above lessons are demonstrated using CorelDRAW version 12. The techniques demonstrated apply to versions 12 through X7. [Click Here](#) to access these videos.

One additional training video deals with the upgrade to the Image Adjustment Lab and Cutout Lab that was introduced in CorelDRAW X3.

The video is:

7. X3 Lesson 05 – Image Adjustment Lab & Cutout Lab

This video applies to CorelDRAW versions X3 through X7. [Click Here](#) to access this video.

Not yet a Premium ACDRP member? [Click Here](#) to sign up.
accepted a photo that’s been slightly out of focus. But, only when there was no other photo available (perhaps the person was deceased). In those cases, we explained to the customer beforehand, that the engraving would also be “soft” or out of focus.

2. The subject in the photo should be large enough for the product you intend to create – on occasion a customer has brought a photo where the subject’s face is very small, and from that, they’ve wanted us to create a large engraving. There must be enough detail in the photo to produce the desired product.

3. It is extremely helpful to have good contrast between the subject and background. For engraved photos, we almost always remove the background from the photo. Backgrounds tend to interfere with the central subject of the engraving. In clear acrylic, having the bust of the person or persons is striking. Contrast helps you easily remove the background. If the photo is of a person with dark hair on a black background, it’s difficult to tell where the hair ends and the background begins.

4. FACES ARE IMPORTANT! – Pay special attention to the subject’s face.
   a. Shading is critical – a photo is a 2-dimensional representation of a 3-dimensional object. How we perceive an object as being 3-dimensional is by shading. Look at your reflection in the mirror. You’ll notice that lighting is important. In a front-on view, cheek bones, the forehead, and the nose are normally the brightest. Other areas are shaded, which gives them shape. A photo with good facial shading will produce an excellent engraving.

   There have been times people have brought us photos of babies where the faces are a blob without shading distinction, a flash in the face. These photos will engrave as blobs.

   b. Outdoor shots can be problematical – look for shadows caused by hats, trees, etc. These can lead to undesirable effects in the engraving.

Photo 03: Another example of an engraved photo on an ornament.
**Working with Photos**

Once you have an acceptable photo then:

1. Work in color whenever possible – even though your engraving is grayscale, working in color will help you in retouching a photo, and/or removing the background. Dark gray and dark red will both translate to dark gray when converted to grayscale.

2. Never accept a printout of a digital photo – always try to get a digital photo in digital format if possible. Going from digital to print, back to digital, offers too many opportunities for data loss.

3. For digital photos, try to get it in as high a resolution as possible. Throwing data away is easy. Recreating it, where none existed, is much more challenging.

4. Never allow your customers to scan the photo for you – it may be a little more trouble for you to keep track of, and return a customer’s photo, but they usually don’t know your needs. When you scan a photo, scan it in medium to high resolution. Once you have it sized and cropped for the engraving, then you can reduce it to the finished resolution.

5. Both CorelDRAW and Corel PHOTO-PAINT have excellent tools that are simple and easy to use -- tools that can help you shape and edit your photo prior to engraving it. In the event your engraver doesn’t have photo engraving software, both programs have tools to halftone a photo for engraving.

**Summary**

Engraving photos was a key element in our retail operations. It draws attention. Fascination with photos brought people into our shop. Even though they might have walked out with something else, they kept our card and ordered later, sending us a photo they wanted engraved.
Last time we took a little trip down memory lane. First, with a little Window’s history, then we looked at a little hardware development history, and how hardware has influenced operating system (OS) development.

This time we’ll look at our journey through the OS maze -- our experience, from the perspective of a graphic products producer.

Our Journey through the Windows Maze
When we first started our journey into the world of engraving and personalized product creation, the year was 1989. The Windows version was 2.0. That was also the first year CorelDRAW was released, version 1.0.

Since then we’ve always kept current. That means we’ve gone through Windows 95, 98, and XP, which was released in 2001. We have also kept current with CorelDRAW. From 1990 (version 1.1) through 2000 (version 10), Corel released a new version every year. From 2000 forward it’s been every other year.

So we launched our business using Windows 2.0 and CorelDRAW 1.0. That said, we also had a dedicated computer tied to our engraving machine for producing engraved photos. We didn’t switch everything over to CorelDRAW and Windows until sometime around the mid-1990s.

