

How to Maximize Productivity, Workflow Automation and Profit Potential with DTG Pod Printing

The custom-printed t-shirt industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the past few years. And that tremendous growth rate is projected to continue.

In fact, [the global market for the custom t-shirt printing industry is expected to reach \\$10 billion by 2025, with an annual growth rate of 6.3%.](#)

The market is mainly being driven by three trends. First, people, especially Millennials, want unique clothing that sets them apart from the crowd. So, more and more companies are offering greater customization options. Second, YouTube, TikTok and Instagram influencers and entrepreneurs are designing their own custom t-shirts to sell to followers and having print shops print their merchandise for them. Lastly, some retail stores are changing how they do business. Instead of ordering thousands of shirts at a time and having them sit in a warehouse until needed, stores are ordering just what they think they can sell in a certain amount of time.

Because of these trends, more custom t-shirt orders are being placed, but the orders are smaller. So, while overall order volume has increased, print runs have become shorter.

Shops that offer direct-to-garment (DTG) printing are uniquely positioned to take advantage of these growing opportunities in short-run t-shirt printing. Unlike screen printing, DTG printers need very little setup and are easy to use.

They can be run by just about anyone with minimal training, making it possible to print short runs of custom t-shirts cost effectively and profitably.

DTG print shops can multiply these benefits and improve their ability to meet the increasing demand for custom t-shirts by using production-level DTG printers to create highly efficient printing pods.

In this eBrief, we'll explain what printing pods are and how DTG print shops can use them to maximize production and improve workflow efficiency so they can take advantage of the growing opportunities and increased profit potential of custom t-shirt printing.





What are DTG Printing Pods?

DTG printing pods group multiple production-level DTG printers around a conveyor dryer that are all run at the same time by a single operator. Here's how a two-printer pod would work. The operator loads a blank t-shirt onto printer one and starts the printer. While that t-shirt is being printed, the operator loads a blank t-shirt on the second printer and starts printer two. While the second t-shirt is printing, the operator takes the completed shirt from the first printer, places it on the conveyor dryer and loads a new shirt into printer one. The operator then takes the finished t-shirt from printer two, places that on the conveyor dryer and loads another shirt onto printer two. This process is continued until the order is completed.

Pod printing not only increases productivity and efficiency, it can also reduce labor costs by allowing one operator to do the work of a few.

BONUS: Some DTG printers are so easy to use, training an operator takes only a few minutes, not hours or days. And just about anyone can run a DTG printer, making it easier to find operators at a time when skilled labor is scarce. You can easily and affordably add new pods to meet seasonal changes in demand or as your business grows.





Taking it a step further, you can improve productivity even more by increasing workflow efficiency through automation. Adding an automated order processing system with a barcode reader can help you scale up your production, help increase profit potential and dramatically reduce the labor and time it takes to print.

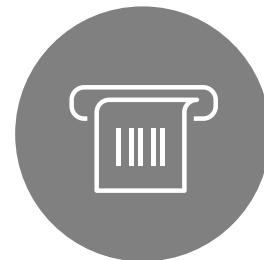
Here's how it works.

When a customer places an order, a print file is created based on the design and color t-shirt they choose. Barcode labels containing the printing information are attached to the t-shirts and passed on to the printer operator. The operator simply loads a blank t-shirt into the printer, scans the barcode and hits the “print” button. This process is repeated until all the t-shirts in the order are printed.

The operator doesn't need to know what the orders are, what's going on with the software or how to set up jobs in the software — it's all automated. This can all result in a more efficient workflow that allows you to scale up so you can print more garments in a shorter amount of time, lower payroll expense due to less labor and training required and create a better, more profitable operation.



PRINT FILE



BARCODE LABEL



LOAD SHIRT



PRINT

What to Look For in a DTG Production Printer

Pod printing can help you improve productivity and efficiency so you can increase profit-potential. But you need to have the right type of DTG printer to make the most of your investment, print t-shirts as quickly as possible and lower TCO.

Here's what to look for in a DTG printer if you're considering creating printing pods:



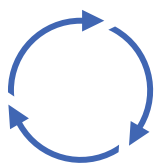
Production-Level Print Speeds

Obviously, the faster your printer, the more t-shirts you can potentially print in a specific amount of time. Printers that offer true production-level print speeds can allow you to print hundreds of shirts per hour when used in a printing pod.



