

# KICKING THE TIRES

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A couple of weeks ago my wife and I decided it was time to trade in the old jalopy for a newer one. Her car was just too small to handle all the kids that she has to transport around town. We have two children who sometimes sound like an entire hockey team in a small car.

Man, how I hate looking at cars! Every one of them costs a fortune and every one is different. Plus, each of them have their good and bad points. I made the mistake of telling a friend that I was looking for a vehicle and next thing I knew, everyone was giving me advice. "Buy this one. Buy that. Don't go there. Go there."

With all the information we compiled after visiting what seemed every car dealer in the northern hemisphere we finally got the car that suited us... I hope.

Buying an emulsion system can be similar to buying a car. There are hundreds of films and emulsions to choose from. Your job is to determine what will work best for you. Some of the questions you should ask yourself are: 1. Should I use film or direct emulsion? 2. What type of print resolution is needed? 3. How important is stencil durability? 4. Is my equipment adequate to handle the stencil specifications? 5. Will this new stencil system be better than what I'm currently using? 6. How easy is it to use? 7. How expensive is it? In other words, you've got some homework to do. Here are my answers to those questions:

1. Just like I had to ask myself : Buy a van or car? The use of capillary films or emulsions is really a matter of choice. They both work very well. Films generally print sharper and are easier to use. Emulsions are typically tougher against wear and tear but are harder to use.

2. Do I need a sports car or a van? (Personally, I do need a sports car, but don't ask my wife). What type of resolution is needed? There are emulsions in the market that can resolve two mil lines. But, do you really need to resolve that fine a line? Textile printers should be more concerned about ink deposit than trying to print 2 mil lines. Examine what you are trying to print and what you are trying to print on. Plastisol printers take a serious look at our Chroma/Tech® PL or Chroma/Tech® PL-2. They are the "sports cars" of direct emulsions. Both shoot fast with quick build up and with all the resolution needed to do textile prints.

3. Stencil Durability. For short runs, is it really necessary to have a bullet proof stencil? What's important is that the stencil makes it through the print run. When you are done printing, reclaim it and coat it up for another job.

4. Is the present equipment adequate to optimize the stencil system? Maybe you should look at getting better equipment that will help you become more efficient and give you higher quality, i.e. metal halide exposure units, high pressure washers, microscopes, etc.



*Looking for insight on the wonderful world of screen making? Consult the writings of Chromaline's Technical Guru, Mick Orr, Applications Training Specialist.*

*Mick has been in the screen printing industry since 1970 with printing experience in a wide range of applications from membrane switches, to textiles, specialty graphics to faceplates and more. His hands-on seminars have been appreciated by screen makers around the world.*



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5. Is this stencil system any better than what you are presently using? I had to ask myself the same thing when looking at a new car. Possibly, the system you are using just needs a little updating. By rechecking exposure times, thicknesses, drying time, coverage and the amount of downtime caused by having to reshoot new screens, you may find that it's not the emulsion that needs to be replaced but the way it is processed.

6. How easy is it to use? No emulsion is idiot proof, but capillary films come close. They're already presensitized, supplied in a specific thickness and are easy to learn.

7. How expensive is it? This is an easy question to answer when buying a car. They all cost too much. It isn't as easy to answer when looking at emulsion systems. What you have to look at is: Will this emulsion system give me the print quality that I demand every time? Will this emulsion system be easy to use? Upon examining your labor rate, an expensive capillary film might end up costing less than an inexpensive direct emulsion when you add up all the factors involved in making a quality stencil.

If you need help locating an emulsion system we can help. We make all four types of stencil systems. What are the four? Glad you asked. They are: direct emulsions, capillary films, indirect stencils and direct/indirect systems. If you need help buying a sports car talk to my wife, I'm sure you will enjoy your new van.