

APPARELIST

TOP 10

INFLUENCERS

*in the Decorated
Apparel Community*



TOP 10

INFLUENCERS IN THE DECORATED APPAREL COMMUNITY

With so many people using platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and more to not only share their personal interests but also reach their professional audience, it's a digital world that you should be a part of as an apparel decorator.

Whether you're a small, three-person operation or a large-scale facility with 20 auto presses, it's never a bad idea to stay in the know about what's going on around the industry. You might think social media influencers are only for those obsessed with Kim K.'s latest moves, but the reality is there are quite a few influencers in the decorated apparel community. Following are 10 social media accounts you must follow for insight, education, and more.



STAN BANKS

T-Shirt Side Hustle

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Instagram - @Tshirtsidhustle; **YouTube** - T-shirt Side Hustle

Stan Banks runs T-Shirt Side Hustle, a business that shows people how to make money printing apparel using all forms of decoration technologies. And if there's a technique he's not familiar with? "I collaborate with others so that others can teach."

Stan makes it his mission to educate the industry via all reliable resources. "I felt as though there was a lack of information when I entered into the T-shirt industry," he says. "So, five years later after learning my side of the business, I decided to start to bridge the gap by documenting my knowledge/processes in real time via social media."

GOALS:

"My main goal is to impact the world in the best way possible," says Stan. "However, my goal at T-Shirt Side Hustle is to grow the number of decorators and help them develop the many levels of their businesses as well as building community within the decoration industry."

ADVICE:

As someone who has done both decorating and educating, Stan has some words of wisdom to share. "Get started at this very moment!" he encourages. "Before getting started, we tend to question what we know and try to consume as much information as we can. Which we should; however, it starts to become paralysis by analysis ... jump in!"

**“MY MAIN GOAL IS TO IMPACT THE WORLD
IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE.”**



RICHARD “KING” TILLEY

ROO U.S.

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Instagram - @king_tilley; **TikTok** - @richard.tilley

Richard Tilley has a fitting nickname on Instagram: King Tilley. Not only is he on the tech side of screen printing equipment (building and training shops on it), he also does several shows, live video, and other events with apparel decorators around the industry. If you've ever seen him, in person or via digital platforms, his passion is evident.

“I was lost for most of my life,” Richard says. “When I learned the things that pulled me out of my darkest place I had ever been, I knew I had to share my experience to help others who feel the way I did. The greatest currency in life is paying it forward!” Perhaps that’s why he’s built such great relationships, especially with those who are being “their most authentic selves.”

GOALS:

“My No. 1 goal is to serve as many people as I can, whether it be through education, how-to videos on YouTube, daily mindset motivation, business advice, [and/or] perspective,” Richard shares. While he initially got active on social media for marketing purposes, it’s now become so much bigger. “As I became more comfortable being myself on social media and sharing my story, I noticed it had a lot of positive impact on others, so I just leaned into it further and now help a ton of people daily. I’m super grateful to do what I do.”

ADVICE:

It can be intimidating to make the leap into any new business venture, but in the screen printing world, there’s also a lot of technical stuff to learn. Richard has been there and has words of wisdom to share: “Make your goals clear so you know what to aim for. Make sure the business will provide you with the lifestyle you’re looking to achieve. Once you have those two in line, the rest is just a simple formula and a lot of execution.”

“THE GREATEST CURRENCY IN LIFE
IS PAYING IT FORWARD!”

APPARELIST



JEREMY PICKER

AMB3R CREATIVE

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

LinkedIn - Jeremy Picker; **Twitter** - @JWPicker; **Instagram** - @jwpicker

Whenever there's talk about the "who's who" of the industry, Jeremy Picker's name comes up. He is in the promotional products space; he does a lot of design work; he specializes in screen printing, embroidery, and appliqué; or, according to him, "[I] essentially build full merch lines for companies retailing some of their merch." He might be a one-stop shop kind of person, for him, quality is everything.

Jeremy wants to create a better merchandise world. "There is too much crap being distributed in our industry," he believes. "I obsess with everything merch and want to spark my peers to stop creating widgets and help their clients make things that are more wearable and useable — i.e., have a longer shelf life."

GOALS:

It's only natural, then, that he's going to implement that in everything he does. "Since my life goal is to help people make better merch, why not help my peers elevate their products, which in the end helps strengthen their clients' brand," Jeremy says. "Being self-conscious and worrying about what others think has been and still is to a degree why I haven't done it more. After I was sick of the cloud of not doing floating over my head, I decided to start writing industry articles and it has expanded from there."

