

# Investing in Growth with the Design Studio Collections

by Craig Mertens, President of Digital Art Solutions, April 7, 2010

Design Studio 1 and 2 are the most successful art volumes in the history of Digital Art Solutions. Design Studio 3 and 4 have taken this proven concept to the next level. This article will outline the keys to growing your business with these innovative collections of graphical tools.



## The Design Studio Collection Concept

When your clients go online or go to the local mall, they are seeing “Graphical Tees” that are produced by leading retailers like Abercrombie and Fitch, Tillys, Buckle, American Eagle Outfitters, Urban Outfitters, Guess and more. These companies spend huge financial resources developing their seasonal graphics package. They test market graphics, conduct focus groups and have access to some of the top designers in the apparel industry. With the Design Studio collections of design templates, design elements and fonts, we have emulated the most popular retail graphics trends so you can produce graphics at the same level as top retailers; we call this the Robin Hood concept. We have taken from the graphically rich and are giving to the graphically poor (this might be you).

## It's not what you think about graphics, it's what your clients think

It's not what you think of the graphics, it's what your clients think. Even in small rural communities, people are plugged into the graphical trends. You can't turn on a TV or search for T-shirts on the Internet without seeing what's hot and new. Most of our clients tell us that their customers don't expect them to be able to produce graphics at this level. We often hear “my clients always choose graphics out of the Design Studio books”. With Design Studio 3 and 4, we have gone even further with the Robin Hood Concept. We have done the “R & D,” research and development (or as we like to say at Digital Art Solutions: Rip-off and Duplicate) for you, so you can present your clients with the newest looks and graphical trends.



Old School Tattoo Style Graphic  
from Ed Hardy



Design Studio 4  
Old School Tattoo Style Graphic



Design Studio 4  
Organic Style Graphic

## Setting yourself apart from the competition

Are your competitors showing the same old boring graphics that they have not updated in years? If you look at some of the most successful apparel companies in our industry, they come out with a new line of graphics at least twice year. They take a proactive approach to keep their clients on the leading edge of graphical trends. The top companies have learned that if you tie clients to your graphics capability, they will not shop you on price. In today's competitive marketplace, you have to find innovative ways to not only sell more to your existing clients, but keep them. Graphics is the one area of your business that you can control. This is why a product line like Design Studio has been so successful. Our clients have used these tools to keep themselves ahead of the competition.

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## If you present graphics first, garment selection and pricing is secondary

From our 30 years in the apparel decoration industry, we learned that if your clients connect emotionally with the graphic, they will buy. The apparel decoration industry is very competitive. Big companies with sophisticated graphics capabilities have come into small communities and taken over. It's hard for a local guy to ignore awesome graphics, especially when they have not seen anything innovative from their existing suppliers. From our experience, companies that have not invested in better graphics have struggled in the current economic climate. With the high-end graphics in the Design Studio collections, you can make an emotional connection between the graphic and the client. Clients get excited when you show them that you can provide them with the same quality of graphics that they are seeing from the top retailers. Do your clients expect you to be able to produce graphics at this level? If the client buys the graphic, the price is secondary. You just need to figure out what you are going to put the graphic on. Selling graphics first has been the key to our most successful clients. This is the best insurance policy you can take out against aggressive competitors with a sophisticated graphics capability.



“Got To Have” Apparel



“Want To Have” Apparel  
from Design Studio

## “Got to Have” versus “Want to Have” apparel; Clients vote with their dollars

Most of your clients purchase a “got to have” shirt. This is typically a corporate uniform with a left chest logo or a basic school T-shirt with the typical “arch, mascot, line of text” graphic. Normally, one or two colors. This is the lowest profit margin product you can sell, and the most competitive category. We call these “commodity” shirts. Of course you want this business, provided the margins work, but the business we really want is the “Want to have” business. This is the apparel that goes above and beyond boring corporate apparel or the basic school logos. This is what the Design Studio collections are all about. Our clients use these graphics to create fresh new ideas for their clients. Clients will buy new apparel items in addition to their basics if they like the graphics. Can you imagine doubling your sales because not only did you sell them a basic graphic, but sold them a new graphic from the Design Studio Collections. Your sales double and all you did was take a proactive step to create a virtual sample. The best part is that the margins are better, because you have produced an exclusive high-end graphic. Our most successful clients take an hour a week to put together virtual samples for their top clients as well as prospective clients. Using the virtual sample tools in Smart Designer X4, a custom proposal can be completed and emailed as a PDF in under 5 minutes. If you produced 10 proposals a week from the Design Studio Collections, it would only take one new order to increase your bottom line. Can you imagine the impact of this concept over the course of a year?