From 2001 until 2009, Windows XP was the primary system we used. We dabbled with Windows Vista but never incorporated it into any of our production computers. It was too slow and unstable.

In 2009, Windows 7 was introduced. Windows 7 was what Windows Vista should have been. We started transitioning to Windows 7 at that time. However, we still had some older equipment that required Windows 98. We also had some equipment that required Windows XP. That meant we were operating computers with three different operating systems.

This year, 2015 we finally retired the one piece of equipment that needed Windows 98. Now, with the exception of one printer, everything runs fine on Windows 7. So for that printer, we still have one computer operating Windows XP. Yes, it’s true, Microsoft ended service for XP. But, we’ve managed to keep one computer operating XP specifically for that printer.

When Windows 8 was introduced in 2012, we made the decision to try it on 2 computers, one laptop that had been running Vista, and our main desktop, which was running Windows 7.

We also acquired a new “desktop replacement” computer, i.e. a powerful laptop that came equipped with Windows 8. That unit is also equipped with a touchscreen display.

Since then, we’ve kept Windows 8/8.1 on the semi-retired Vista laptop and the desktop replacement laptop computer. We actually rolled the primary
desktop computer back to Windows 7. We found some issues with using Windows 8 on that system.

**Some of the Reasons we tried Windows 8**

One of the main reasons was speed. Microsoft went to great lengths to speed up Windows 8. Gone are some of the pretty features of Windows 7, like the Aero graphic interface. However, Microsoft substantially increased speed.

We first upgraded our 5+ year old laptop to Windows 8 Pro. It originally came with Windows Vista. When Windows 7 became available, we upgraded to that. After installing Windows 8, we were delighted to find out that Windows boot time went from almost a minute, under Windows Vista and 7, to a little under 10 seconds. Awesome! Applications load faster and response is quick. Needless to say, that old laptop has received a new lease on life. It’s running better than new. Vista is such a dog.

We also tried Windows 8/8.1 on our main desktop computer. It did boot much faster; however, there are some features that were lost in moving from Windows 7 to Windows 8. Those features included… built-in backup and XP mode. In addition, the user interface for 8/8.1 relied on being able to draw out sidebars from the right and left sides of the screen. Without a touchscreen, it’s necessary to do that with a mouse. That became an issue. Sometimes, it just didn’t work.

Windows 7 has built-in backup. You can back your system up to an external drive. Microsoft eliminated that feature in Windows 8.

The other issue for us was the ability to run a virtual Windows XP machine from within Windows 7. In Windows XP mode we are able to run older versions of CorelDRAW. That feature was eliminated in Windows 8.

One additional observation is that touchscreens can be cumbersome to use when they grow in size. We evaluated an all-in-one computer that had a high resolution 24-inch touchscreen built-in. We judged that for us, a large touchscreen required exaggerated arm movements, and became tiresome and annoying. In fact, our desktop-replacement laptop has an 18 inch touchscreen display that we use quite infrequently.

In our judgment, touchscreens are very useful for smaller, handheld devices. But as screen size increases, touchscreen usefulness decreases.

**Enter Windows 10**

Now it’s 2015, and Microsoft has released Windows 10. (29 July 2015) We are still in the process of evaluating it for our industry. Next time we’ll cover some of the pluses and minuses that we’ve discovered so far.
Current Recommendations
If you have a computer running Windows 8 or 8.1, and are running CorelDRAW X6 or X7, then go ahead and upgrade to Windows 10. It’s free, and we think you’ll agree that it’s an improvement.

If you are running an older version of CorelDRAW, hold off. We’ve discovered some issues with earlier versions that we are still exploring.

If your computer is running Windows 7, it’s also a free upgrade, but hold off. Windows 7 has built-in backup, and built-in virtual XP mode. Neither of these features were carried forward into Windows 8, 8.1, or 10. In addition, the version of CorelDRAW you are using is also important.

If you’re holding on to XP for dear life, the jury is still out. Currently, the upgrade is not free, but there are rumors of a discounted price coming. That said, your XP computer may not run Windows 10, and your equipment drivers (engravers, printers, vinyl cutters, etc.) probably will not work. You’ll need new drivers, if available.