ADVICE:

Even his advice to those new to the industry follows the same track. "Dig in deep to learn about branding, design, fashion, marketing, sales, etc.," Jeremy advises. "For some reason, people in our industry just rest on their laurels and create widgets all day, never digging deeper to help their clients better serve their clients. Learn from other industries to gain insight on the consumer trends and buying patterns in retail."

“LEARN FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES TO GAIN INSIGHT ON THE CONSUMER TRENDS AND BUYING PATTERNS IN RETAIL.”

APPARELIST



JAY BUSSELLE

Equipment Zone

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

LinkedIn - Jay Busselle; **Twitter** - @JayBusselle; **Instagram** - @jaybusselle;
Facebook - Jay Busselle

If you look up Jay Busselle's social media handles, some of them have pictures of him with tacos. It's funny, relatable, and makes him one of the most recognizable faces in the industry. Jay has done a little bit of everything, but his specialty these days is in direct-to-garment (DTG) and direct-to-film (DTF).

And tacos aren't the reason Jay got involved in social media interactions. "Social media has allowed me to multiply the opportunity of giving value first, collaborating and amplifying the insights learned and shared," he says. "It has helped me build meaningful relationships with seriously smart people that I like and trust ... and that I otherwise wouldn't have connected with."

GOALS:

He might be an influencer now, but that wasn't the original intention. However, he's not going to let the opportunity go to waste. "I have a drive to give back and help new promo peeps, apparel geeks, and printing freaks succeed because a lot of people were there for me when I started my small business," Jay says.

ADVICE:

Jay believes that there is a lot of questionable material on the internet these days. "Find a mentor that has more experience than you do and meet in person at least once a month — every other week would be better — to talk about business," he suggests. "Also, sometimes you're the maker (craftsperson, artist) and other times you're the marketer; both are required to sustain a healthy business."

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MARSHALL ATKINSON

Industry Educator

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

LinkedIn - Marshall Atkinson; **Twitter** - @atkinsontshirt;

Facebook - Atkinson Consulting LLC; **Instagram** - @marshallatkinson

Marshall Atkinson is a well-known name around the industry for good reason. Currently serving in the role of consultant, he specializes in helping shops with processes, workflow, efficiency, cost optimization, business and marketing planning, employee training and leadership, and sustainability. This plays into why he's active on social media. "People have to know who you are first ... Then, they have to like what you do," he says. "Social media for me helps establish trust as anyone can see and understand my viewpoints and knowledge that I can bring to a challenge."

GOALS:

If you guessed, then, that his goals are all about education, you're spot on. Marshall is all about teaching. "There is such a tremendous amount of misinformation and wrong answers being flung about on the internet and in groups," he feels. "I'm all about sharing the best and most relevant information I can."

ADVICE:

Marshall's advice is what you might expect coming from someone in the consulting role, which is likely why he's so good at what he does: "My first bit of advice isn't about the decoration, but about being clear on your goals," he says. "Write a business plan. Talk to others that have already made the journey and are successful."

"I'M ALL ABOUT SHARING THE BEST AND MOST RELEVANT INFORMATION I CAN."

U.N.I.T.E. TOGETHER
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



UNITE TOGETHER

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Instagram - @unitetogether.us; **Facebook** - U.N.I.T.E. Together

UNITE Together is “a social movement that empowers and reinforces a collective commitment to embrace and celebrate all that makes us unique and demonstrates that all are welcome, valued, and heard,” says Ross Hunter, president of ROQ U.S. Ross sits on the board for this program along with several others in the apparel industry, including Nikki Bowen of Machine Gun Graphics and Print Girl Mafia.

UNITE stands for Understand New Ideas Through Empathy. “UNITE Together was created as a platform to provide advocates of underserved communities to speak out on diversity and inclusion within the decorated apparel space,” Ross adds.

One underserved community includes women, which is what brought Nikki to serve on the board. She says that while her group Print Girl Mafia (which has 871 Instagram followers since becoming official in January 2022) came together organically and by accident, they share the same values as UNITE Together. “You realize that the support system and same education is not there, and that really ties together with what UNITE Together is trying to do,” she adds.

GOALS:

If it isn't already clear, UNITE Together is all about bringing the industry together to ignite change. “We further and encourage education via books, documentaries, and testimony from those directly and indirectly affected by inequality,” says Ross. “We welcome and invite conversations with everyone with the conscious intention of building bridges between communities and creating a warm and safe environment for everyone through continued conversation, mindful marketing in our businesses, and outreach programs.”

