

Embroidered Patches vs. Direct Embroidery by Mary Van Horn

Customers frequently question whether to use patches or direct embroidery and there is no simple answer as to which is most appropriate. Certainly, direct embroidery onto a garment is a luxurious way to get a logo or message across, however it is extremely expensive. Although there is no exact guide as to which is appropriate, perhaps a look at some of the factors to consider will ease your decision making process.

The first question is a direct cost comparison. In this regard, the patch generally wins hands down. As we manufacture almost all of our patches using the most modern equipment available, we are able to completely assemble the finest quality patch at a mere fraction of the cost of directly embroidering onto a garment. This is simply because direct embroidery is a very labor-intensive process that generally involves taking pre-existing products and running them through a secondary embroidery process. We are able to manufacture patches without considering the product to which they will be applied. With the use of patches it is not necessary to make a preliminary investment in garments or products that may be required over a substantial period of time. Simply put, you purchase the products as you need them and simply apply the patch that has already been made. The patches are also reusable in most situations and therefore the useful life of a single patch may extend through use on several garments. Our customers frequently purchase a supply of patches that will last a year or more to save on production costs and then send these patches as needed to their uniform suppliers as needed. They eliminate the cost of holding inventory in large quantities and sizes in anticipation of need.

The next question is how well the design will reproduce. Here again, we are generally able to do a better job at reproducing your artwork in a patch than could be done by direct embroidery. The reason for this is actually quite simple, as the patches are all digitized for and embroidered onto a twill substrate that is an ideal medium for embroidery. With direct embroidery, the design must be digitized for the specific underlying fabric and different fabrics present different looks when embroidered. When direct embroidery is done on the front of a six-panel cap, the seam in the front is always a problem – this is not the case when a patch is used.

The detail that we are able to generate in a patch will generally far exceed that which can be done by direct embroidery. In terms of reproducing detail, we have the ability to go anywhere from that which is available by embroidering the patch to the fine detail available by weaving the patch and then to the photographic quality of the dye sublimation patch.

Clearly we at American Patch and Emblem Company have a bias, but hope that the consideration of the above factors will help you make your choice with more insight. If we are able to help you or provide answers to specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail at info@americanpatch.com or telephone at 800-752-1667.

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