

“Screen Making: Basic to Professional” Workshop

Printing excellence begins with the right screen. SPTF’s Screen Making workshop is guaranteed to motivate every participant who takes it by combining real-world, hands-on experience with just the right amount of supporting theory. This year, we have built in some new topics, such as a computer pre-press overview and press set-up primer, which add tremendous value to this already invaluable workshop.

Days One and Two...



The first day of class begins with an intense examination of screen fabrics, tensioning systems and the whole variety of screen frames used by the industry — from rigid to retensionable.



After a morning investigation of the screen’s components, participants are introduced to state-of-the-art equipment in SPTF’s laboratory and training facility. Instructor demonstrations, by both prominent industry speakers and SGIA/SPTF staff, show the latest stretching techniques and procedures. Then it is time for everyone to have hands-on experi-

ence with each stretching system. Our three-team approach for this workshop creates an atmosphere that reinforces the proper techniques demonstrated earlier.

Day two begins by taking a close look at the mesh manufacturing process, giving everyone a new appreciation for screen printing fabrics. Then the hands-on stretch-



ing continues until all the screens have been correctly built. Next, proper screen preparation is demonstrated and students degrease all their screens. As the final topic for the day, and overview of computer pre-press software and printers is presented, so participants can generate good positives for the process.

Day Three

On the morning of day three, a detailed explanation on stencil types, selection and processing is discussed, equipping participants to make the best stencil choice for



optimum printing results. We then move on to some more ‘show and tell’ as the instructors demonstrate practical tips and methods for applying stencils. Hands-on work begins again after that, as participants coat each of their screens with manual techniques and automated equipment.



The last part of the day kicks off the critical topic of exposure. Qualified guest lecturers cover the variables and concepts of proper exposure with appropriate emphasis, setting the stage for the following day’s activities.

Day Four

Day four’s focus is exposure and printing. Exposure times are determined and re-examined using the latest in screen calculation techniques. Each attendee then exposes and processes all three of their screens, and once they are dry, prepares the screens for printing with block-out and tape.



Stencil measurement and testing devices and techniques are then discussed in another 'show and tell' session. Electronic thickness gauges, surface profilometers and coating test methods are all demonstrated and explained.



Before printing the screens everyone has made, we take the time to run through some practical points on setting up both a graphics and textile press. Participants attend the demonstration that best suits their business. Each discussion will include registration, squeegees, floodbars, off-contact, press settings and substrate placement.



And that brings us to the moment of truth...time to print! With three printing stations, and three ink systems — solvent, UV and textile plastisol — each participant moves from one station to the next, printing test samples of their creations.

Day Five...

By the final workshop day, attendees have received and absorbed an incredible amount of information...and it is time to put it to the test. Each team now breaks off to examine their prints. Comparisons are made among their own team members and to those created by the other two teams. Throughout the week, various hidden "problems" were intentionally introduced, forcing noticeable alterations in the stencil, and subsequently in the print. Now, the challenge for each team is to use the knowledge they gained to determine what might have caused the subtle differences in their prints.



As this examination period progresses, a clear picture of cause and effect emerges, and the variables discussed all week come together.

Next, a presentation by SGIA's Government Affairs Department shares the basics of OSHA and EPA regulatory requirements. Through the "Safety, the Environment & You" presentation, workshop attendees are introduced to the basics of hazard communication, personal protective equipment, hazardous waste disposal...and more. They are also shown how to locate additional regulatory information available from the Association.

Before moving on, everyone is invited to print their own Souvenir SPTF T-Shirt. The

important process of screen reclamation is covered next, including the latest SPTF research results. The chemicals and methods used in reclaiming a screen are discussed and demonstrated, with emphasis on efficiency and screen life.



Before leaving, an overview of the valuable resources available on the SGIA website is presented. Participants take with them print samples, a SPTF Process Model, SPTF lab coat and T-shirt and an up-to-date reference notebook containing one of the best collections of articles on screen making in the industry. More importantly, they leave with the skills and knowledge to produce superior screens that will bring increased success to their companies. ■