



Printess

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A

Personalization Solution

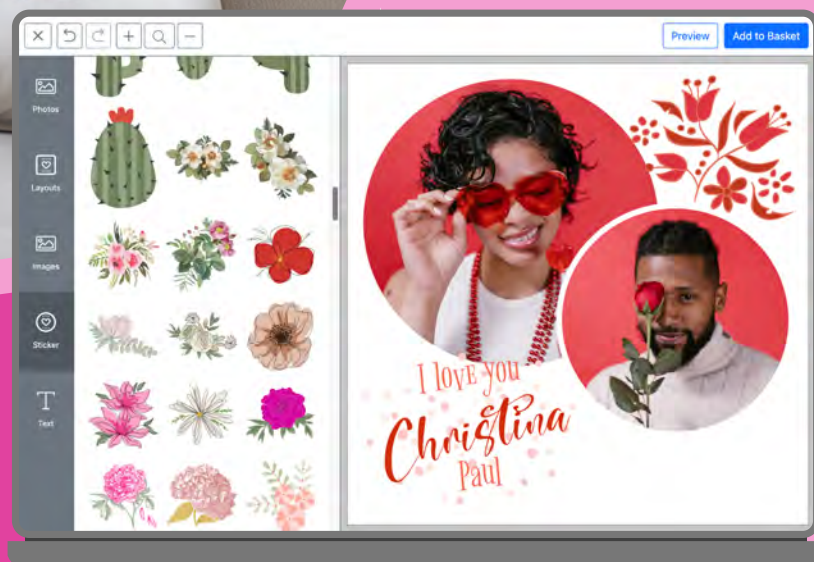


What to Look for in a Personalization Solution

Searching for that perfect personalization solution to make your business stand out with a personal touch? There are tons of options out there, and everyone claims to be the best.

So, how do you find the right one for your business? This e-book is your friendly guide.

We're here to walk you through the must-haves and questions to ask of a personalization solution that really gets your business.



MOBILE READY?



Is the Solution Mobile Ready?

"Mobile ready" is way more than just being able to pull something up on your phone. It's about whether your customers can navigate easily, no matter what device they're using.

Does everything feel just right, tailored for their phone or tablet? Or is it just a shrunken-down version of your website that's tough to use and sort of awkward?

With over 60% of customers now scrolling and buying on their mobile devices, the stakes are high. If your online experience isn't smooth as butter, you're not just missing out; you're giving your business away. Make sure you're not that company.

What is the User Interface Like

Does the solution offer multiple user interfaces for different product journeys like photo products, form-based products, design products?

If you want to offer a product that has several steps, does the solution offer step-based configuration?

Previews are an integral part of the purchase process; customers like to see realistic representations of what their final product will look like.

Do you have access to various preview types to suit your need? Are you able to offer mock-ups of a client's design onto other products they may want to purchase for upselling?



Does the solution offer true flexibility to accommodate the user's design journey as well as their experience?

We know that different product offerings need unique user journeys. Selling photo-gifts like photo books, canvas prints, greeting cards, calendars and mugs need a simple design journey.

Apparel, marketing collateral or corporate stationery, would need a completely different design journey.

LANGUAGE?

What about local languages? Are you able to sell your products in any country and in any language?

Any personalization solution should offer translatable UIs as well as the ability to add more languages for the complete UI when the need arises.

Is there support for page navigation and uploading things like icons or is the solution just branded as customizable with very little flexibility?

Today nearly all images are kept on a mobile device. Is there good support for image upload from mobile devices both for desktop and mobile?



Typography That Talks?

When it comes to typography, the devil is in the details. Users expect WYSIWYG throughout their design process and if there are any discrepancies, you are going to end up with unhappy customers. Here are some important questions to ask in relation to typography in a personalization solution:

- How does the system guarantee 100% equal output of what is previewed on the screen (WYSIWYG)?
- Is the text rendered on the customer device? Server generated previews are slow and low quality and could increase project abandonment.
- Does the system support upload of TTF/OTF fonts without complex conversions? You don't want your design team to spend a lot of their time on trying to give your customers a variety of font options. This is often an unseen "time thief" when it comes to product creation.



Fun!



CARTOON!



Kingdom



Dream Big

- Does the system support outlines and decorative effects to personalize licensed products? (For example Marvel or Disney that will require specific typography)
- Does the solution support inline Text Editing with inline formatting? This is a super important feature when it comes to products like books and greeting cards or invitations.
- Is there support for maximum characters/copy fitting? Another important feature to ensure the best final product.
- Can the solution support Emojis? This might sound like a strange question, but Emojis have become a way for users to express themselves when there just aren't quite the right words. Having Emoji support will make users more comfortable in the platform too.

Is there Masterful Image Management?

The saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” exists for a reason. This is why masterful image management is an integral part of your personalization solution.

Most solutions would support the common image formats like JPG or TIFF, PNG, but what about other modern formats like HEIC or WebP?

It can be extremely frustrating for your designers and users if they need to spend time converting images to different formats before they can continue with a design project.

