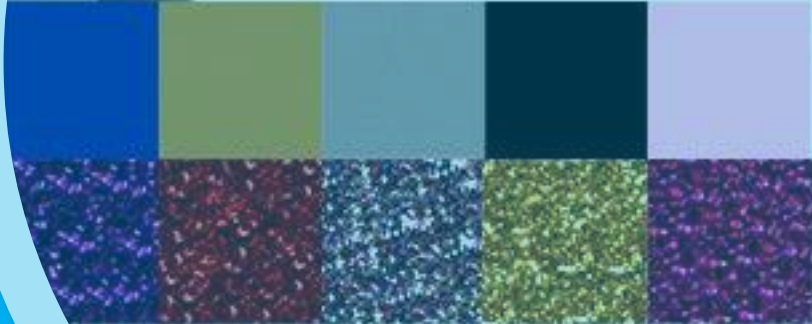
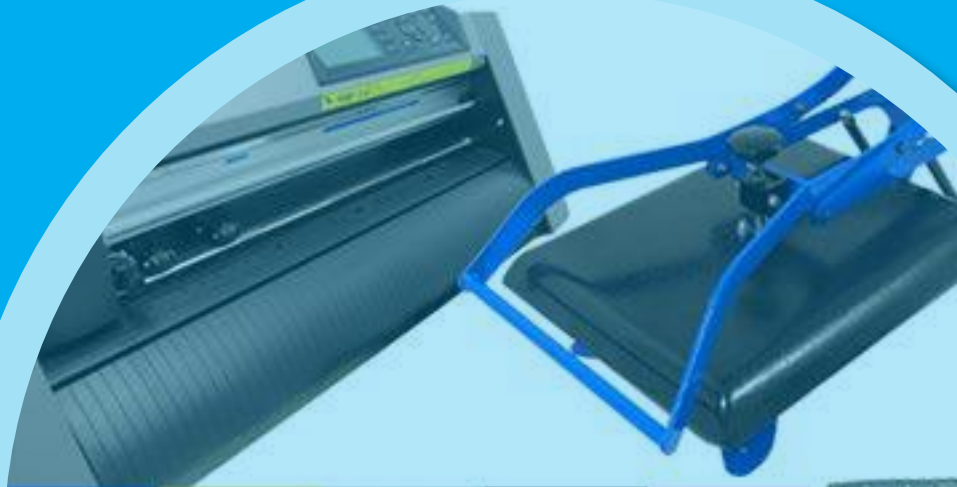


<http://colmanandcompany.com/cutnpress.html>

**cutnPress**  
CUSTOM T-SHIRT SYSTEM

# Starting a Custom Apparel Business



Ten - 15" x 5 yards rolls

## Starting a Custom Apparel Business

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There's a reason that starting a custom t shirt company is always at the top of the popularity charts for entrepreneurs, because in addition to appealing to the creative spirit of potential business owners, the low cost of entry is very attractive.

Starting up any small business is a challenge and poses various risks, and the custom apparel business is no different. BUT, if you plan well you will have a great chance of succeeding!

While the apparel or custom apparel business isn't just based on custom t shirts, it is the foundational product for many. T-shirts are a staple of the global wardrobe and it seems that we have an unending appetite for new design, clever graphics or sayings. So the following pages do discuss hoodies, pants and accessories in passing, but the bulk of it will be devoted to the bulk of the market, the t-shirt itself.

Of course, one of the reasons why the idea of starting a t-shirt business is appealing is because you can start off from your home or garage. The equipment doesn't take up much space and that means you can maximize profits. With time, and if that's your goal, you can establish your business and turn it into a retail store or mall success.

Sounds interesting? Read on.

## So... What's Next?

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Now it's time to hash out a plan and figure out what **your business** is going to be about and how you will put it all together for success. The topics we will cover are:

1. Picking Your Niche
2. Making a Business Plan
3. Legal Aspects & Money
4. Getting New Business
5. How the Cut n Press Works
6. Starting Your Business

Let's get started!

