

Commercial Embroidery: Not Your Mom's Sewing Machine

As a method of decorating shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, bags, hats and much more, embroidery is both elegant and sophisticated. It can be very artistic and colorful and give your logo or motto a great look. To better understand how this decoration method works, we would like to offer the following information for so you can fully understand the similarities and differences that you will find with different embroidery vendors you will run into.



How Is Embroidery Charged?

Most places charge by the number of stitches, not the number of colors. Within this method lie a couple of pitfalls you need to be aware of.

First, the number stitches is very dependent on how many stitches per inch a given embroidery machine is capable of. The number of stitches per inch determines how tight your embroidered logo or saying is. Simply put, more stitches = tighter embroidery = higher quality. So while you may be used to your



logo being 2500 stitches, a high quality machine may do that in 3000 or 4000 stitches. The good news is that a high quality embroiderer may actually charge less for more stitches. You'll get higher quality for less money. We use machines that are capable of more the 1500 stitches per inch for a very high quality finish.

Second, the number of colors in your logo could affect the price, depending on machine used. Embroidery machines come in several types from single needle to 15 or more. With a single needle machine (like a home sewing machine) each color requires a change in thread. While most commercial embroiderers don't use single needle machines, many use machines with just 3 or 5. This means that if you have more than 3 or 5 colors in your logo, there needs to be a thread change somewhere in the process. This either limits the number of colors or raises the manual labor part of the cost equation and also

leaves room for error. At Statement we use mostly 17 needle machines in the 240 that we have so that you are not limited in the number of colors in your logo and don't need to pay for extra labor to make it happen.

So, when you are being quoted a price, be sure to ask about the number of stitches per inch and the number of needles available for you embroidery. That will give you a clearer picture of what you will get for the price you pay.



Digitizing

Taking your artwork and making it into the computer image needed to embroider it is a lot more complex than you may realize. There is more to it than simply creating a computer image. Once the computer image is created, the type of stitch used (flat, standing, fill, etc.) needs to be selected for each area and color of the design. Digitizing is both a science and an art. Working with machines that have the 17 needles we have gives a wide latitude to the digitizer. With that latitude we can create gradations of color in a logo and allows us to pick out small details in the logo as well as well. Having a good digitizer ensures that you logo is accurate, vibrant and stands out. At Statement, our digitizing department is in-house and has been doing this kind of work for over 15 years.

Machinery

There are many types and brands of embroidery machines on the market and they have changed a lot over the years. Remember when the first computerized home sewing machine was introduced? That was a result of what the commercial industry had been doing for years. Industrial machines are not only advanced technically, they are built to be used all day everyday with minimal rest. With regular maintenance they will last for many years.



Backing and Material

There are two things needed to keep embroidery from puckering and shrinking over time. First is the selection of garment itself. A more expensive garment will have more threads per inch than an inexpensive one and will hold the embroidery

better. Also pique fabrics (the ones with the nubby knit) make it more difficult for the embroidery to get a grip on the material than a smoother jersey-like knit or other woven fabrics. Steps can be taken to minimize this even with the less tightly knit or woven fabrics and that's the use of a backing material. Backing material is a fairly stiff material that is placed on the inside of the garment (unseen) that the embroidery is sewn through. It holds the embroidery together no matter what is done to the garment – laundry, age, etc. At Statement we always use a heavy duty yet soft backing so you will maintain the sharpness of your embroidery without feeling it on your skin.

Summary

Getting apparel embroidered is a very nice way to decorate something. In high quantities silk screening can be a little less expensive but the look of an embroidered logo is almost always worth the slight heavier cost. And if you get the great quality at the volume prices available at Statement Apparel, you will be the winner!