

# Etsy Manufacturing Glossary

## How to use this guide

Whether you're a manufacturer or an Etsy seller, you might encounter some unfamiliar terms when using Etsy Manufacturing. Use this guide to learn more about the many manufacturing processes available for each industry. Note that many processes are relevant to multiple industries.

### MANUFACTURERS

If you've been a manufacturer for a while, you're probably familiar with most of the processes listed in your area of expertise. This document maps out how we have categorized these capabilities across industries, which will help you highlight your special skills to attract the right customers for you.

### ETSY SELLERS

If you're new to manufacturing, you might not be familiar with all of these processes. Below are the options you'll come across while using Etsy Manufacturing.

## How our processes align with each industry

PRINTING	JEWELRY & METALSMITHING	MACHINING & FABRICATION	APPAREL & TEXTILES
Letterpress	Casting *	CNC	Cut and Sew
Offset Printing	Plating	Milling and Routing	Embellishment
Photographic Printing	Stone Setting	Waterjet Cutting	Embroidery
Screenprinting *	Polishing	Plasma Cutting	Knitting
Digital Printing	Laser Cutting *	Die Cutting *	Weaving
Giclée	Engraving *	Turning	Dyeing
Direct to Garment (DTG) *	3D Printing *	Laser Cutting *	Millinery
Transfer Printing	Stamping *	Engraving *	Textile Printing
Dye Sublimation *	Enameling	3D Printing *	Direct to Garment (DTG) *
Vinyl Cutting	Other Benchwork	Casting *	Dye Sublimation *
Die Cutting *		Molding	Screenprinting *
Coating		Welding	Finishing
Embossing		Stamping *	
Foil Stamping		Finishing	
Book binding			
Finishing			

\* Process appears in more than one industry

# Printing

The Printing category encompasses printing on various types of surfaces and objects, as well as post-press processes. Products include photography, wall art, greeting cards, invitations, T-shirts and books. For 3D printing, see [Jewelry and Metalsmithing](#) or [Machining and Fabrication](#).

## LETTERPRESS

A process by which printing plates with the text or artwork in relief are covered in ink and pressed against the surface of a piece of paper.

## OFFSET PRINTING

A process where each color of the artwork is made into a separate printing plate with the print areas raised from the surface. This plate is inked, and the image is transferred (offset) to a second roll, which is in turn pressed against the final product. This is most appropriate (and cost effective) for larger print runs.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTING

Refers to the process of using papers treated with light-sensitive chemicals to produce printed images. Examples of photographic processes include chromogenic prints and gelatin silver emulsion.

## SCREENPRINTING

A process by which ink is applied to an item (a t-shirt for example) through fine mesh screens. Paper, textiles and hard surfaces can be screenprinted, though this process lends itself to images with clearly defined borders between colors, such as geometric graphics, lettering and logos. *Also in Apparel and Textile.*

## DIGITAL PRINTING

A general term that refers to a number of different printing processes, such as laser printing and inkjet printing, where digital files are transferred to a physical substrate (paper, for example) through various means.

## GICLÉE

Refers to inkjet prints made with archival quality inks and papers. The term was coined to differentiate museum-grade inkjet prints from regular inkjet prints.

## DIRECT TO GARMENT (DTG)

A process where artwork is printed directly onto a textile surface. The substrate, such as a T-shirt, is placed on a flat table, and ink is applied to the surface through an inkjet process. DTG can produce high-resolution images in small quantities. *Also in Apparel and Textile.*

## TRANSFER PRINTING

A general term that refers to any process in which an image is printed onto a sheet of paper or film sensitive to heat, pressure or water, and then transferred to the final product. Examples include traditional heat transfers, cut vinyl transfers and ceramic decals. Dye sublimation is listed separately.

## DYE SUBLIMATION

A process in which a transfer printed with special dyes is laid against a substrate (a T-shirt or device case, for example) and placed in a vacuum oven or heat press. The heat causes the dye particles to sublime (become gaseous) and permanently bond with the surface of the substrate, transferring the image with minimal resolution loss. This process is often used to produce "all-over" prints. *Also in Apparel and Textile.*

## VINYL CUTTING

The process of using a specialized machine to cut vinyl in a specific pattern defined by a digital file.

## DIE CUTTING

The process of using a die and a press to cut a shape from a low-strength, flat material. A die is a forming tool, usually made of metal and customized to the item being produced. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

## COATING

A finishing process where varnishes are applied to paper goods to create matte or glossy areas.

## Printing cont'd

### **EMBOSSING**

A process for creating raised (or depressed, when debossing) areas on the surface of paper, leather, plastics and other materials.

### **FOIL STAMPING**

The application of metallic foils to the surface of paper, textiles and leather, and objects made of materials such as wood, glass or plastic.

### **BOOK BINDING**

The process of assembling sheets together in the form of a book or booklet, with or without a hard cover. Most binding techniques utilize adhesives, stitching or perforation to hold the sheets together. Common binding methods include perfect binding, saddle stitching and spiral binding.

### **FINISHING**

Refers to processes that happen after printing, sometimes still in the press ("in line"), or as a completely separate process ("off line"). Finishing can have decorative purposes, or be crucial to the item's functionality. Examples include laminating, cutting and folding, gluing and collating, etc. Other finishing processes such as embossing, coating and foil stamping are listed separately.

## Jewelry and Metalsmithing

The Jewelry and Metalsmithing category includes processes related to the creation of jewelry and other small-scale metal items.

### CASTING

Refers to the process of pouring a liquid (often molten metal) into a mold of a specific shape. After the metal cools (or otherwise hardens in the case of resin), it is removed and finished. There are many different methods including lost wax casting, sand casting, plaster casting and die casting. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

### PLATING

The process of coating a piece of metal with a thin skin of another kind of metal using a chemical bath and electricity.