Fast, Easy Garment Loading

The time it takes to load a blank t-shirt into the printer can dramatically slow down printing and reduce productivity. Printers that feature traditional platen hoops can be a struggle to use, thereby slowing down the process. So, look for a DTG printer that offers a quick-load platen with a grip pad to reduce the time it takes to load garments. Another feature to look for is automatic garment thickness optimization. This can take a lot of the guesswork out of t-shirt printing. This technology allows the printhead height to automatically adjust quickly for optimal print quality and maximum productivity.



Workflow Flexibility

Choose a printer that can adapt to your existing workflow. You'll be able to take advantage of the benefits of high-production printing pods without having to start from scratch, so you can get pods up and running faster with less expense.



Automatic Cleaning and Minimal User Maintenance

Choosing a printer that offers automatic cleaning and minimal user interventions for maintenance can help you maximize productivity. The less time you spend on cleaning and maintaining the printer, the more time you can spend printing t-shirts. This can help boost cost-effectiveness and profitability by not only increasing printer uptime but by also helping to reduce the overall maintenance expense.

For Pod Printing, Choose Epson

As experts in DTG pod printing, Epson can help you maximize productivity and increase profit potential.

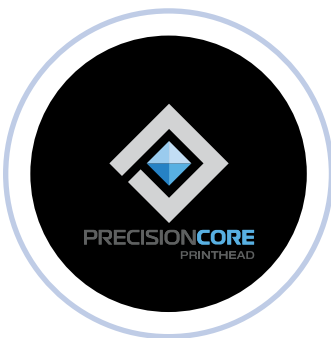
Our SureColor F3070 direct-to-garment printers are the perfect building blocks for creating DTG printing pods. Using the latest Epson PrecisionCore® printhead technology, the F3070 delivers stunning direct-to-garment printing with vibrant colors and fine detail. The F3070 is the first of its kind to meet the demanding needs of high-production shops. It was built from the ground up to deliver professional-quality, one-pass prints at industrial-level speeds so you can print up to hundreds of sellable t-shirts per hour.

In addition, the Epson SureColor F3070:

- Is easy to use, so just about anyone can operate it with just a few minutes of training.
- Simplifies t-shirt alignment, cuts loading time, and reduces errors by using a quick-load grip pad.



- Uses automatic garment thickness optimization which allows the printhead height to automatically adjust quickly for optimal print quality and maximum productivity.
- Easily integrates into your existing workflow, so you can work the way you want to.
- Offers an automated maintenance system which maximizes uptime, maintains consistent print quality and helps to reduce maintenance costs.



Advanced PrecisionCore printheads
deliver outstanding print quality at
impressive production speeds.

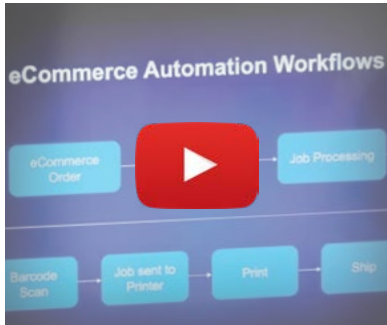


Automatic in-line cleaning system
simplifies maintenance, helps reduce
expenses and slashes downtime.



Optimized garment thickness
automation adjusts quickly for optimal
print quality and maximum productivity.

Watch an Epson SureColor F3070 direct-to-garment printer pod in action and see examples of how shops are partnering with Epson to deliver high-quality professional prints to their customers.



Redefining High Production DTG Printing

See for yourself how the SureColor F3070 direct-to-garment printer is redefining high-production printing. Watch as Senior Product Manager Tim Check demonstrates the SureColor F3070 printer's ability to print up to 100 shirts in an hour.

[WATCH NOW](#)



Scaling Up for Success with Gotham City Online

Discover how Gotham City Online has been able to expand their capabilities and efficiently deliver a variety of high-quality, customized products for their customers by integrating Epson DTG printers into their workflow.

"Choosing Epson to run our print operation was really a fantastic decision... it allowed us to scale up the business as we needed to."

– Gotham City Online

[WATCH NOW](#)



