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Digitizing 201

An intermediate-level look at how decorators can work better with digitizers

Sophomore

Learn to Communicate With Your Digitizer

Communicating with your digitizer is one of the most important steps toward receiving a design that will meet your expectations. One of the biggest issues is that embroiderers believe that they are providing every possible piece of information that their digitizer could possibly need – no one would intentionally withhold vital design information from their digitizer. Let's take a look at some very important factors.

1. Size matters. Be very specific on sizing. If you were to order a design and simply state "left chest" or "full back," it leaves the final size subject to interpretation. Another thing to avoid with specifying size is using generic sizing. For example, a common design size for a hat is 2 inches tall. However, the length of a design is also important. In some cases, a 2-inch-tall design could end up at 12 inches wide. Unless you want a full wraparound hat design, the size won't work for a hat front.

Designs are also digitized specifically for certain sizes. Many design decisions are made according to the final design size. Many companies have ordered designs at a size smaller than needed to save on price per thousand stitches. Then, once the design is received, the embroiderer enlarges the design to the desired size. Sometimes this works; other times it doesn't. Always order designs at the intended size.

2. Specify the material. Knowing about the material the design will be sewn on is very important to the digitizer, as underlay choices and stitch densities are determined by the potential material. If you'll be using your design on more than one material type, be sure to specify that as well.

3. Choose your colors. Identifying the colors in a design might seem like one of the most clear-cut portions of the design order process; however, it's usually the stage that has the most interpretation. In *Figure 1*, the logo has two white areas. Do they both get sewn? Does the black background get sewn? Does the red in the spade get sewn if the garments are red? There are a lot of areas that can be left to interpretation.

Figure 1

Figure 2

4. Look at lettering. The first issue with lettering is its size in comparison to the logo's requested size. Here's where the embroiderer needs to take on some of the responsibility and look for any obvious problems, then discuss those issues with the customer before sending the job to the digitizer.

In *Figure 2*, if the customer wanted the design to be 2½ inches wide, there would be some serious issues. First, the border on "dreamquest" wouldn't work. Then, the bottom line of text would be too small to sew. Wouldn't it be nice to address these issues in advance and communicate the exact modifications to the digitizer? For example, can the design size be enlarged? Can the bottom line of text be broken down into two lines instead of one? If so, which words are on the first line and which words are on the second line?

5. Pay attention to special effects. Are there any special effects to be incorporated or ignored? If the artwork has blending, does the design get blending or should it be simplified? Are there any areas of appliqué as part of the design? If so, will the material be precut or will it be cut at the machine?

What seems like a simple process can cause numerous edits, delays and frustration. Attention to detail at the beginning of the process can help eliminate a serious issue.

5 Steps to Effective Communication With Your Digitizer

1. Specify the proper design size.
2. List all materials the design will be sewn on.
3. Clearly identify all colors and indicate whether or not voided areas will be sewn or be left open.
4. Indicate allowable stitch types for lettering.
5. Identify any special effects such as blending or appliqué.