

Design and Marketing

John sourced his base t-shirt product from a supplier in Shanghai, China, with whom he corresponded frequently by e-mail to keep track of schedules, payments, and deliveries. His eco-friendly, water-based inks were sourced from an online wholesaler and his in-house silk-screening technology consisted of an Odyssey 6-color, 4-station press, a Primus Manual Flash-Cure Unit, a Powerhouse 2608 Quartz Conveyor Dryer, a Point1000 Screen Exposure System, and a Wash-It Screen Developing/Recycling Booth.

John's eco-friendly and hypoallergenic t-shirts contained 70 percent bamboo fiber and 30 percent cotton. His shirts were breathable and sweat absorbent, had thermal regulation characteristics, and were naturally ultraviolet (UV)-repellent. He carried his shirts in five basic colors and had a range of sizes for both men and women. John had only two pricing ranges which kept his books simple: silk-screened shirts were \$25.00, while hand-painted shirts were \$50.00.

During the design phase, John drew his designs in freehand. He scanned and stored the designs for each t-shirt on a hard drive along with the designs of his closest competitors. He also scanned and stored the import and customs documents of the company on his computer and hard drive. As part of the production process, John documented the inks he used and their color variations in a spreadsheet. Retention and easy retrieval of this data ensured that future production runs of popular t-shirts would always be identical to the earlier runs.

Once each shirt was completed, photographs were taken in the studio and edited. For Amazon, the photographs' backgrounds were bulk processed using Photoshop to ensure that all backgrounds were pure white as required by Amazon instead of the light gray background ArtShirts featured on their Web site catalog photographs. The photographs used in the two Web sites were also used in ArtShirts's marketing materials. The product photographs along with a spreadsheet detailing the product description, sku code, UPC code, size, color, and pricing variations were then stored on a hard drive. This information was updated on the ArtShirts and Amazon Web sites daily. In addition, variations of the ArtShirts logos were also created and stored to quickly provide to other third parties, such as the eco-blogger community, who wished to feature the ArtShirts brand on their Web sites. John also retained sales information for each item sold on his Web site along with tax-collection and remittance data for audit purposes.

There were a small number of eco-friendly companies, such as onnotextiles.com, bambooya.com, bamboclothes.com, and moseau.com, selling bamboo-cotton t-shirts online. However, none of them were offering artistic and trendy products like those offered by John's company. To market his brand successfully and to compete with these companies, John had to increase his online presence. He used Google's paid-search campaign service to cheaply advertise his products. The company stored Google paid-search keyword bulk sheets which included information on average cost and rank per keyword. Retaining this information helped John and his team to monitor costs, to see his return on investment (ROI) performance for each keyword, and to upload cost and status changes directly to the search engines.

John also created and uploaded a few quirky videos on YouTube showing people running a marathon, swimming, and working outdoors in his t-shirts with the hope of the videos going viral.