If you are running Windows 98 or older, keep on keeping on. You’ll need lots of new stuff.

Conclusion
We will cover more of the pluses and minuses we discovered, and more on the rest of these issues, next time.

In the meantime, picture 1 is My Desktop graphic under Windows 10 (a picture of Crater Lake, Oregon). Picture 2 is the old Metro interface under Windows 8. Picture 3 is another Windows 10 desktop image, with the Start Menu showing. And picture 4, is a close-up view of the Start Menu.

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Secrets To Curing Digital Prints With A Heat Press:
An Interview With Steven Jackson

Ensure you get the best results when curing digital direct-to-garment prints with a heat press by using these tips.
Steven Jackson is the product manager of digital technologies for Stahls’. Having jointly owned a decorated apparel company—Seaglass Logowear in Clifton Park, NY—Jackson has real-life experience working with vinyl cutters, printer/cutters, and more recently, digital direct-to-garment printing.

He is the webmaster of MyVersaCAMM.com a free community forum where participants can go to see educational videos and blogs, post questions, and see photos of jobs to learn how to use their equipment and get new application ideas.

Jackson does installations and training on Graphtec, Roland printer/cutters, and the Epson Surecolor F2000 digital printers as well as customer service and tech support. He also teaches classes at Stahls’ facilities around the country and trade shows, and he presents webinars at the new Stahls’ TV website. To see the current schedule, go to http://www.stahls.com/events.

Jackson also assists in Stahls’ Cad-Printz digital and Cad-Cut production facilities as they produce leading-edge high-quality garment graphics for the industry. You may contact him at steven.jackson@stahls.com.

There are two ways to cure shirts decorated with a digital direct-to-garment printer: 1) a conveyor or drawer-style dryer, or 2) a heat press. For most shops doing small- to medium-size orders, a heat press is the most viable in terms of capital investment, efficiency, and quality.

But using a heat press for digitally printed garments is not the same as printing a heat transfer. Instead of transferring already cured inks via a carrier paper to a garment, you are curing inks directly printed to the garment.

And as anyone who does digital printing knows, the ink deposit can vary widely based on the color, quality, and fabric content of the shirt. So there is not a single formula and technique for successfully curing digital prints.

Unless you own an industrial digital direct-to-garment printer that applies pretreatment solution as part of the printing process, you have to pretreat the shirt, and this pretreatment has to be completely dry before printing can begin.

So when using a heat press with a digital printer, you are actually heat pressing each shirt two or even three times. Some decorators will prepress a shirt to smooth wrinkles and remove moisture before pretreating. The second pass is to cure the pretreatment and mash down fibers to prevent fibrillation. The third time is to cure the ink deposit.

Experienced digital printers have found that for the best results, it’s ideal to allow the upper platen to be positioned about an inch above the freshly printed shirt for about 35 seconds. This gels the ink and creates a film, which has two advantages. It prevents the ink from smearing and from getting onto the upper platen when it makes contact for the final pressing.

For these reasons, you really need a manual vs. a semi-automatic or fully automatic heat press. A manual press will give you the control you need to set it to hover over the print for a specified amount of time. It also is easier to set a manual press at the lower recommended pressure for curing. Most automatic presses that use a compressor cannot be set below 20 pounds.

The ideal choice is a heat press, such as clamshell or a swingaway, with an auto release or a hover feature. The auto release, which pops open once the set time is up, also safeguards against burning dark garments that require a longer dwell time. No one wants to sit and wait, but oftentimes when an operator walks away to do another task, the press can be forgotten until after it’s too late.

Although it is not necessary to remove the
A heat press is needed to cure the pretreatment prior to printing and then to cure the printed shirt. If you have only one heat press, it will speed up production to heat press pretreated shirts prior to your production run. Photo courtesy of Mind’s Eye Graphics, Decatur, Ind.

moisture prior to pretreating, if the shirt is very wrinkled, it may be a good idea to use the press to flatten it before applying the pretreatment and then cure it according to the manufacturer’s directions. It can result in a smoother, better-looking print.

Prepressing should be done by hitting the garment with very hard, heavy pressure, usually for 15 to 20 seconds. The temperature depends on the brand of pretreatment used and how much was applied. With proper curing, pretreated garments can be stored for future printing. Many shops do this to speed up overall production.

