

Are You Considering a Digital Strategy?

Written By: Michelle Moxley

Presented By:

ROOUS
YOUR PARTNER IN PRINT

Thank You for downloading Your copy of Michelle Moxley's E-book, presented by #YourPartnerInPrint, and congratulations on taking this important step in establishing Your #ROQSolid and seamless bridge between screen & digital printing success!

We're grateful to provide You #EducationThatROQs - chock-full of hard-earned insights to position You with the most advantageous printing (and printing-business) knowledge and strategies.

Major thanks to Michelle Moxley for sharing her expertise with us. Michelle, and You, dear Reader, ROQ. #PressOnward!



Michelle Moxley



Home of "Fahrenheit AI"



Are You Considering a Digital Strategy?

The lines between new technology and traditional methods have blurred, and contemplating a digital strategy can seem monumental.

Whether you're a fledgling in the industry or a seasoned player, the question isn't whether you should consider a digital strategy but how to navigate these uncharted territories in your own factory.

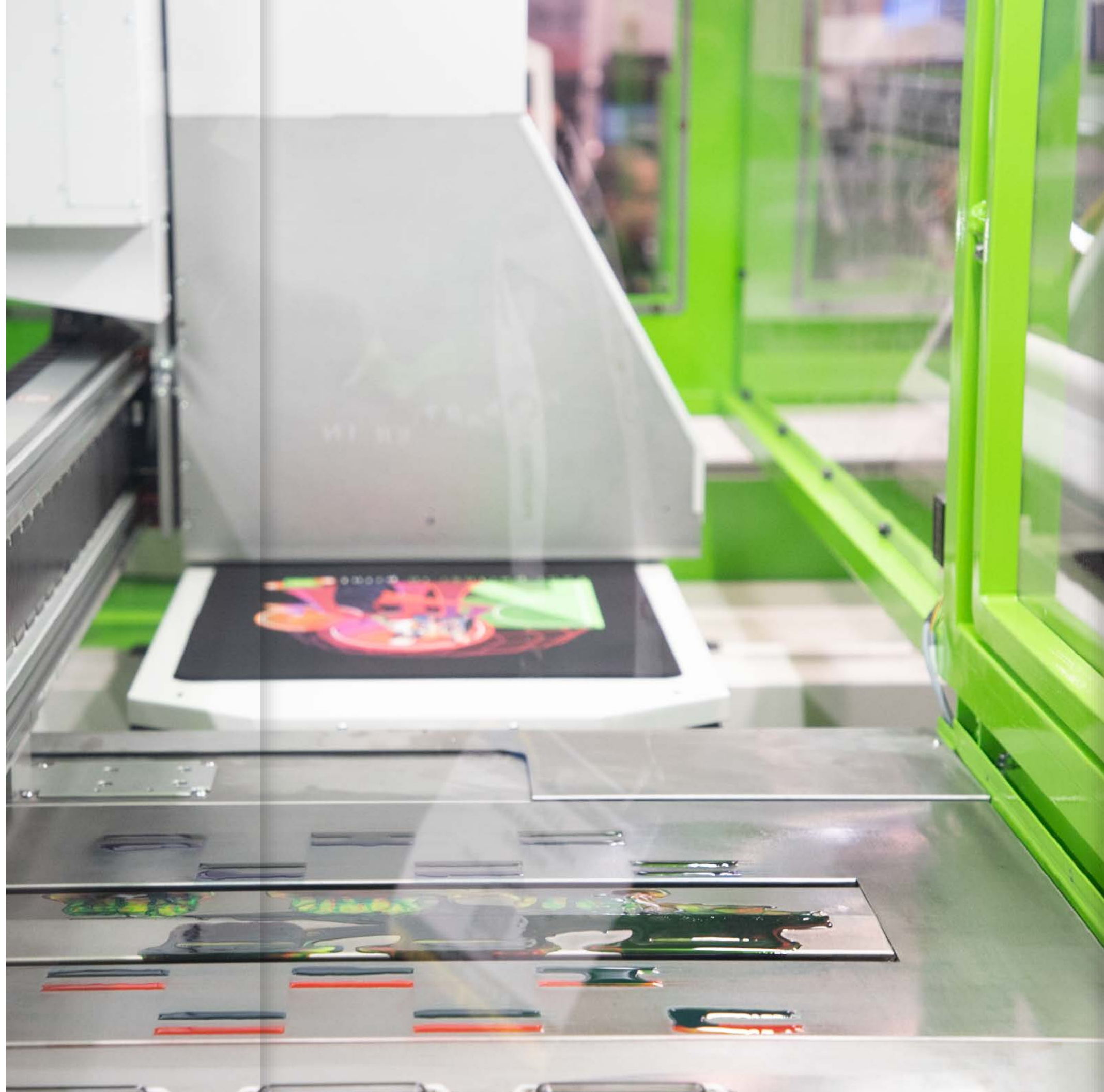
So, let's embark on this journey together. Explore the nuances of this changing landscape, potential pitfalls, and advantages of a well-crafted digital strategy.