## Picking Your Niche

So what is a Niche? It is a special area of demand for a product, a market segment. In other words, it's a group of people, who buy specific items. If you are into youth sports, you might be looking to make shirts and uniforms for little league teams. If you are into music, you might make band t-shirts. If you work in the school system, you could be looking to make shirts for local high schools. No matter what you want to do, it is important to think of at least one market segment or niche.

What are the niches you want to make apparel for?

<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Dance Teams	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleading	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Wear
<input type="checkbox"/> Funny T Shirts	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Wear	<input type="checkbox"/> Band Tees
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Apparel
<input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Pride	<input type="checkbox"/> Political Support
<b>YOUR OWN IDEAS</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

It's important to pick some specific areas where you can succeed. If you are having a hard time deciding, don't worry, it will come to you. Think about the groups you are involved in, the people you know and the passions you have. Once you have a target market, then you are ready to make a plan.



**A FAST AND EASY  
WAY TO MAKE  
CUSTOM APPAREL**

## Making a Business Plan

Putting all difficult things aside, a business plan is nothing but a guide to help you start your business and run it in a profitable manner. The business plan should include information on what type of business you are planning to start, what your goals are and how you plan to achieve them.

Will you open up a store or will you be selling your t-shirts online? Will you be working with other people or will you be the only one managing the business? How will you get customers?

A business plan should be able to answer the questions above, along with others. Do not let the idea of creating a business plan worry you – this is not a term paper nor is it a formal document that you need to show others. It's just something that will help you understand how you plan to conduct business.

*If you are looking to get investment or financial assistance from someone, a business plan will help them realize you are serious about success.*

### Mission and Long Term Goals

You must have a mission if you are starting a business. What is your mission? Is it to become a renowned t-shirt brand one day? Or is it to become famous for quality t-shirts in your town?



Whatever your mission, this is the time to write it down. Once you have a mission, you can write down each of your goals as well as how you plan to achieve them.

While it may seem to you that your mission or goals are too far-fetched, ignore this. Remember that a lot of businesses started off from homes and later grew to become huge businesses having national presence.

### ***What is your mission?***

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### ***What are your goals?***

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### ***Example***

#### ***Mission:***

*To create great apparel for the youth of America. Provide shirts that are fashionable, fun and give a positive message.*

#### ***Goals:***

- *Become known in my city as the best custom t shirt designer*
- *Have a website that is visited by people all over the country*
- *Sell \$10,000 in shirts a month*
- *Start a charitable organization for underprivileged youth*

## Short Term Goals

Writing down your short term goals is extremely important. This is how you will track your ideas and make sure you accomplish them. Everyone has had great ideas for businesses, but how many people accomplish them? One of the reasons people let things go by for months and years is because they don't set short term goals. What are some things you want to accomplish in the next week? Next month? Next year?

### *What are you short term goals?*

**This week:**

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**This month:**

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**This year:**

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*Example***This week:**

- *Think of a business name*
- *Write down name of 5 people who I could talk to about making apparel for them*
- *Learn more about custom t shirt production*

**This month:**

- *Order my t shirt system*
- *Get set up with a shirt supplier*
- *Register my business name*

**This year:**

- *Sell 1000 t shirts*
- *Get set up making uniforms for at least 10 little league teams*
- *Get business that support local youth to use my company for custom apparel*

**Plan for achieving goals**

This part can sound intimidating, but it's just some basic ideas. You will most likely change all or some of these ideas, but it is your starting point for achieving your goals. Are you planning to set meetings with people in your community? Going to build a website? Learn how to advertise on facebook or google? Perfect your t shirt making techniques? Draw out designs?

***What are some specific things you will do to make sure you achieve your goals?***

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## Identify your customers

This is the niche we spoke about in the beginning of this guide. Write down as many specific people or groups you can get to buy custom apparel from you. The more you can write down the better, be specific. If you are going to say “high school students,” then write down the name of specific schools. If you are thinking small businesses, then think of the names of some specific businesses or industrial business parks you plan to visit. If you are going to sell women’s apparel, target specific ages groups or interests like “women who like rock music.” This is a time to let your creative spirit shine.

