

# Artist Grows Business with Dependability and Productivity of GTX Printers

BROTHER DTG TESTIMONIAL



## Artist Grows DTG Business

While Brandon Lee, SB Printing, Richmond, Va., got his start in DTG experimenting with several other brands, it wasn't until he discovered the Brother DTG GTX that his business finally found its groove and learned some key lessons along the way. In just over three years with the GTX printers, the business tripled.

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Today, he owns eight GTX machines and one GTX Pro B as well as the three-lane Synergy pretreat and Firefly drying system.

Configured in a pod, the Synergy + Firefly is at the base of a semicircle with the nine printers positioned around it. This requires only four employees. One employee operates the Synergy

pretreat station while the other three employees run three printers each. This allows Lee to maximize the output from his multiple printers in the most efficient and effective way. Thus allowing for more product to be shipped out at the end of the day.

Tying all the equipment together into a scalable automated printing solution is Linx control integration software. This combination allows him to receive orders directly from web stores that go into a production queue.

Artwork is automatically converted into the required format, sized and assigned to the correct garment, and a barcode is created and affixed to the blank. This barcode allows for a seamless transition from the pretreatment stage to printing to the final curing of the design.

If it's a one- or two-piece order, Lee has devised a shelving system where it sits until it's packaged and labeled. Multipiece orders are deposited into bins where they wait for shipping.

While Lee reveals he's hoping to further fine tune his production process, his current setup with GTX printers outputs an average of 1,500 garments a day – an increase from the up to 500 garments a day he was getting with the same number of modified DTG printers (8). When you factor in that the majority are one and two pieces, **it's hard not to be impressed with his shop's work flow and productivity.**

Prior to purchasing the GTX printers, Lee spent too much time doing maintenance and troubleshooting. "My wife (co-owner) would say to me, 'You need to focus on getting more business,' but I couldn't handle more business with the printers I had.

**"But once I got the GTXs, it really changed things. They're very reliable and purpose built,"** says Lee.

The entrepreneur got his start in the decorated apparel industry at 15 years old airbrushing T-shirts in an amusement park. From there he migrated to inkjet transfers and finally to DTG. He sold in flea markets, the mall, and today his own commercial location, where he finally started steering his business into what he wanted it to be.

In the mall, he served a combination of individuals and local businesses including schools, organizations and teams. But he preferred B to B over B to C orders. Switching from eight modified DTG printers to three new GTX machines in 2017 allowed him to focus on fulfillment orders from web stores, which is the niche he wanted to serve.



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“I knew by that time I left the mall I just wanted to do e-commerce. I was going after only businesses like screen printers, promotional products distributors, and people who wanted to sell shirts online,” says the printer.

A big turning point was in 2017 when Lee purchased three GTX machines. “It was the biggest investment I had made at that time, but once I got those I had made the commitment, and I started advertising heavily with Google ads to grow the business.”

What he found was the three GTX machines in a pod layout out-produced the eight modified DTG printers combined. “You can slam these printers all day; they just print non-stop,” he says. “The GTX units have more than replaced the old ones. And, while the ink cost is higher on the surface, the print quality and dependability undeniably outweigh it.”

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Lowering the cost of Brother’s Innobella Textile inks can be done with case pricing for the GTX & GTX Pro. The GTX Pro series also feature a through-head circulation system that significantly reduces waste and increases efficiency while extending head life. For higher volume users the GTX ProB incorporates the Advanced Ink System (AIS) allowing for lower cost bulk ink that is agitated, circulated, filtered and degassed all within the system which lowers costs and shortens down time of replacing empty inks.

What Lee learned after his years of experience with other machines was the most important qualities are **“the ability to print continuously and produce acceptable results 95% of the time.”** And GTX delivers on these qualities.

With the eight modified printers, “I’d have to replace the print head every three months. With GTX, I’m outputting 60,000 prints per machine in less than 24 months with the same print heads.”

Another factor in Lee’s productivity equation is the software. **“I could sit here and talk all day about the Brown Linx software; it never stops amazing me how awesome it is.”**

“You have to understand enough about your business to make the software work for you, because it’s a complicated world syncing order data to the order source and the end product. **But, it allows me to hold every garment accountable.”**

Software designed for DTG printing must take into account sizing the artwork for a specific shirt model, controlling the volume and area of pretreatment spraying, setting the appropriate print settings, and controlling the dryer temperature to get optimal ink curing. Linx uses a rules library to manage these factors for every garment printed.



“When you’re producing individual shirts all day, there are so many things that can happen. The Linx software helps you track down where it is and what happened to it,” Lee explains.

One of the challenges the shop owner has had is keeping up with the printers’ output. “Sometimes you have to scale back the full potential just to get the orders assembled and shipped by the end of the day. That is a constant balancing act. It’s like you’re running two businesses: printing and shipping.”

But Lee is optimistic as he continues to look for ways to make his business better and to overcome some of the challenges of packaging and shipping.

As the shop owner grows his fulfillment business, he continues to exceed customer expectations. He regularly receives metrics comparing his operation to other fulfillment shops with more expensive DTG printers. For one large ecommerce website, Lee states, **“We are in the top two of all the fulfillment companies they use.”**

The three original GTX printers purchased in 2017 are still in production with more 130,000 prints on each of them. As SB Printing continues to exceed its customers’ expectations in speed and print quality, it will look to growing its operation with an eye on efficiency and a strong return on investment. ■



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