When you are pretreating, you want to make sure you use the right amount of pretreatment for that particular garment. To determine how much to apply, you will need to review manufacturer’s recommendations and engage in some experimentation.

On a higher-quality ring-spun cotton T-shirt, you might get good results using 28 grams of a particular pretreatment fluid; but if you switch to a shirt with a coarser weave and a surface that’s not as smooth, the same amount of that brand of fluid may not be nearly enough.

The best advice is to increase the amount of fluid incrementally. So do test prints by increasing the amount by 5-10 grams at a time and evaluating the results. Or another popular technique is to use 20 grams, cure, then do another 20 grams on top of that and cure. The first layer provides a flat surface foundation, which is then made even smoother with a second layer.

You want to test with different manufacturers’ shirts and colors and document
how much pretreatment works best with each garment. Once you determine the correct amount of a specific type of pretreatment for a particular brand of shirt and color, as a general rule, you’ll be OK pretreating at that level going forward. But never take for granted that the same rules will apply with different brands, fabrics, and colors that you haven’t worked with before.

Customers who have been getting great results sometimes suddenly find they’re experiencing fibrillation when they go to a coarser or heavier weight shirt. Not using enough pretreatment can result in a splotchy print or one where there is a lot of fibrillation that causes white spots in it.

Not curing the ink sufficiently and using too much pressure are other common sources of curing problems. There is a bit of an art to curing digital printing with a heat press. Obviously, you want to make sure you know the manufacturer’s recommendations for dwell and curing time.

Generally, you want a light amount of pressure when you are trying to cure a print; you are not trying to push the ink deep into the garment. The cover sheet that you’ve put over the print while pressing can provide a good indication of cure.

If the ink is cured, the sheet should come right off when you open the press. If the paper is sticking to the print a little, the ink is not quite cured, and washability is likely to be a concern. Also, be sure to pull the cover sheet off immediately after opening the press. Otherwise, it might stick to the ink as it cools.

In terms of manpower, you may need two people if printing light shirts, but only one if printing dark shirts. Print times on light garments without underbasing can range from 1 to 1.5 minutes, depending on image size, whereas the time to print on a dark garment can be upward of 3 minutes. Photo courtesy of Stahls’, St. Clair Shores, Mich.

Dark shirts will take longer to cure than light shirts because they have an underbase of white ink. To determine the right amount of dwell time, you should follow manufacturer’s instructions as well as do some testing yourself. Once you have determined the right amount of time and pressure, be sure to write it down for later reference. Photo courtesy of Stahls’, St. Clair Shores, Mich.
Testing pretreatment levels on various shirts and documenting the results enable you to develop standards that will smooth production and boost quality and consistency. Beyond pretreatment and the RIP, the greatest opportunity for improving the quality of your digital print is shirt selection. You can have the best software, pretreatment, printer, press, and everything else on down the line, but if you have a low-quality T-shirt, you are going to get bad results. Education makes a big difference for both you and your customer.

When someone comes in and says he wants a brand that you know won’t perform well, be prepared to show examples of printing on various brands of shirts to let the customer see the differences for himself. It may convince him to upgrade to a better shirt. This simple strategy can head off issues and pave the way to greater customer satisfaction.

In addition to understanding the process and the variables, it pays to give some thought to production. You want to look at your customers and their needs, and your space to evaluate what it will take in the way of equipment, personnel, and shop layout to optimize production. These are some things to consider:

**Volume.** How many people and how many heat presses will it take to achieve the production speed you need? In digital direct printing, you are performing two operations with your heat press—prepressing and curing.

The first requires a heavier pressure, the second a lighter one. If you are using only one press, you will have to pretreat the garments in advance so you can stage them. Then for curing, you have to adjust the pressure and add dwell time. A single press would be inefficient if you needed to do both of these steps simultaneously.

Having multiple heat presses can make for a more efficient workflow; however, this is not a realistic option for every shop. The same goes for multiple operators. Although a single operator can manage more than one heat press, it’s always optimal in terms of production speed to have multiple operators if you’re running multiple presses.