*What are some groups of people who will buy your apparel?*

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## Create a budget

This isn’t about having a degree in finance or being an accountant, it’s about tracking possible expenses and planning out how much money you need or want to have upfront. You should also plan on monthly expenses too, for example if you are going to have a website, what are your hosting costs?

Here are some initial costs to consider.

Description	Cost	Description	Cost
Equipment		Business Registration	
Website		Business Cards	
Web Hosting		Flyers	
Samples		Phone	



Do your best to be detailed and put aside some extra money for unexpected expenses whenever possible. Keep track of this over time. In fact, it's great to invest in some small business accounting software if you can, it will help you keep money on track.

### Summarize your plan

The last part of your plan is just a simple summary and review. Be sure to outline your goals and put together a quick description for your plan. Most likely you will have friends, relatives or business partners that will ask about your business. You will find yourself more confident if you have a quick 5-10 sentence summary of your plan.

#### *Example*

*Start a small business focused on youth apparel that is fashionable and provides a positive message; working with organizations that promote a healthy environment for today's youth. The company will start by working with schools, sports clubs and businesses that support local youth. I will work with them to create high quality and affordable custom apparel while building towards a goal of a nationally recognized brand. This goal will further be supported through a website and targeting advertising on facebook and other online forums that would reach the company's target markets.*



## Legal Aspects and Money

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A number of legal aspects are involved when it comes to starting your own business. These shouldn't be ignored as it could lead to headaches and trouble in the future.

This is why it's absolutely important that you spend some time to read and understand these legal issues so that you do not face any problems later on.

### Is Your Name Legal?

Before you head out and start to print your business cards, you will have to make sure that the name you give to your business is not already being used by other businesses out there. In most of the cases, you will not have to get in touch with an attorney; you can simply carry out an online search to see whether that particular name is registered with your state. This search will reveal if the name is available in your state. Just do an online search for "{your state} business registration." For example, searching "Florida Business Registration" will bring up the state of Florida's website, sunbiz.org and the Small Business Association(SBA). All three of these will provide information on how to register your business name. They will also provide info on how to legally start your business.



***Although this information may be intimidating at first, it isn't hard to do. You can most likely contact your state via phone or email to get further instructions on how to do it. A small fee and a few online forms and you are officially in business!***

You can also consult an attorney to get your business up and running. There will be local companies that help new businesses get up and running. This is not legally necessary though; this is just a way to help you get going on the right track.

## Get Your Federal Tax ID Number

In order to establish your company as a separate legal entity, you will need to get a Federal Tax Identification Number. This is also referred to as the Employer Identification Number (EIN). This is issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and is quite similar to your social security number. Through this number, the IRS can track whatever transactions your business makes.

This information should also be provided when you are on your state website for creating your business. Also remember, when in doubt, contact a professional who handles these matters, such as an attorney. However, your state should be able to provide you all the info you need.

## Setting up a bank account

In order to accept payments and checks to your new business name, you will need to set up a bank account. You will have to complete the steps above in order to get this account. Most banks offer great small business plans, so contact your local banker and they can point you in the right direction.

## Do you have to do all of this?

Well there are plenty of options for small businesses. You can be a sole proprietor and run your business through your social security number, or you can start a corporation. The best advice is to just look up the information in your state small business registration area. They will have tons of information for you.



This is also a good time to seek advice from friends and family who own a business or consult with an attorney. Just don't let this step stop you from achieving your dream or put you in a sticky situation where you are operating under a name of another business.

**Once this is done you are ready to legally start making money with your new business!**

## Getting New Business

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You are at the point where it's time to make money! This is an exciting time, but where do you get your first customers? This is where fear can take over and businesses can fail. You are different though; you have prepared and are driven to succeed! So here are a few ways to get new business that won't cost you tons of time or money.

