

Understanding Your Ink Jet

Here's how to reduce downtime and save you money.

Why did screen-printers move to ink jet technology for making film positives (and negatives) and away from traditional photographic devices such as Image setters and thermal devices?

Lower Cost: The industry looked to ink jet printers for making film for the most part because the devices cost much less to purchase and operate.

Quality Results: Screen-printers were achieving the sharpness and d-max on films they needed to burn screens using ink jets.

The Negatives of Alternative Solutions: Laser printers can manage the postscript data and are fast but they use "heat" to fuse toner to paper and weren't designed to use a clear film. Clear film aids you during screen making but would shrink in the printer because of the heating process and subsequently create registration issues. The use of vellum helps that, but it's cloudy and requires more time to expose screens and negatively affects the ability to capture detail. Finally, laser printers are not available for 17-inch or wider output. Image setters have a much higher purchase cost than ink jet devices, take up a lot of floor space and have special requirements.

Thermal devices are also costly devices. The cost of film is high. They suffer from registration and head burnout issues.

Direct-to-screen devices are costly and slow. They are true "one-off" devices. Each time you washout your screen you destroy the stencil and therefore you must directly print your separation to a new screen each time it is needed.

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