### STONE SETTING

A general term that refers to the affixing of precious or semi-precious stones to a piece of jewelry.

### POLISHING

Refers to the fine finish put onto metals or plastics, usually through the use of a polishing machine.

### LASER CUTTING

A process that uses a computer-controlled laser to cut through material such as metal, paper, board, plastics, wood and fabrics. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

### ENGRAVING

Refers to the inscribing of words, letters, characters or images into the surface of an object. This can be achieved by hand using a graver, though today it is commonly done by machine using either a CNC cutting tool or a laser. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

### 3D PRINTING

An additive manufacturing process in which a computer-controlled machine lays down successive layers of material to produce a three-dimensional object according to a digital design. Some 3D printers can print in a castable material that is ready to use in jewelry casting. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

### STAMPING

A method of imprinting letters, numbers, patterns and textures onto a surface using a steel stamp. *Also in Machining and Fabrication.*

### ENAMELING

The process of adding colored enamel to a piece of metal. Enamel can be made of very fine glass particles that need to be fired in a kiln to melt together and solidify. It can also take the form of a polymer resin.

### OTHER BENCHWORK

Encompasses jewelry processes not listed separately including sawing, filing, soldering and finish work.

## Machining and Fabrication

The Machining and Fabrication category contains larger-scale shop processes including those found in machine shops, foundries, design studios and woodshops. Products include housewares, furniture, lighting, toys and art.

### CNC

A general term that stands for Computer Numerical Control. It can be used to operate many different machine tools including mills, lathes, routers, waterjet and plasma cutters, and 3D printers.

### MILLING AND ROUTING

Subtractive processes where a machine removes areas from an existing piece of material. These machines can be operated manually or by CNC.

### WATERJET CUTTING

A CNC process that uses a high-pressure jet of water (often with an added abrasive) to cut through many materials including metal, plastic, rubber, glass, leather and stone.

### PLASMA CUTTING

A process used to cut through various types of conductive metals such as steel, brass, copper, aluminum and others. It can be done either by hand or controlled by a CNC machine.

### DIE CUTTING

The process of using a die (a forming tool, usually made of metal and customized to the item being produced) and a press to cut a shape from a low-strength, flat material. Leather, felt, paper, board, plastic and sheet metals can all be die cut. *Also in Printing.*

### TURNING

A process used to create round shapes such as bowls and vases using a lathe.

### LASER CUTTING

A process that uses a computer-controlled laser to cut through material such as metal, paper, board, plastic, wood and fabric. *Also in Jewelry and Metalsmithing.*

### ENGRAVING

Refers to the inscribing of words, letters, characters or images into the surface of an object. This can be achieved through more traditional means such as a graver, though today it is commonly done by machine using either a CNC cutting tool or a laser. *Also in Jewelry and Metalsmithing.*

### 3D PRINTING

An additive manufacturing process in which a computer-controlled machine lays down successive layers of material to produce a three-dimensional object according to a digital design. *Also in Jewelry and Metalsmithing.*

### CASTING

Refers to the process of pouring a liquid (often molten metal) into a mold of a specific shape. After the metal cools (or otherwise hardens in the case of resin), it is removed and finished. There are many different methods including lost wax casting, sand casting, plaster casting and die casting. *Also in Jewelry and Metalsmithing.*

### MOLDING

Molding, such as injection molding and rotational molding, is a process used to make plastic, rubber and polymer objects.

### WELDING

A fabrication process used to join metal by using either an electrically generated arc or a torch.

### STAMPING

A method of imprinting letters, numbers, patterns, and textures onto a surface using a steel stamp. *Also in Jewelry and Metalsmithing.*

### FINISHING

Can refer to different processes depending on the material. For wood, this could include staining and varnishing. For metal, this could refer to powder coating, painting, polishing and patinas.

## Apparel and Textile

The Apparel and Textile category contains processes related to the creation of garments, fabrics, housewares, shoes and accessories.

### CUT AND SEW

A term used to describe two processes that often go hand in hand. Fabric is cut according to your patterns and sewn together to create the final item. Cutting and sewing can also exist as separate services.

### EMBELLISHMENT

Refers to a variety of techniques including embroidery, beading and appliqué. Depending on the embellishment, the work might be entirely done by hand, by manually operated machine or completely by machine.

### EMBROIDERY

A process where thread or yarn is used to create patterns, shapes, words and basic images. While embroidery can be done by hand and also take elaborate, skilled forms, today it is often done using specialized machines.

### KNITTING

A process for creating textiles or finished products that can be performed by hand using knitting needles or by using a knitting machine. Knitting machines range in size from hand-operated models that can fit in a small space to industrial sized models that require a large manufacturing space.

### WEAVING

The creation of textiles through the use of a loom. Looms can be as simple as a manipulated piece of cardboard and as complicated as large-scale, computer-controlled machinery in a factory.

### DYEING

A process that adds color to fabric by submerging it in a dye bath. This technique can be performed on fabric yardage or finished products.

### MILLINERY

Millinery (or hat-making) processes include blocking, flanging, lining, banding and finishing.

### TEXTILE PRINTING

Refers to the transfer of artwork to the surface of a fabric item. This can include heat transfers or cut vinyl transfers. Other transfer processes such as direct to garment printing, dye sublimation and screenprinting are listed separately.

### DIRECT TO GARMENT (DTG)

A process where artwork is printed directly onto a textile surface. The substrate, such as a T-shirt, is placed on a flat table, and ink is applied to the surface through an inkjet process. DTG can produce high-resolution images in small quantities. *Also in Printing.*

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### SCREENPRINTING

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### FINISHING

Refers to a number of supplementary production processes including pleating, binding, trimming, zipper-setting, slitting, button-holing and others.