



Financing and Budget



How to choose the right press based on your business needs



Timeframe - How long do you have to wait?



Learn more about additional expenses



What does the future hold with an automatic press?



What you need to know before purchasing an automatic screen printing machine

Why an automatic screen printing machine?

Choosing the right screen printing press for your business can be a difficult decision, especially if you don't know exactly where your business stands. There are a number of factors to consider before purchasing the best automatic press for your business's current and future needs.



The main reason to switch to an automatic press is if you're regularly struggling to meet your customers' existing demands with a manual machine. If you know consistent business opportunities exist in your area but you can't print fast enough to take advantage of them, it might be time to upgrade to an automatic.

There are many variables to account for when identifying the best equipment for your business. You need to explore the impact an automatic screen printing press will have on the business itself and your bottom line. Some ramifications of an automatic press may not be apparent at first – you may not consider them or the manufacturer may not address them in literature or website descriptions.

If you feel like an automatic press is the right fit for you, here are some factors to think about first:

What you need to know before purchasing an automatic press

There are a number of factors to consider before purchasing an automatic press while staying focused on your business needs.



The Business Plan

Take a closer look at your business and come up with an effective business plan.



Financing and Budget

Crunching the numbers will give you an idea of how much you can afford to invest.



What are your needs

Your current and future business needs will have an impact on the press you'll choose.



Types, Features, Options

Choose from different press types: pneumatic, hybrids or all-electric.



Timeframe

Understanding why and how long you have to wait for your automatic press.



Incremental Costs

Be prepared for some additional expenses, aside from the purchasing cost.



Location, Location, Location

Upgrading to an automatic press may also require some changes in your location.



Be prepared for the future

Enjoy increased productivity and profits, but be prepared for higher expenses too.



Conclusion

Making the best decision for your business based on correct information.

The Business Plan



Your roadmap to success

We all want the latest piece of technology in our shops, but before making any rash decisions you might end up regretting, take a close look at your business and come up with a solid business plan. Ask yourself these significant questions and answer them truthfully in order to determine if your reasons for upgrading to an automatic press are valid.

- +** Why do you need an automatic press?
- +** Do you regularly receive orders of 300+ pieces? Are you meeting this demand adequately with your current press?
- +** How do you see your business evolving in the next five years? Do you see expanded business opportunities?

Your business plan should include your budget, the type of business you are running, and what your customers usually need from you. This will also help you determine the volume and quality of printing you need to be ready to supply. Taking the time to write down important information about your screen printing operation can help you make the best decision. After all, numbers don't lie.

Financing - Determine your budget

1. The budget

Crunching the numbers will also give you a pretty good idea of how much you can afford to invest in an automatic press.

Even though you see your business constantly growing in the next few years, you should also make sure you're not drying out your financial resources in an attempt to meet your anticipated needs.

2. What to buy

It's okay to buy a "stepping stone" machine for starters, and then swap it for a bigger press or add a new one as your production expands. Most importantly, make sure there is enough business available to justify whatever press you're operating.