**Type of printing.** This also impacts workflow. Print times on light garments without underbasing can range from 1 to 1.5 minutes, depending on image size, whereas the time to print on a dark garment can be upward of 3 minutes. The latter takes longer to print, but also allows time for the operator to prepress the next garment while the previous one is being cured.

**Workflow.** Setup for a smooth workflow calls for positioning equipment in a logical order in terms of the process, but also for considering how each function impacts the others.

For example, a good typical configuration would be: pretreatment, heat press, printer, heat press. However, if your pretreatment machine has open architecture, putting it too close to your DTG printer could result in pretreatment fluids getting into the printer’s components.

On the other hand, while putting your pretreatment machine in a separate area would eliminate this problem, it also could increase production time by adding a lot of running back and forth. The best solution for a given shop depends on the work you do and your space and what arrangement will provide the steadiest workflow. Your equipment sales rep can be a good resource in mapping out the best direction to take.
COASTAL BUSINESS OFFERS SUBLIMATABLE CERAMIC HOLIDAY ORNAMENT SAMPLER

Put together your own holiday sampler of sublimatable ceramic holiday ornaments and save money while expanding your profit opportunities. Coastal Business Supplies of Maryland Hts, MO, is offering customers the chance to purchase four 25-piece packs of selected ornament designs as a set for 10 percent less than the cost of buying them separately.

Choose from 3-inch round, doily edge, snowflake, heart, and star-shaped options. Ideal for creating personalized heirloom decorations and gifts, these ornaments are designed exclusively for sublimation and feature a white gloss surface on both sides for bright images and vivid colors. 

MORE INFO

THE WILD SIDE OFFERS CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY DESIGNS

From traditional and religious designs to seasonal humor, The Wild Side of San Fernando, CA, offers a broad selection of Christmas/holiday plastisol and rhinestone transfers in a variety of art styles to appeal to all ages.

Transfers include sparkling glitter ornaments, angels, and snowflakes, and even rhinestone sports balls with Santa hats! There also are fresh, fun holiday sayings like “Dear Santa Define Good” and “Get Your Jingle On.” And graphics like “Who needs Santa, I’ve got Grandma/Grandma” and “I (heart) Santa” make creating gifts with a personal touch for your customer’s special someone fast and easy. New designs are continually being added; so check back often to see what’s new.

The full-front designs are high-definition plastisol screen printed transfers. Orders placed by 1 p.m. Pacific time are shipped the same day. 

MORE INFO

FLORIANI COMMERCIAL OFFERS RNK APPLI-STITCH® CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY DESIGNS

RNK Appli-Stitch™, offered by Floriani Commercial of Knoxville, TN, is a way to create professional-looking appliqué faster and easier with no cutting! Using new Appli-Stitch fabric combined with the Christmas Holiday design collection, you can create fool-proof appliqué for spiritwear and teamwear.

The RNK Appli-Stitch Christmas Holiday Appliqué Design Collection comes with
10 ready-to-use designs and step-by-step instructions. Appli-Stitch fabric, which comes in velvet, glitter, and leather, is sold separately. Designs include Christmas tree, snowflake, stocking, snowman, ornament and Christmas wreath.

To create an appliqué, the Appli-Stitch fabric is positioned over the target stitch. The design border is sewn and the excess fabric is torn away. To see the full selection of designs and fabrics as well as a video of Appli-Stitch in action, go online. 

**DALCO ATHLETIC OFFERS CUSTOM RHINESTONE TRANSFER DESIGNS FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

Custom rhinestone transfer designs from Dalco Athletic of Dallas, TX, are a great way to decorate holiday apparel, stockings, décor, and more. Choose up to four sizes of rhinestones (2mm, 3mm, 4mm, rhinestones, nail heads, or studs) or four different colors (from a palette of 15) per design, in any combination, to give your artwork a special sparkle that sets it apart.

These crystal transfers can be applied to cotton, polyester, or cotton/polyester blends (no nylon, dazzle, mesh, or moisture-wicking materials). They come on clear Mylar carrier sheets, are applied at 340 degrees F with firm pressure for 20 seconds, peeled cool, and then covered with Daltron paper and reheated for an additional 2 seconds to seal.

Recommended washing is in cold water with the garment turned inside out and air dried. There is a 25-piece minimum, with two- to three-week delivery. Artwork is acceptable in .cdr, .ai, .jpeg, and .pdf file formats, with a maximum height or width of 11.5 inches, one design per sheet. Email your design for a free quote.