What's out there? Hybrid printing is a technology that has been around for over a decade in our industry.

In recent years, it has come back into the limelight, nudged by the shifting landscape of our business. The current market has adopted the technology to reduce setups for trending small orders, partly due to the high volume of online ordering, the need to reduce inventory, and evolving brand strategies. Hybrid brings the high color count of Digital to the many advantages of screen printing.

In the world of digital printing, there are many variations to cater to the market's diverse needs, particularly when it comes to Print-On-Demand (POD) and single-volume orders. In the past, printers could turn away minor customizations during busy seasons due to inconvenience and low margins, and today many printers are finding a niche and lucrative model addressing these needs.

High-volume Digital for POD involves printing up to 250/hour of unique garments and unique images. This equipment has high capacity and needs volumes to keep it running; digital machines are not idle beasts. Smaller DTG units are often good starting points for those unfamiliar with digital, with graduation to high-volume units as a business grows.

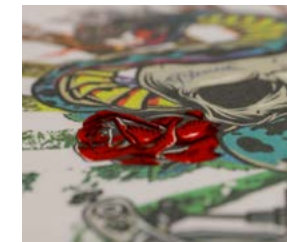




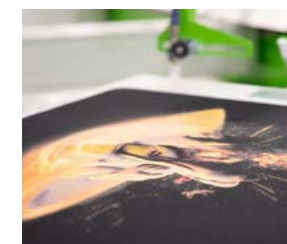
What is your current print strategy? What is your minimum? As with any new tech, outsourcing until you can handle a constant flow is often a good idea.

If you are considering Hybrid, find out who prints in your state. Find out who prints with the equipment you're considering, and outsource to them. Build a friendship, take advantage of the players in our industry that know the space, and learn from them.

Most of the industry is willing to share in today's market through social media, podcasts, and in-person and online learning events. I've recently had the experience of getting insurance for an RV, and my carrier didn't offer the service, so they directed me through divisions of their partner carriers. Many printers establish this practice before getting into digital-- to learn. Ask your supplier their opinion on any potential partners' environment and setup.



With Digital, find someone close to home with a good reputation, and that uses the equipment you're considering. Get your samples, wash them, and smell them. Check the inside of the garment. Finally, choose to outsource the products you are considering printing in-house later.



Become a volume-driven factory. Scheduling equipment based on its capabilities yields the most lucrative results. For example, a good rule of thumb is 36-144 is Hybrid, 1-36 is digital, and 144+ is screenprint. Are you considering POD? Do you have active POD sites?



Are they most active during Q4/Holiday? Most POD has a busy season that pays for their entire year with one season, which means downtime and idle equipment. Are you turning down small orders during a busy season? Are your minimums over 1? Do you know how to handle downtime on digital equipment?