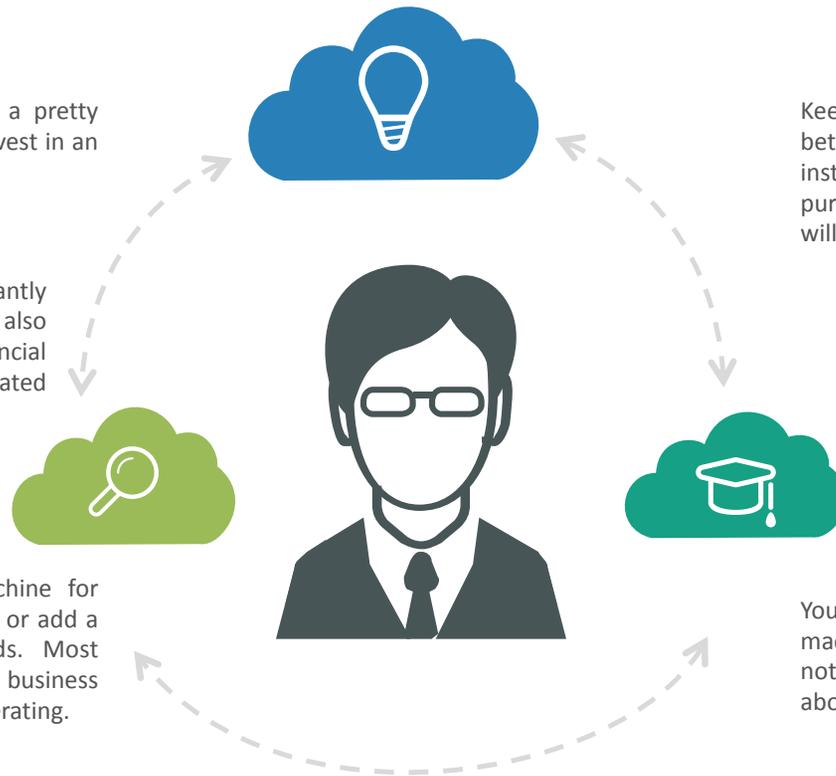
3. Pricing

Keep in mind that automatic presses usually run between \$20,000 and \$200,000 – so after adding freight, installation, training and other costs to the initial purchase price, your investment in an automatic press will be a minimum of \$25,000.

4. Do your research

Spend some time exploring different leasing companies and be prepared to seek financing or leasing. The amount is up to you, but make sure it makes sense in the long run.

Your monthly payment can be \$1,000, but that new machine can bring you \$10,000 worth of business. It's not always about the amount of the payment, it's also about the quality and efficiency of the new equipment.



What do you need



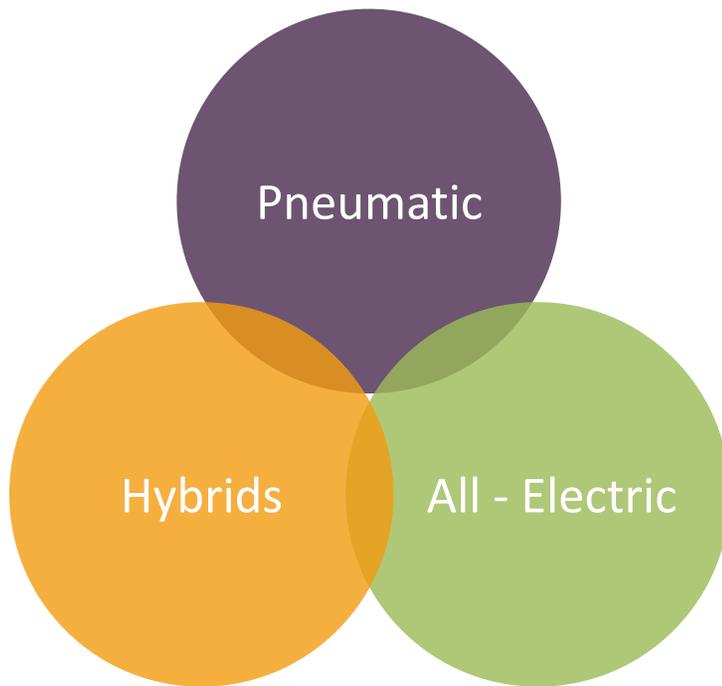
Your current, and most importantly your future, business needs will definitely have an impact on the budget you are willing to spend on an automatic screen printing machine. You can either choose a small, relatively inexpensive model or you can go for a bigger, more powerful press.

It all depends on what you need your automatic press to deliver, so consider the number of colors, image size, flash cure capabilities and other options before making a decision. The volume you expect to print will help determine the production speed requirements, so think about how many pieces you will need to print per hour to meet your customers' demand.

Decide on your maximum print area and the number of colors you are looking to print. It's all about what your customers want. Remember, while you might be used to printing simple one or two color designs on your old manual press, an automatic will open a huge variety of new possibilities. If you've passed up complex jobs in the past because your old press couldn't handle it, an automatic will let you tackle these orders.

However, keep in mind that a press advertised as eight colors is not necessarily going to print eight colors. On a manual press, flash curing doesn't use a print head. On an automatic press, a flash cure unit will most likely replace one of the print heads. It may be necessary to dedicate one station to a white under base or a cooling station, reducing the number of colors you can print. Now in reality, that eight color press becomes a six color press.

Types, Features and Options



01 Types

There are generally three different types of automatic presses you can choose from: pneumatic, hybrid or all-electric. Each comes with different advantages and a different price tag. For example, an all-electric press will mean a higher initial investment, but thanks to reduced operational and maintenance costs and improved efficiency, the total cost of ownership over the automatic's lifetime is lower than with a pneumatic press.

02 Features

Make sure you evaluate the machines' features and choose the one that fits your specific needs. Screen size is an important feature, and although a 23" x 31" screen can be enough for now, you should think about whether you'll need a bigger one in the future.