For Nikki, one of the biggest goals is education in the community. “There’s a lack of inclusion for not just women, but many people in general,” she says. “We want to let people know we’re behind helping others, [and showing them] how they can be better with inclusivity inside their four walls. It’ll naturally push that mindset to staff and even beyond.”

ADVICE:

Nikki’s advice? Keep learning. “Keep trying to educate yourself on the newest trends, styles, and vendors ... There are a lot more vendors and shops who are willing to provide education and resources if you just ask.”

Ross has a few words of wisdom to share as well: “Put yourself out there, be a part of positive change, and remember that people are what build businesses. Be kind, respectful, inclusive, and most importantly, empathetic.”

“KEEP TRYING TO
EDUCATE YOURSELF
ON THE NEWEST
TRENDS, STYLES,
AND VENDORS ...”





MADE LAB

Industry Educator

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Instagram - @madelab.io; **TikTok** - @madelab.io; **LinkedIn** - MADE Lab

The MADE Lab folks aren't your traditional influencers by general definition. Sure they have a presence on Instagram, TikTok, and most of the hot spots, but it's not about how cool they look pulling a squeegee to the latest pop song.

According to Ryan Moor, partner at MADE Lab, it's all about building partnerships to grow the apparel community. It's a "special sauce" if you will, one that is about collaboration. "Often we are not the ones that have the skills or resources to do something, but we know who does and we have invested in relationships with these amazing friends, customers, and partners so we can reach out and ask, connect, and build a stronger 'thread' throughout," he says. And in that sense, their influence goes beyond the digital space.

GOALS:

"MADE started from Brett [Bowden's] and Tom [Davenport's] vision to build something in a physical space that provided a focused and state-of-the-art place to test and learn, but as that space came together, we knew it was going to be more than inside our four walls," says Moor. The team recognizes that through their efforts, they can not only educate the decorated apparel community at large, but also help reduce waste and maximize the human aspect.

ADVICE:

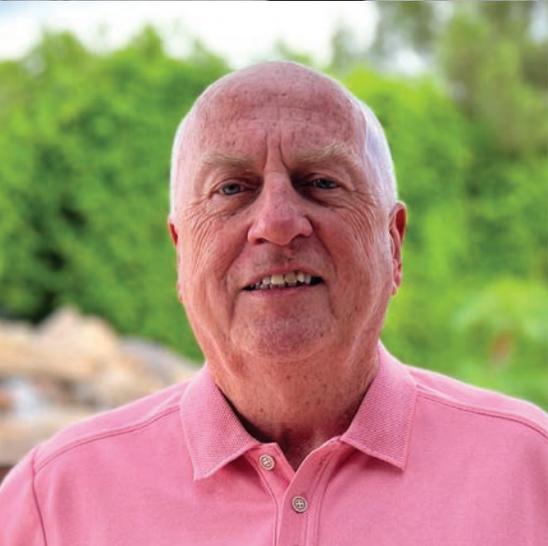
Born from experience, these folks have a thing or two to share with others. "Community involvement, both online and through participation in the events such as trade shows, conferences, and workshops, is the secret to personal and business development," Moor feels. "Today, this community is comprised of so many successful individuals and companies who learn from and support each other. The end result is that if you invest yourself into the community, you can accumulate ... the knowledge and connections that used to take decades to develop."

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TWO REGULAR GUYS

Industry Podcast



SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Facebook - 2 Regular Guys Podcast; **YouTube** - 2 Regular Guys Podcast

The 2 Regular Guys podcast has been around for quite some time, hosted by Aaron Montgomery of Our Success Group and Terry Combs of Equipment Zone. Both love to talk all things apparel, and both love chicken wings.

But for Aaron, social media isn't necessarily the name of the game. "For me, it's all about creating engagement, creating connection, creating relationships," he says. Instead, his influence lies in connecting directly through people via methods such as Zoom, Volley, and in-person events.

Terry, being a journalist at heart, is all about education as well. "My articles, seminars, classes, and the 2 Regular Guys podcast all grew from training my own employees," he adds. "There are no secrets in this industry, but lots of useful information to be shared."

GOALS:

The shared mindset is perhaps what makes them great co-hosts of the show. "It really boils down to the fact that I think we need to have a change in mindset," says Aaron. "[I want to] help people to take action, to get engaged, not just consume ... the more we give, the more we get."

Terry agrees. "My goal is to help people, especially people new to the industry, find the right information to help them be successful."