Virtual Sample Concept

## Investing in the growth of your business by producing better graphics faster

What are you doing to invest in the growth of your business? From our experience, our clients that have scaled back in this economy are really struggling. The typical scenario is as follows: sales are down, so companies lay off employees, cut back on the art department and deep-discount their products. From our perspective, this is the beginning of the end. When sales are down, you have to make an investment in your business. This means aggressively marketing to your existing clients, opening up new clients and increasing margins. Graphics are the key. The Design Studio collections were designed to decrease your design time and increase both your sales and margins. Boring old graphics are a commodity. Very few companies can produce in-house graphics at the level of Design Studio. Our staff designers at DAS would charge you a minimum of \$150 to produce a single graphic at the level of the graphics in the Design Studio collections. This does not include the custom clipart or custom fonts that would be required to produce this graphic. We have done all of the work for you. Not only with great templates, but with great design elements and fonts. There is no comparable product line on the market. The Design Studio collections are a completely unique set of graphical tools.

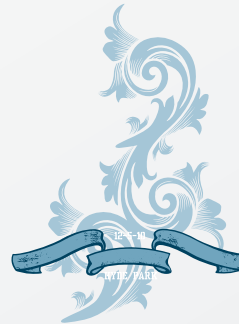
### The Design Studio Collections provides a unique set of graphical tools for creating cutting edge custom graphics



Design Studio  
Design Templates



Design Studio  
Design Elements



Design Studio  
Fonts

## Design Studio Collections, the best Return on Investment opportunity in the Industry

The numbers are hard to argue with. Each volume in the collection sells for \$399. The volumes are discounted when you buy them together. If you get one new order for 50 shirts, you can make back your entire investment. If you get one new client as a result of investing in these products, that client could potentially be worth thousands of dollars over the course of the relationship. Factor in referrals from these new clients and you have a huge opportunity for growth with a minimum investment. This has been the key to the success of this product line. Clients can invest a few hundred dollars and get a massive return. There are few products in our industry that will produce a faster return on investment than the Design Studio collections. We understand that money is tight, but we have many different options for getting started. The key is getting out of your comfort level and getting started. Nothing changes, if nothing changes. We don't believe that anyone in our industry can afford to be complacent with their graphics under the current economic conditions. Now is the best opportunity you have ever had to grow your business. Your competitors are struggling, and Design Studio can give a clear advantage that will grow your business.

To find out more about this remarkable product line from Digital Art Solutions, visit [www.digitalartsolutions.com](http://www.digitalartsolutions.com) or call us at 1-800-959-7627.

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# Feedback from Owners of the Design Studio Collections

“Last year I received an email from DAS spotlighting their newest designs in Design Studio 1 and 2. I took a quick peek and was definitely interested. About a week or so later I received a call from a sales rep at DAS just checking in and I remembered these new design books and questioned him about them. Together we went to the website and walked through just a few of the designs. I liked what I saw and bought the set while on the phone. I do the majority of my screen printing for local schools and church youth groups and saw designs in these 2 books that was very similar to what I had seen the kids buying in the stores. As soon as I received the designs, I loaded them and played around with them. I then invited various teenagers from my area over to my shop for pizza and soft drinks – that always brings them in. I had a group of about 8, mixed ages, male and female. ***As soon as they relaxed and had their stomachs full, I started to show them on my computer some of the designs from Design Studio 1 and 2. They loved it. They threw out lots of ideas on ways to change designs around, mix things up and to make each design individualized for certain groups. Everyone was impressed with the samples DAS shows for each design.*** To date I have used just less than half of the designs in each book for teams, events, trips, conferences, you name it. The local high school Journalism Department went to St. Louis for a conference and I designed a 3 color tee using a template from Design Studio, added an arch, and customized the wording. The kids and adults were stopped numerous times on the street asking what gift shop they bought them in because they wanted one just like it. I've even started showcasing photos in my shop of the local kids when they are in the area newspapers wearing one of “my” designs. It keeps getting bigger and bigger!. ***With just a little bit of maneuvering designs, I've even managed to sell this artwork to a much older market – and they love it as well.*** I've certainly recouped the cost of pizza and soft drinks many times over and cannot wait for Design Studio 3, 4, 5 and so on, to be introduced!”

**Dolores Settle**

**Owner, Can Do Specialty Printing, Ashland Virginia**  
10053 Lickinghole Rd., Ste. L

“***Because of having the DAS Graphics package it has clearly put me ahead of all my competition in the area simply because it gave me the tools to do the graphics without being a graphic designer.*** I can't say enough positive things about it obviously I haven't really even scratched the surface as to what its capabilities are. That I know! I've only had to call tech support once or twice but when I did they were right there and responded to my needs and questions and sent me on my way. I am a very firm supporter of the Smart Designs system and have told many EmbroidME people when asked how I do my graphics and graphic questions to call DAS and get on the bandwagon!”

**Alan Face**

**Owner, EmbroidMe of Clermont, Clermont, Florida**

“***Your art system is the best investment of time and money I've ever spent for my business.*** We have purchased all the volumes of Smart Designs and then some, upgraded from 8.0 to 12.0 (can't believe I even did 8.0 now!), and will be attending Art Camp this fall. (watch out, I'll be in the front row!). ***I would not be able to do my job with the excellence it takes to beat my competition without the support of your software.*** My customers love the designs we are generating and keep coming back for more. Keep up the great work. ***You are an invaluable asset to my company as I include you as part of my art department. Thanks a million.***”

**Wendy Renner**

**Owner, TJ T-Shirts/Daytona Marketing Solutions, Inc.**

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