03 Options

There's no reason to overbuy, but if you feel like you're going to lose some customers along the way because you don't have the right equipment, then a bigger machine could be worth it. Think about how nice it would be to be able to say to your customers: "Whatever you need, think of me first because I can deliver".

Timeframe



How long does it take to get an automatic press in your shop?

Now that you've made all the important considerations and decided on the perfect automatic screen printing machine for your business, it's time to be realistic and understand that getting an automatic into your shop won't happen overnight. Placing an order is only one step towards greater production.

You will need to arrange financing, wait patiently while the press is being custom built just for you, prep your shop for installation, install the equipment and get trained to operate it. All of this adds up to approximately three months or more before you print your first shirt.

- Arrange financing
- Wait for the press to be custom built
- Prep your shop
- Install the equipment
- Get training
- Prep your new screen for the shift

Incremental costs

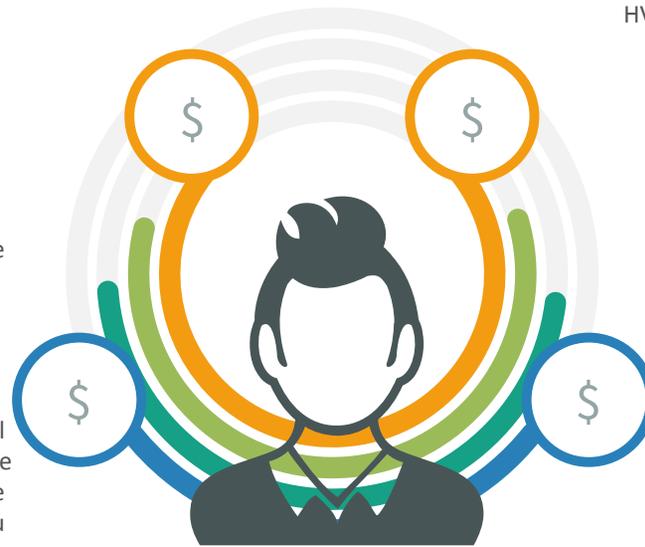
Unfortunately, purchasing an automatic screen printing press is not as simple as purchasing some other type of equipment. It's a large, complex machine and requires time to build and additional expenses to set up, aside from the purchase cost.



Depending on your location, freight alone can be anywhere from \$750 to several thousand dollars. However, this doesn't include getting the equipment off the truck and into your building. To do that, you will need to rent a forklift if you don't have one (\$200+). Depending on the available space at your building, it will either need standard or extended forks to get your press in place.



Installation, airfare and expenses for the installer will probably be another \$1500+. Assembling the press will take up to a few days, so you should be patient. After the installation is complete, the technician will likely tell you everything you need to know about setting up and properly operating it.



If you feel like that's not enough, you can always invest in some workshops or training classes. You will also need to hire an electrician to hardwire the compressor, press, dryer and flash unit (\$400+), and if you've purchased a gas dryer you will need a HVAC professional to vent the dryer.



If you've decided to go with a pneumatic screen printing machine instead of an all-electric one, you will also need to purchase a compressor with chiller (\$2500+), air hoses, fittings and other parts (\$200+). When you go from a manual press to an automatic it's also a good idea to bump up the screen mesh count. A mesh count for an automatic press shouldn't be lower than 125.



Depending on your customer base, you may need to purchase different size pallets for printing kids t-shirts, for example. You need to be prepared for all of these extra expenses.

Location Location Location



Upgrading to an automatic press may also require some changes in your location. Depending on the size of the machine and your current workspace, you may want to consider restructuring your shop or moving to a more spacious location. Printing higher volumes with an automatic press may also require more storage space for garments and supplies, so the size of the press itself is not the only reason to move to a bigger location.

You should also research if your building is zoned for heavy machinery and check with the businesses around you if you are allowed to install such a press and if it will cause any problems. Shop layout is also important. You need to make sure the press will fit through the door and that there's enough room for the technicians to install and position it properly, and enough room for the operators to run the press once it's up and running.

Be prepared for the future

An automatic press will definitely mean an increased productivity and higher profits, but it will also mean higher expenses?



An automatic press will definitely mean increased productivity and higher profits if there's enough business to support it, but it will also mean higher expenses. Like any machine, over the lifetime of a screen printing press, certain parts are prone to break. It is in your best interest to be prepared for this and purchase small replacement parts as inventory before you need them.