ADVICE:

What better way to help the new people than share some advice? "In every screen-printing class I teach, I hear about poor or completely incorrect information being shared [on the internet] on how the printing process works," notes Terry. "Try to find recognized experts and seek out more than one source on any particular subject."

"The most important piece of advice I can share is dive in," adds Aaron. "Be willing to share what you know, because you're bringing your experience to this as a person."

**"BE WILLING TO SHARE
WHAT YOU KNOW,
BECAUSE YOU'RE
BRINGING YOUR
EXPERIENCE TO THIS
AS A PERSON."**



LON WINTERS

Graphic Elephants

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Facebook - Lon R. Winters; **Instagram** - @graphicelephants;

Twitter - @graphicelephant; **YouTube** - GraphicElephants;

LinkedIn - Lon Winters

It's been said by more than one person in the industry that Lon Winters is the "Godfather of Screen Printing." Of course, there are many screen printers out there that do phenomenal work and know their craft, and Lon is among the best. On top of being active on nearly every social media platform, Lon has also been on the PRINTING United Alliance Apparel Decorators Committee for at least 15 years, and chaired it for the last four; has been a part of the Academy of Screen and Digital Printing Technologies (ASDPT) since 2013; and is a contributor and presenter for multiple trade publications and shows.

"The business has provided for my family and employees' families for 35 years," Lon says of Graphic Elephants. "[I've] always been passionate about giving back and contributing to the apparel decorators' community."

GOALS:

Lon is all about community. "Helping each other is critical," he notes. "I hope my experiences can help others not make some of the mistakes we have made. We all don't have to learn the hard way."

ADVICE:

While he pushes passion to those in the industry, he feels that when it comes to apparel decorating, community is his number-one pursuit. "Get involved in the community for the sake of community, and the value you will receive is tenfold the investment," he believes.

"GET INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY FOR THE SAKE OF COMMUNITY, AND THE VALUE YOU WILL RECEIVE IS TENFOLD THE INVESTMENT."



ERICH CAMPBELL

Industry Educator

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES:

Facebook – Erich Campbell; **LinkedIn** – Erich Campbell;
Instagram – @erichcampbell; **YouTube** – Erich Campbell

Around the decorated apparel industry, Erich Campbell is known as the embroidery guy. But it's really not that simple. "My specialty is embroidery with a specific focus on embroidery digitizing, but I've managed e-commerce sites and niche businesses throughout my career and still manage a decently large e-commerce channel," he explains.

In addition to seeing him hanging out with the likes of the 2 Regular Guys, you can also catch Erich doing his own things on social media: "Though Facebook is still a prime focus for a lot of embroidery groups, I engage and stream my weekly show live to multiple channels, primarily YouTube and LinkedIn, though you'll find me live on Twitter and Twitch."

GOALS:

Erich didn't have an easy start into the industry when it came to education, and he wants to change that, especially when it comes to the somewhat-complicated digitizing process. "When I was first digitizing, I had no local mentor, no access to classes or trade shows, no knowledge of industry publications," he says. "If I can help any digitizer or embroiderer who feels lost to get that little burst of confidence and the technical knowledge they need to move from their initial struggles into a place where they own their process and can create on their own terms, develop their own style and hand, that's success."

ADVICE:

There is so much to be learned from Erich, but it boils down to a few simple things: learn from mistakes and know your worth. "You will ruin garments. Forgive yourself now," he says. "Value yourself and sell on that value; you are here to help people and solve problems."

And for those looking for a little insight into embroidery specifically, he has some advice for that as well. "Embroidery isn't print, and that's OK," he says. "Sell it on its strengths, its texture, durability, and luxury, rather than apologize for its weaknesses or differences from other media."

**“VALUE YOURSELF AND
SELL ON THAT VALUE;
YOU ARE HERE
TO HELP PEOPLE
AND SOLVE PROBLEMS.”**

WHO WE ARE

APPARELIST

As the apparel decorating industry continues to change and evolve, we at the *Apparelist* recognize that businesses of every size must stay on top of those changes as well as trends and disruptive events. We provide a community that not only addresses these changes, but also offers resources and information that is trusted and reliable. Apparel decorating businesses across the industry can turn to this community as a genuine and authentic voice of support.



PRINTING United Alliance is a trade association built by and for printers and professionals in the industrial, graphic, garment, textile, electronics, packaging, and commercial printing markets. Alliance members grow their businesses through connections, resources, content, and education.