

TECHNICAL GUIDE

AN INTRODUCTION TO SUBSTRATES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
TEXTILE PRINTING

Second Edition

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What fabrics can I print on?

There is no limit to what fabrics you can print on, unless you are using a digital press, so check with the manufacturer. The most important thing is that the printed image is of high quality, the colours vibrant and that the print is rub-, water- and light-fast.

2. Can I use conventional inks to print textiles?

No. You need to have inks that are optimised for the print process you want to use and for the material you want to print

3. What is the ideal application for digital textile printing?

This depends on your local market. Uniforms for local sports teams are a good choice as there is the likelihood of lots of gear with regular repeat orders. Printing materials for interiors is also growing.

4. How are fabric dying and printing different?

With dying the entire fabric surface is covered whereas print is only applied to selected areas of the fabric.

5. Do fabrics need to be pretreated before they can be printed?

Not always but generally speaking it's a good idea to remove dust and loose fluff and to ensure that the surface is completely smooth and clean, and perhaps preshrunk. Many fabrics are supplied ready to print, however raw fabrics need specific processing before they are printable.

6. What is the most common print process for printing textiles?

Screen is the predominant print method for textiles. However digital inkjet technology is advancing rapidly especially for banners and similar soft signage, as well as garments and interiors.

7. Is it possible to print fabrics with an extended inkset?

This depends on the print method. If you are screen printing the material you are not limited to the four process colours. For digital printing in theory it's technically possible to add any number of printheads and ink sets to the digital printer. There are inkjet printers available with additional fluorescent ink channels.

8. Is there an ISO standard for printed textiles?

ISO has an entire committee (TC38) dedicated to textile standards, mostly working on tests for colour fastness, cleaning and water resistance, and for physical robustness.

9. How long should I expect printed fabrics to last?

There is no simple answer to this question as it depends on the print method, the inks, the intended usage (indoors or outdoors) and of course the fabric. It is important to remember that fabrics for upholstery and clothing must meet their market standards.

10. How can I get into textile printing?

The best way to start is to visit trade shows such as FESPA to educate yourself about the technology available. Then talk to your customers to see if there is any interest in extending your business in this direction.



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