Dalco Athletic offers a full line of official’s uniforms and accessories as well as die-cut, water-jet cut, and kiss-cut letters, numbers, shapes, and mascots in a range of materials for decorating team and spiritwear. It also offers roll materials to cut your own. 

**IMPRINTABLES WAREHOUSE OFFERS DURACAL 130 REMOVABLE WALL VINYL**

Help customers deck their halls by creating removable graphics that can be used on walls, doors, flat surfaces, and those with simple curves. Whether it’s a holiday message for a showroom, front office, party, or other holiday event, DuraCal 130 is the ideal material to create a bright, colorful graphic.

Offered by Imprintables Warehouse of Masontown, PA, this cut only, versatile vinyl is designed for short- to medium-term indoor applications. It can be used on a variety of surfaces including sensitive ones such as painted drywall. It can be removed cleanly up to one year after installation. DuraCal 130 is recommended for indoor use.

Made of 3.0 mil calendared vinyl, DuraCal 130 comes in 20 colors in a 24-inch width. Quantities include 10-yard and 50-yard rolls. It is not recommended for textured, freshly painted surfaces or walls with low volatile organic compounds (VOC) paints.

Imprintables Warehouse is your premier online destination for apparel decorating and sign-making supplies. The online selection includes heat-applied graphics and sign materials as well as Stahls’ Hotronix heat presses.
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How Old Is Too Old?

My company was in hiring mode for a couple months this past winter. We did all the right things. We advertised the position, and even used social media as one of our hiring tools. We put the word out everywhere. We shared the job description. We asked for resumes and a cover letter from applicants.

The first two times promoting the position brought us applicants totally lacking in the skills needed to work in our industry. Not only could they not make change without a computer telling them what to give back, but spelling and grammar errors on their applications were so bad that we began to wonder if we’d ever find someone who could walk and chew gum at the same time.

Our starting wage was certainly more than working at a fast food place. Our working conditions are good and our work space environment is way better than many other places in hiring mode. So why weren’t we finding the right fit? And, then, in one interview, we discovered the reason. We were looking for a long-term team member, and those applicants were looking for a temporary, just get me to the next step kind of job. What a shame!

Needless to say, we did finally fill our position – with a part-time person who is dedicated enough that she’s working two jobs. We have to share our Jenny with another employer who has enjoyed her loyalty for several years. Jenny is not fresh out of school.

This past weekend, I shopped in a big box store. The sales person who helped me was a friend from my past. Since this person was a former professional in the business world, I asked about the transition to working in a retail environment. I was surprised and disappointed to hear about how this person was downsized out of a very important and responsible position, especially when told that the replacement in this position was younger and less experienced.

I’ve noticed that, especially during holiday time, older, wiser folks are working in these kinds of retail positions. They’re genuinely focusing on making customers happy.

They’re not there to be just a warm body at the register. They seem actually glad to be able to help customers find what they want and need.

After the discussion with my friend, I’ve been wondering about the older/wiser folks who are being phased out of positions in which they have performed well, to make way for younger workers, who may be just as qualified -- but may start their work journey at a lesser rate of pay.

Jacquelyn James, in an article/blog for huffingtonpost.com, dispels the myth “that senior citizens are just too old for the workplace.” She goes on to say “older workers aren’t risks or burdens to organizations. They are, in fact, a benefit.” She reports that “Numerous studies have shown that older workers are the most satisfied with their jobs and the most engaged of all age groups, which any manager can tell you leads to higher levels of presenteeism and productivity.”

The thinking that older workers won’t be happy having a younger boss is dispelled with the reality that older workers are reporting to younger bosses more and more these days. The argument that they are past their prime and that they don’t have as much energy as younger team members just doesn’t work.

An Entrepreneur.com article offers twelve reasons for hiring older workers, including:

- Older workers are dedicated to producing high quality work.
- They are punctual in arriving on time and ready to work.
- They are honest and full of integrity.
- They are detail-oriented, and fully focused on their work.
- They are good listeners so they are easier to train. They usually have to be told only once what to do.
- They take pride in a job well done. Younger workers want to put in their time and work and leave. Entrepreneur says, “Older workers are more willing to stay later to get a job done because of their sense of pride in the final product.”
- They have better organizational skills. Entrepreneur reports that “more than a million man hours are lost each year simply due to...
workplace disorganization.”