You need to be prepared ahead of time for upgrading to automatic equipment. Keep in mind that an automatic press may require an increase in everything from shop space to the number of jobs you need to take to offset the cost of owning and operating the machine.

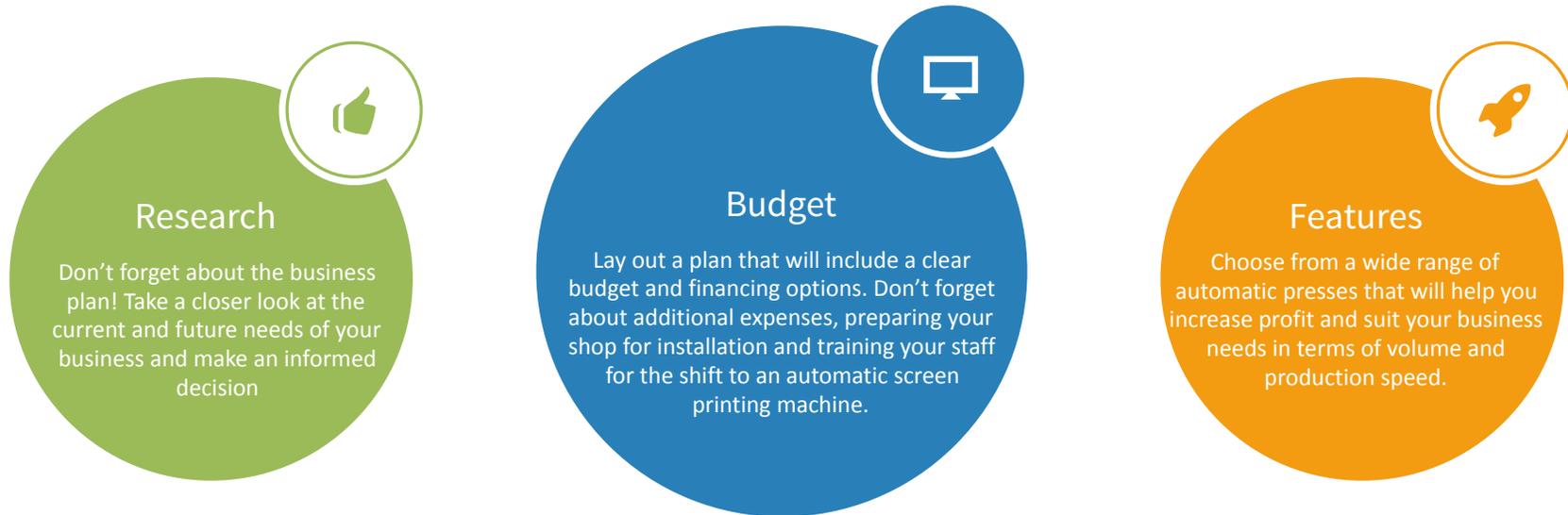
You'll need to be prepared to purchase additional equipment to support the press, and pay higher utility bills to power everything. You'll need a dryer fast and powerful enough to keep up with increased production, and an air compressor and chiller that can meet the air consumption needs of the press.

The electricity bill when running an automatic press is another expense you need to be prepared for, and if you're considering moving to a different location because you need more space, you may also want to consider a location with access to three-phase power to help save some money. Make sure your ventilation/exhaust system meets your needs and always pay attention to expenses.

Last but not least, even with an automatic press human resources still play an important role, because you can only print as fast as you can load and unload. Make sure your staff is well trained and that they are aware of the machine's safety features – and that those features are working properly.

Conclusion

Purchasing an automatic press can make or break your business if you don't make the decision for the right reason.



Do your research and decide on the best time to upgrade from a manual press to an automatic, and also decide on the amount you are willing to invest to make the change. Keep an eye out for additional expenses you will have to face, like moving to a bigger location, adding equipment or freight and installation costs, and you should be good to go.



Anatol offers a full range of screen printing presses, dryers and accessories focused on quality and production scaling that matter to both you and your customers. Imagine a range of easy-to-learn and easy-to-use screen printing equipment tailored to your needs, designed for your business size and dedicated to growing your business through happy customers who recognize quality and precision.

Since 1982 we've been sharing more than our passion for designing the most technologically advanced equipment...we share our resourcefulness, integrity and strength for innovation that only a manufacturing company with the strongest engineering team and supportive, dedicated experts in sales and service can offer.

To learn more about Anatol's equipment solutions visit www.anatol.com or call our direct sales team at 847-367-9760.