It would be best to start analyzing what you're turning away and your workflow.

A moderate volume of single orders can bring in a new revenue stream if appropriately handled. Knowing the timeline of these volumes helps you build a digital strategy. A high volume of 36-144 orders is perfect for Hybrid. A low volume of 36-144 is a great place to start outsourcing to a partner and learn.

Knowing your current setup costs on orders with smaller volumes is also vital to introducing these new technologies. High color counts are perfect for hybrid and digital.

One of the weaker points of cost efficiency in screen is high color count. However, for some seasoned printers, this is niche and quite lucrative. It can be hard to play in that field, which requires a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be hard to acquire.



Remember that as brands and consumers become more familiar with digital, the aesthetic they are attracted to will shift in that direction.

What fabrics do you regularly print?

Anything outside of cotton requires more research and investment in digital. Polyesters, blends, and fleece can be easily transitioned to Hybrid.

Digital is more challenging in this space, there are solutions, but they're often stand-alone and costly. Testing with manufacturers, and ordering samples from print partners, is essential.





Often, transitioning customers is a complicated part of the journey.

What if they aren't pleased? What if they're split, and a younger crowd wants something new? One option is working with manufacturers to help transition customers ahead of purchase. Make sure only to develop something that you can reproduce.

But taking advantage of that service before purchase helps set expectations on all sides.

For your customer, it gives them a good idea of where you're headed and helps develop their expectations.

For the manufacturer, it allows them to understand what the market needs and what should be their future focus.

Offering specialty garments, blends, polyester, and special finishes is critical to maintaining a diverse customer base. Hybrid printing is capable, but this can be more limited in Digital. Durability plays an important role here. Establishing a durability standard and having a durability setup in your factory (washing machine, dryer, crocking, elasticity testing) will drive any new product integration.

Let's look at the **+ ADVANTAGES**
and **- CHALLENGES** of:

Hybrid // Digital

+ Variable data: Each print shares an under base, but the digital image can shift.

This is something new you can bring to your customer with Hybrid. If you're currently doing name drops, this is a much faster, more stylized way to offer that service.

+ Special effects/discharge: Maintaining technique can be critical if you've built a niche in the space.

Discharge can be one of the easiest places to learn Hybrid, using just two screens for full color. Special Effects can act as a top coat or a catching layer for Hybrid print, adding a multi-dimensional effect.

Special effects/discharge: Finding support for a growing technology can be challenging. You have to build a network of resources to support your growth. When compared to Digital, Hybrid is smaller, but is available.

+ - Special effects/discharge: For customers that insist on PMS matching out of Gamut to CMYK or Hex, you can add a screen to match color, and you can support any transitions with the digital art, so spot screens are minimized. Digital Color Management is another learning curve.

It has limitations of Gamut. In Hybrid space, it may require another screen.

+ - Setup costs: For traditional screen printing, setup costs become high as volumes reduce. With Hybrid, the reduced screen count and repetitive print model cut the setups dramatically and reduces cost.

For POD using high-speed Digital, your workflow of up to 250/hour printing different garments and images eliminates setup. If your model is automated, your prints arrive at the press. Using a volume driven model helps control set up costs, digital has a higher per unit cost and handles smaller volumes, hybrid meets in the middle.

+ - Durability: Hybrid printing incorporates screen printing, so durability matches traditional printing when done correctly.

Screen-making precision: EOM, Tension, and Imaging repeatability become MORE critical in a Hybrid print space. Digital is static. Digital doesn't forgive, so your screens, while less, need to be ON POINT.

- Turnover: Holding onto Digital print operators is challenging. It's not the same as a screen printer. It's not so much of a trade and can be seasonal work.

+ - Pretreatment: Pretreatment and Fusion sucks. It can stain, smell, and be challenging to work with.