- They have the efficiency and confidence to share their recommendations which makes them ideal employees.
- They have maturity.
- They set examples for other employees, and make excellent mentors.
- They have good communication skills. Let’s face it…older workers don’t depend on texting to get their message across. Entrepreneur states that “older workers understand workplace politics and know how to diplomatically convey their ideas to the boss.”
- They may come with reduced labor costs due to having insurance plans from prior employers or have additional sources of income. They understand that working for a company can be about much more than just collecting a paycheck.

Entrepreneur.com also reports about older workers that “maturity comes from years of life and work experience and makes for workers who get less rattled when problems occur.”

Over the years, we have hired retirees who were definitely not ready to retire. They have so much more to offer…and they have been great additions to our team. They want to keep learning new skills. One of our best production managers was a former Doctor of Education and Executive Director of an organization that was one of our best clients. About 3 months after his retirement party, he showed up at our front counter saying his wife didn’t want him at home all day long. (I know his wife, Peg, was a perfectionist homemaker, and I suspect she didn’t want interference in her daily routine.) Doctor Dick worked for us for many years and brought lots of joy and laughter to our production team.

Our latest retiree hire was head of a large government department who found pleasure in building trophies. He got rid of non-essential clutter in the work area and created a great flow system for orders to follow. He said it was just the kind of work one could do and not have to think about pressure situations…that was until busy season…and then, still, Dan had a smile on his face every day.

Our industry requires workers who know how to read customers’ minds, use a dictionary when they don’t know if the customer has spelled a word right for their imprinted text, and can see a project all the way from taking the order to handing the finished product to the customer with kid gloves.

We’re going to be in hiring mode again soon. That’s a good thing. We’ll be looking at all the resumes and we’re hoping for a seasoned worker to come our way.

So how old is too old? Truth be told…as if you didn’t already guess…my husband, Dave, and I could be considered older workers. While some still can’t hold a candle to what we can do in a day…we have reached the age. Will we retire? Just ask our daughters, and our granddaughter, who work with us. Their answer will be…Heck no! They know we love what we do. They know we can still do the job. And we, and maybe some of you, don’t want to go out to pasture yet.

Many successful businesses hire older workers to their company’s great satisfaction. They would all agree that it’s a good thing for employers to think about the perceptions of older workers as good team members.

Donna Gray is the president of Total Awards, Promotions, & Gift (aka AwardsMall.com) in Madison, Wis. She and her husband Dave have run their full service awards and personalization business since 1977. She has presented seminars nationwide, won awards as Business Woman of the Year, Retail Marketer of the Year, and Sam Walton Business Leadership Award. She is also the author of two books on family business, It’s All Relative! Surviving & Thriving in A Family Business (2007), and Never Quit: The Ups & Downs of Running a Family Business (2004). She has earned professional credentials as a Certified Recognition Master. She can be reached by email at donna.gray@AwardsMall.com.
Donna Gray is the president of Total Awards, Promotions, & Gift (aka AwardsMall.com) in Madison, Wis. She and her husband Dave have run their full service awards and personalization business since 1977. She has presented seminars nationwide, won awards as Business Woman of the Year, Retail Marketer of the Year, and Sam Walton Business Leadership Award. She is also the author of two books on family business, *It's All Relative! Surviving & Thriving in A Family Business* (2007), and *Never Quit: The Ups & Downs of Running a Family Business* (2004). She has earned professional credentials as a Certified Recognition Master. She can be reached by email at donna.gray@AwardsMall.com.

Bill Leek of Houston, TX has over 30 years experience in computer engineering and graphics design. He has developed several lines of color imprintable products, and does testing on a variety of products for different manufacturers. He can be reached at wfleek@jblgraphics.com or 281-257-0695.