### Talk about your business

This one is so easy and it absolutely will work for you. Remember above, how you wrote down a few sentences about your business plan? Well just adjust this into a short "elevator pitch." Essentially if you just met someone in an elevator, it should be short enough where you can describe what you do before you get to your floor. Any time you meet someone new, be prepared to deliver this. Remember, this isn't a sales pitch; you are just sharing what you do. Then at the end, pass off your business card and say, "If you ever need custom apparel or know anyone that does, feel free to contact me." That's it. Just tell people what you do. If you are passionate about it, this one will be easy.

### Networking

This is another one that is easy, but will require a little more time. This one could also be called, Attend Events. If there is a local town hall meeting, a social event, a luncheon, a dinner, a small business association, a school board meeting, a church group, a school event or anything alike... go to it. Just meet new people and make sure they know what you do. This one absolutely works!

### Business Referral Sharing

Is there a local sign shop or printing shop? Who do they send t shirt referrals to? If someone is printing a sign, they most like-



ly have apparel for that same business. This is the same for accountants, lawyers, promotional item stores, web developers, etc. Build a small network of people that will refer people to you. The most important thing to do is work on referring people to them **first**. They will notice this and want to reciprocate. Even if they don't refer people to you right away, just continue on the path and you will get referral business coming in.

### Ask your customers

Every time you finish a job for a customer, ask for referrals. *"If you know anyone else who could use my services, please let them know"* or even better, *"Who else do you know that might need some custom apparel soon? Is it ok if I tell them you referred me?"* This one is simple and works great; if you did a great job they will be happy to refer you business.

### Local Advertising

This is where we start getting into investing money, so it's wise to not go crazy at first. Find some local places where you can advertise within your budget. These can include any of the following:

- Advertise at local youth sports park
- Be a sponsor at a charity event
- Small local print publications and papers
- Restroom signs in bars and restaurants
- Sponsor a local sports team, little league, football, etc
- Local parks and recreations

These are just some examples. Just be sure to start small, find ads that work and then go bigger. These work, but do require more planning.

### Online Ads

Advertising online can be the most lucrative, but also cost the most. You can quickly spend a lot of money online without getting any business from it. Just do your research and learn how the systems work. If you are going to advertise on Facebook, Google or Bing... make sure you have learned how it works and test your ads.

## Phones

Selling on the phone requires a certain personality and thick skin. People aren't always nice when you are calling on the phone to promote your business. However, if you have a brief pitch and word things correctly, it can be extremely effective. The best part is you can do it anywhere. Here are some tips:

- **Set a goal for the call.** Are you just trying to get the name of the person who makes decisions? Or maybe you are just calling to advise of your new business? Set a meeting? Possibly you are just asking, "I wanted to know if you had any needs for custom t shirts and apparel."
- **Make a lot of calls.** Don't just call 10 businesses and get discouraged if it doesn't work out. You have to plan to make many calls, and probably call some of these people back. Set a goal to make calls to 100 local businesses and then follow up with the calls that sounded promising.
- **Keep your promises.** If you say you will email them info, do it. If you say you will call back, call back. If you promise a sample, send it. This is your opportunity to prove you are a great business person.
- **Take notes.** You can start with a note pad and pen. You can even get more sophisticated with a CRM (google that if you want to pay for sales software). Just make sure to take notes on every call. Who you spoke to, if you should call back and what happened on the call.
- **Follow up.** If you have a good conversation with someone, be sure to follow up with them. This could be with an email, an in-person visit or another call.

Just remember that selling on the phone isn't always easy, but it's very effective.

## Visit local businesses

Door to door sales!? Well, kind of, yes. It's not exactly that though, you aren't trying to sell shirts to these businesses, people or organizations. You are letting them know you are around to help them. Be prepared to smile, pass out cards, give out flyers and say "Have a great day" 100 times. Just

let people know who you are and soon you will have tons of conversations about custom apparel!

## Get Creative

You have the power to do whatever you want to get new business. Give out samples, wear your artwork, send out letters, make funny videos, put a sticker on your car window, put a sign in your yard... whatever. Get creative and look at what other businesses are doing. There are tons of ways to drum up new customers. If you have it on your mind, you will find the methods that work perfect for you and your business.

