

FASHIONABLE PRINTS

Recently the demand for printed textile products has skyrocketed. Chris Bailey from Quality Print Services discusses textile and garment printing opportunities in a post-pandemic world

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, it is probably fair to say that textile printing was one of those things that we had all considered at some point. Perhaps it was for printing flags, fabric banners and soft signage, or supplemental production such as interior décor applications and soft furnishings. You might even have considered direct-to-garment printing including T-shirts, sportswear and short-run fashion designs.

However, while there is no doubt that there are opportunities for expansion in both the textile and garment printing markets, the primary issue for companies looking to move into these segments is capacity. If your printers are all running at full capacity and the order books are already full of sign and display print production, the desire to pivot your business in a new direction is all too easily dismissed.

DIVERSIFICATION IS IMPERATIVE

Fast-forward to the present day and the thought process of many printing businesses is now very different to the start of 2020. The world is a different place and companies of all kinds, not just those in the print industry, are having to look outside their traditional remit and consider ways to expand their business and ensure survival as we move out of the pandemic.

Simply put, diversifying your business into new sectors and opportunities suddenly now looks less like a possibility for future consideration and much more like a necessity for immediate action. After all, work in your traditional markets may now be less plentiful than before the pandemic, and a move into



Roland Texart XT-640 high-volume dye-sublimation printer

other growing segments may help open up new sources of revenue.

With this in mind, what sort of markets should you look to target as a realistic prospect? A good place to start would be the textile and garment print markets. As we continue to move towards a more familiar-looking and normal future, the industry has seen something of a boom in these areas, with this trend showing no signs of slowing down.

POPULAR AND PLANET-FRIENDLY

One of the primary reasons for this trend is that many brands are now shunning plastic in favour of textile-based products in order to improve their environmental image – something that is becoming more important than ever as they seek to meet the

increasingly eco-conscious demands of their customers.

Textile is much more planet-friendly than plastics and, as such, demand for printed textile products has skyrocketed. With the

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call for more sustainable products only set to rise, so will the demand for textile print, and a move into this market will ensure you're well positioned for a key growth trend.

Then there is the fact that textile and fabric products are much more hard wearing than plastic and are likely to better stand the test of time. An excellent example of this is shopping bags, both in the high street retail

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Colorjet Softjet Grand soft signage printer



ColorJet Softjet Plus soft signage printer

and supermarket environments. Bags made from textile or fabric materials not only last significantly longer than plastic bags, but are much better looking and more fashionable than their plastic cousins, making them a popular choice with the consumer.

DEMAND FOR FASHION AND PERSONALISATION

If we are considering wider trends within the industry, then it is only right that we look at one of the fastest growing markets in the form of personalisation. Print personalisation continues to increase at a rapid rate and textile printers offer a cost-effective way of capitalising on this trend. Consider also that the machines used to produce this type of

"Consumers are desperate to get back to their normal shopping routines"

work offer a relatively fast return on investment, and this makes the transition to market much easier and the prospect of moving into the sector more attractive.

Stepping back and looking at the textile market as a whole allows you to see the range of work that is available to businesses operating in this sector. Be it fashion products such as T-shirts and hoodies,

"Textile printers offer a cost-effective way of capitalising on the print personalisation trend"

interior décor items like curtains or cushions, or even outdoors with flags and banners, textiles come in many wonderful forms and there is plenty of opportunity for you to win both new work and customers.

With retail now open and almost back up to full speed, demand for fashion is expected to rocket. Consumers are returning to shops

and desperate to get back to their normal shopping routines and with this set to boost both textile and garment sales, now is as good a time as ever to move into the market.



Roland Texart RT-640 dye-sublimation printer

TRUSTED SUPPLIER

However, as is the case when moving into any new market within the print industry, the thought of having to invest in new equipment and train up your staff to run it to its best

ability is often quite a daunting prospect and can put print businesses off making the move. Working with a trusted supplier that is already demonstrably expert in these new areas of interest will make this a much easier, smoother and more attractive prospect.

Quality Print Services (QPS) has worked with a wide range of businesses to support them with new textile and garment print investments – including companies moving into the market for the first time – having supplied, installed and supported fabric printing systems for many years.

QPS offers the full portfolio of Roland DG textile print equipment – including the Texart RT-640 and RT-640M dye-sublimation printers, the Texart XT-640 high-volume dye-sublimation printer and the ZT-1900 industrial dye-sublimation printer. The company is also the official UK distributor for ColorJet's range of soft signage printers, offering two of its most advanced machines: SoftJet Plus and SoftJet Grand models.

The future is awash with opportunities for printed textiles, so – if you haven't already – you'd be wise to do your research and ensure your business is set to take advantage of this profitable growth-market. ■

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