John and Judy McDaniel are owners of CorelDRAW® Help, Inc. They started in the personalization business in 1989 with CorelDRAW version 1.0. In their businesses they apply CorelDRAW! They’ve used it with—mechanical and laser engravers—to produce Awards, Gifts, and Industrial Products. They’ve also used it with all types of printers and vinyl cutters—for creating sublimation and other image transfers—for making sandblast masks—screen-printing screens—pad-printing plates—signs and banners—sales literature and flyers. In essence, they have over 20 years of experience in applying CorelDRAW! They have written hundreds of articles and tips; lectured across the country; and have been teaching CorelDRAW since 1991. For information on training and more, call 541-967-4271, or write to mail@CorelDRAWhelp.com.

Jeff McDaniel is the owner of Creative Graphic in Philomath, Oregon. He worked as a journeyman machinist before getting into the graphic products business. Creative Graphic offers laser engraving, rotary engraving, sandblasting, sublimation, image transfers, vinyl signs, banners, screen printing, and promotional products. Jeff routinely applies graphics to a wide variety of materials. Contact him at Jeff@creativegraphic.net.

Mike Neer is the editor of CorelDRAWHelp magazine and Executive Director of ACDRP. He has more than 25 years experience in writing and publishing in the personalized products industries. He is the author of the CD, *Creative Showroom Display*, and the booklet, *The Professional Edge*. He can be reached at the ACDRP office in Fresno, Calif., at 800-276-8428 or mikeneer@coreldrawhelp.com.

Deborah Sexton, former editor of *Impressions Magazine*, has been in the apparel graphics industry since 1981. She currently does marketing and public relations for apparel graphics companies, and is a columnist for several industry publications. She can be reached at dsexton@sbcglobal.net.

Otis Veteto is a sales consultant with more than 30 years experience in the awards and promotional products industry. He offers the “PROspective” of a veteran sales rep in reporting on ideas, people and places that he visits. Otis also presents sales and motivation seminars for industry organizations. He can be reached in Sacramento, CA – when not on the road – at 916-396-3009. Or email olveteto@gmail.com.
Tips For Numbering Basketball Uniforms

Here’s the rundown on official regulations as well as some selling tips to how to boost basketball numbering sales.

Team numbers for basketball range from traditional to modern, rounded styles. Some teams will want to stick with a classic look, but others may be interested in changing things up and having uniforms that offer a fresh look. For these customers, there are unique number choices available that feature narrow or longer stem heights.

What numbers basketball players can wear is regulated. These regulations help officials and referees report player’s numbers to the scoring table.

Here are the legal number ranges:

- 00, 0-5, 10-15, 20-25, 30-35, 40-45, and 50-55
- Team rosters may not include both 0 and 00

You’ll find that recreational and elite leagues follow the same rules of numbering because referees officiate at all games. Regulation basketball numbers and styles are used across the board for girls’ and boys’ teams.

Street ball and three-on-three teams generally use number styles and placements that are nontraditional. This type of decoration is generally all about the attitude or message a team is trying to present.

Going with a more unique number will kick up the entire look of a uniform. Set your shop apart by showing teams a variety of number options you have selected beforehand. I recommend including a couple of traditional choices and then sprinkle in five unique alternatives.

A gap outline type of number offers a multicolored look without the weight of multiple overlapping layers. The inside number can be swapped out with the outside number of another color, and then the gap between the two numbers lets the garment show through creating a three-color look. Photo courtesy of Stahls’, St. Clair Shores, Mich.

No matter what level team—recreational through professional—nor what sex, all basketball numbers must follow official rules. Photo courtesy of Stahls’, St. Clair Shores, Mich.
You also can offer the option of a three-color number without layers. This can be achieved in two ways.

Single-color heat transfer materials are applied one color at a time. By using a pre-spaced number style with a gap outline, you can remove the center piece of the digit and replace it with a pre-cut number piece in a different color. Once applied, you'll have the gap outline color with the garment color showing in between along with the center digit color. This requires two applications; one for the outline color material and one for the center digit material.

The second method is to use digital transfer numbers. This is a one-step application offering unlimited colors because the selected pattern is digitally printed onto the heat transfer media. This provides a lightweight decorating method with only one layer. Choose from popular effects like camouflage, animal prints, sports textures, and more. You also can achieve a two- or three-color digital number that is only one layer and one application.

Numbers are generally placed on the center front and center back of the basketball jersey, and in some cases, on the front left of the player shorts.

Common number sizes for basketball are as follows:

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