## How the Cut n Press Works

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The reason you downloaded this guide is because you checked out our Cut n Press Custom T Shirt System, so we might as well give you a brief overview of how it works and what it does.

The Cut n Press system uses a cutting plotter, heat apply materials and a heat press. These materials will make high quality shirts that feel great, look awesome and wash excellent. Let's go through each of these items and talk about what they are, and then go through the steps of creating a shirt.

### Cutting Plotter

A cutting plotter is a machine that uses a small blade to *cut out* designs from various materials. These machines can cut materials for signage, cards, stickers... and of course, t shirts. You will put rolls of material in the



machine and then use software to design shirts. When you press *Send to Cutter*, the machine will feed the material in and cut out your design. Now this design is ready to be put onto a t shirt.

## Heat Apply Materials

You will use various types of vinyl materials to be heat applied to apparel. These materials come in solid colors, multi-colors, glitter, metallic and more. They are thin, yet robust. They won't crack, peel or wrinkle easily. The colors stay vibrant after washing and look awesome. You also will find that the material is comfortable to wear and your customers will be very satisfied with the finished product.

## Heat Press

A heat press is a big flat iron. You will use it to apply heat and pressure to apparel and the heat apply materials. Once you apply the materials to a shirt with a heat press, it is a near permanent bond. You are now making custom t shirts!



## The Steps to Creating Custom T Shirts and Apparel

- 1. Design your shirt.** Use the software provided to design what you want on your apparel. Lettering, custom art or images provided by your customers.
- 2. Choose your material.** Are you using a solid color or glitter? Or are you combining multiple colors? Once you pick, put your material in your cutter.
- 3. Cut your material.** Just send the design to your cutter like you use a printer. You click a button and the machine goes to work.







4. **Weed the material.** Once the material is cut, you want to remove the excess material you don't want on your shirt (a.k.a. weeding). This peels away very easily. If you have an intricate design, you can use weeding tools to get into small areas.
5. **Set on the garment.** The material will have a sticky backing to it. So you can place and remove the material to get an alignment. Once you see it looks good, it's ready to be permanently placed.
6. **Heat Apply.** Now just take your shirt, jersey, tote bag, apron or whatever and heat apply the material. Essentially put in on the heat press, push it down and let it sit for about 10 seconds.
7. **Done!** You have made custom apparel. If you had to do 50 of them, you could have cut out all 50 designs at once. Then heat applied one after the other. It's really that easy!

The Cut n Press System really puts your imagination to the test. There are tons of things you can do. Some examples are:

<b>T Shirts</b>	<b>Sports Jerseys</b>	<b>Jackets</b>	<b>Hoodies</b>	<b>Sweaters</b>
<b>Hats</b>	<b>Tote Bags</b>	<b>Pants</b>	<b>Fitness Apparel</b>	<b>Shirt Sleeves</b>
<b>Stickers</b>	<b>Uniforms</b>	<b>Shorts</b>	<b>Golf Shirts</b>	<b>Jeans</b>

## Starting Your Business

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The power is now in your hands. The knowledge in this guide is exactly what you need to get things going, but where do you start? That is always the question that gets people stuck, they aren't sure where to start, so they just don't. You shouldn't get caught in this trap, because there is no bad place to start... that is the secret! Some people want to start talking to people about their business right away to see potential for income. Others want to spend time making designs and artwork. Most want to start learning the process of making t shirts so they can perfect their new craft.

No matter what you decide, we are here to help. Colman and Company has helped thousands of people in the apparel industry. We work with large businesses and small. We have seen people grow from bedroom businesses to storefronts. We have seen people grow from buying small orders of supplies, to bulk purchases. You could be our next success story!

**You can have your own successful t shirt  
business starting right now!**

Ready to get started?

**[You can order your Cut n Press here.](#)**

Still need more help? Call or email us.

**800-891-1094**

**[sales@colmanandcompany.com](mailto:sales@colmanandcompany.com)**

One of our friendly apparel experts will be happy to answer all of your questions.