There are some innovations in chemistry in the market, yet, it is one of the evils we currently have to accept when working in Digital. In Hybrid, on the other hand, no pretreatment.

+ - Resources/Support: Finding support for a growing technology can be challenging. You have to build a network of resources to support your growth.

When compared to Digital, Hybrid is smaller, but is available. With Digital, almost the opposite is true; there are many resources and a lot of support out there, maybe too much, be discerning.



THESE THINGS WE DO
SO OTHERS MAY PRINT.
- THE CREED OF THE ROQ.US TECH TEAM -



(Hybrid MUST HAVE)

High Solid Water Based Print Capability: Learning to print both High Solid Water Based and Hybrid is a lot.

If you do get into both at once, turn off the Hybrid and learn the water base, or you will set yourself back months.

(Hybrid & Digital MUST HAVE)

Environment: If you can keep an orchid alive in the room, you've got the equipment in the right environment.

The environment is as vital as maintenance. Hybrid is usually self-contained, but you may have to plumb some a/c or humidity in.

(Hybrid & Digital MUST HAVE)

Maintenance: This is the most critical aspect of getting into Hybrid/Digital. Are you leaning on your supplier too much? How much can you fix yourself?

How well do you understand your equipment? Due diligence in hiring for maintenance is critical. Do your research, check references, and be prudent. This person is taking care of your investment.

(Hybrid MUST HAVE)

Screen-making precision: EOM, Tension, and Imaging repeatability become MORE critical in a Hybrid print space.

Digital is static. Digital doesn't forgive, so your screens, while less, need to be ON POINT.

(Digital MUST HAVE)

DOWNTIME/Repair: Digital may have seasonal work that means significant downtime or setting up a seasonal repair schedule.

Preventative maintenance is worth more than its weight in Gold.



Reach out to Your ROQ Digital Printing Specialist: **John Murray**

[Book Time!](#)

When considering a digital strategy:



Attend trade shows,
Find industry partners to learn from,
Use consultants,
Get manufacturer samples.

Take your time and prepare your shop. Invest in proper environment and maintenance training. And don't worry, in this author's experience, the technology is changing, but not so fast that the technology needs have shifted.

The space is evolving and improving, but so are we, as printers, evolving to meet in the middle. An ideal environment and a well-trained maintenance crew are good for a factory with or without Digital on board... yet.

Follow along here for more information, next time learn how to transition customers to Hybrid prints.

Thanks and congrats again for downloading #YourPrintingSuccess!

Explore what the ROQ HYBRID can do for You here.

We look forward to finding out what You'd like to learn more about in other upcoming educational content – please email sales@roq.us or call 1-87-ROQ-IT-NOW (that's 877.674.8669) to share Your topic wishlist! ROQ on!

For more insightful tips and to have Your questions answered, please visit roq.us or call 1-87-ROQ-IT-NOW, that's 877.674.8669. Your ROQ Team is standing by to provide You a #GreenGloveExperience.

CONNECT ON SOCIAL



About ROQ.US:

Today's garment decorators need the most productive, most streamlined, and most reliable automated solutions to exponentially increase production and profits. Communities across America and beyond need the highest quality prints to express themselves meaningfully and reinforce togetherness. Our planet needs a coalition of businesses and consumers who demonstrate a commitment to sustainability to ensure our collective continued growth and wellness.

ROQ.US lives at the crossroads of these issues and strives to be an anchor for a shared prosperity in the digital & screen printing business, communal unity, and a flourishing Earth. We do that by partnering with businesses and providing them with the most technologically advanced printing machines and services that reduce the industry's environmental impact and reduce the needed overhead to succeed.

When You build on sand, You drift away with the tide. When You build your house on the ROQ, You propel from a solid foundation of integrity coupled with dependable automation for many years to come. #ROQYourWorld and #PressOnward with #YourPartnerInPrint!

roq.us

Download another insightful eBook to streamline Your operation and widen Your margins. ROQ on.

Download Here!