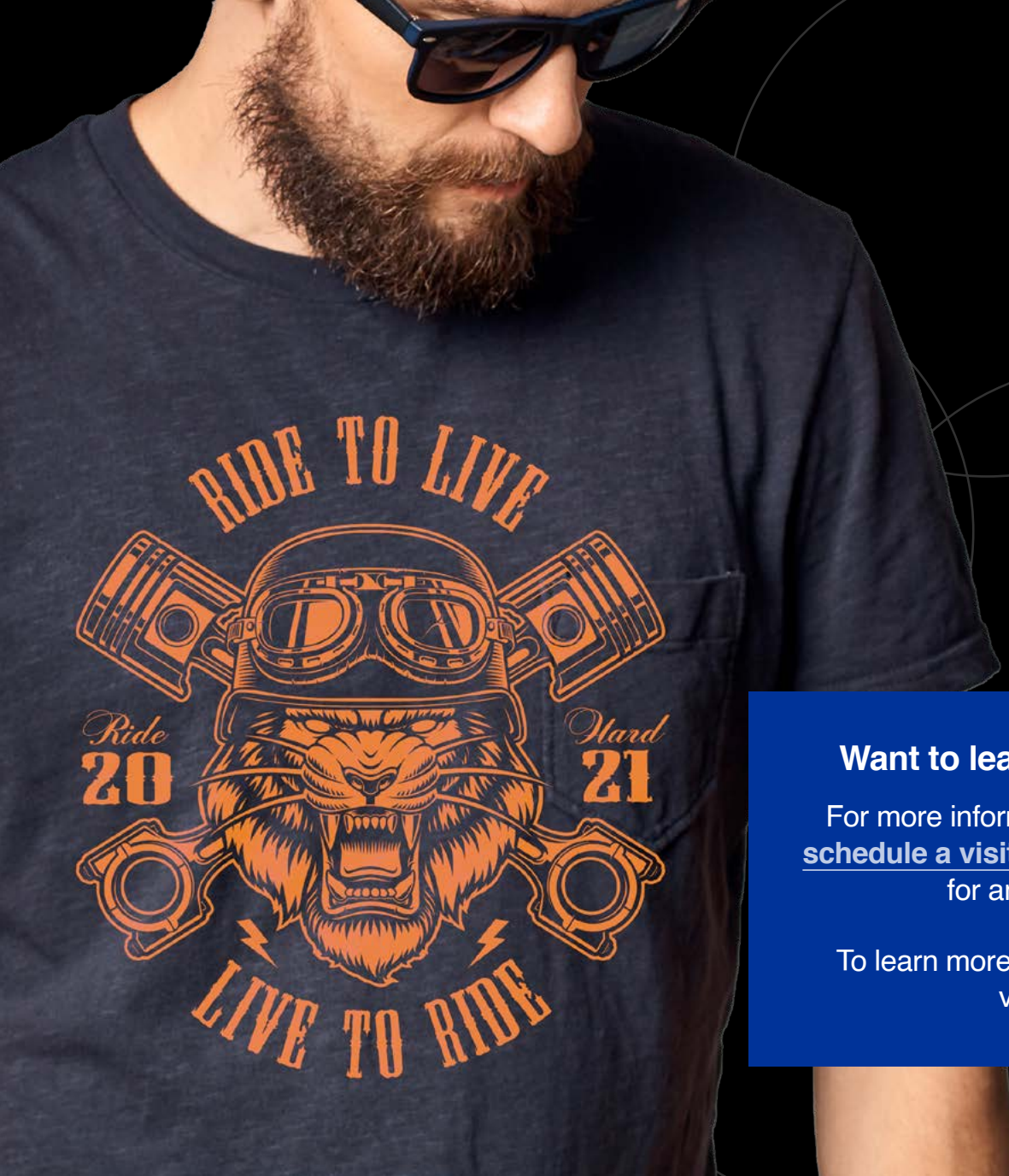
Partnering for Success with SkinzWraps

Learn why SkinzWraps trusts Epson DTG printers to consistently deliver vibrant, professional-quality prints with amazing depth and color.

"Everything we have here has an Epson label on it because it's just simply the best."

-- SkinzWraps

[WATCH NOW](#)



Want to learn more about pod printing?

For more information, contact your Epson dealer or [schedule a visit](#) at an Epson Certified Solution Center for an in-person or virtual demo.

To learn more about the Epson SureColor F3070, visit Epson.com/F3070

About Epson

Epson is a global technology leader dedicated to becoming indispensable to society by connecting people, things and information with its original efficient, compact and precision technologies. The company is focused on driving innovations and exceeding customer expectations in inkjet, visual communications, wearables and robotics. Epson is proud of its contributions to realizing a sustainable society and its ongoing efforts to realizing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Led by the Japan-based Seiko Epson Corporation, the worldwide Epson Group generates annual sales of more than JPY 1 trillion: global.epson.com

Epson America, Inc., based in Los Alamitos, California, is Epson's regional headquarters for the U.S., Canada, and Latin America.

To learn more about Epson, please visit epson.com — you may also connect with Epson America on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

EPSON®

EPSON is a registered trademark and EPSON Exceed Your Vision is a registered logomark of Seiko Epson Corporation. All other product and brand names are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of their respective companies. Epson disclaims any and all rights in these marks. Copyright 2022 Epson America, Inc.