What about supporting pdf documents if a product requires? True flexibility with image and document formats is the only way to ensure efficiency and customer satisfaction.



Paul & Emmy



for ever





Giving users as well as your design team creative freedom is an important part of your personalization solution's success. Does your solution offer things like creative clipping for imaging and text?

What about being able to start your project while images upload in the background? It's almost inevitable users will abandon the project before properly starting it if they're required to wait for all their images to load before they can continue with their design. There should also be enforced upload functionality to ensure your users don't submit an order without selecting an image.

The last thing you want is for a user to spend time creating their perfect design, only to find the final project is disappointing due to poor image quality.

Is your personalization solution warning your users of image quality and resolution problems? User loyalty is more likely when your customers know they can trust you to deliver the best possible product.

ISO Conforming Color Management & Support

We all know that output accuracy plays a really important part in customer satisfaction and are even more important for your workflows.

Have you ever had customer reprints or complaints due to ignored color profiles? This will be a thing of the past if your solution has color managed workflows. Your customer sees profiled images in the correct profile on screen, eliminating surprises with the end results.

Does your solution truly generate print-ready, trouble-free output files with all the necessary features, such as die-cut lines, CMYK, and spot colors? This is especially important in automated workflows where outputs need to follow specific guidelines, and non-printing elements must be totally avoided.

Do you offer themed products for things like greeting cards, apparel or photobooks?

We would wager a guess that you had to create a template for each color scheme, right? The best personalization solutions offer support for color schemes within one template for your product.

How much time do your teams spend on postproduction file preparations? We've had hundreds of discussions with clients, and we know precious time and resources are spent preparing files for processes like DTF, DTG, DyeSub, foiling, Scodix, toner transfer, laser engraving and more.

Does your current (or prospective) web-to-print solution offer support for these processes directly within the output file, without any postproduction intervention? Imagine how many man hours can be saved.

COLOR ACCURACY?



Swatch Name
Pink

Name with Color Value

Spot
 Process
 Transparent

Overprint Reflection

RGB **CMYK** **LAB**

Red (R) - 242 + Cyan (C) - 0 + Lightness (L) - 54 +
 Green (G) - 34 + Magenta (M) - 92 + Color (a) - 80 +
 Blue (B) - 148 + Yellow (Y) - 6 + Color (b) - -9 +

Web Color #f22294 Kontrast (K) - 0 +

Remove this Swatch OK CANCEL ?



Dynamic Document Handling

Document design and functionality are pivotal, for any personalization solution to be a success in your organization, template and product creation needs to be efficient and user friendly. Here are some key aspects to consider when it comes to choosing your solution:

- **Flexible Page Templates:** Whether you need single or facing pages, the system should flex to accommodate.
- **Multi-Format Support:** Can it handle multiple product sizes seamlessly? This is essential to avoid an explosion of necessary templates.
- **Multi Component Products:** From book covers with separate inner pages to memory games with their box, a good solution manages multi-component templates effortlessly.
- **Adaptive Document Length:** For products like photo books, supporting variable page counts, whilst setting minimum and maximum page counts lets customers personalize extensively.
- **Layout Fluidity / Flexible layouts:** Changing layouts should be smooth and easy and without losing your content, allowing for creativity without constraints.
- **Starting from Scratch:** A strong platform will enable building documents from the ground up, adding text, images, and more with ease.



100%



CLOUD

Peak Performance

Speed and efficiency can make or break performance, the last thing you want for your business is finding a solution that ticks all the boxes but falls flat when it comes to performance. When it comes to optimal performance, here are some things to consider when it comes to the solution you choose:

- **Server Smarts:** Minimal server communication during editing means faster, smoother user sessions.
- **Lightweight Client Apps:** Aim for a client application size under 10MB for quick loading.
- **Speedy Starts:** Startup times under three seconds keep users engaged.
- **Real-Time Interactivity:** Live typing and image resizing should be instant to keep up with user inputs.
- **Quick Page Changes:** Transition between pages in less than a second to maintain flow.
- **Overall Snappiness:** If you want to be your customers' first choice, instant gratification isn't just nice - it's necessary.
- **Scalability:** There should be no limits for parallel editing sessions without the need to maintain a complex server infrastructure

Additional Features

In our experience, these are some of the features that are often overlooked when choosing a personalization solution, but can have a serious impact on the bottom line.

- **Barcode Basics:** Is the solution able to support various barcode types? This is an imperative feature for production workflow automation and quality control.
- **Native App Integration:** Can the configurator be implemented in iOS/Android apps without complex and expensive maintenance?
- **Undo/Redo Functions:** Mistakes happen. Make sure they're easy to fix.
- **Session Savvy:** This is a feature that not many providers offer when it comes to personalization products like photobooks and the like. The ability to save and reload editing sessions can be a game-changer for complex projects.



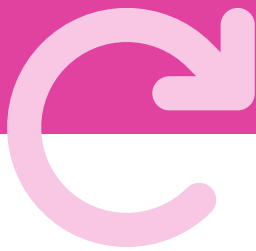
QR CODE?

AI Prompt:
a delicious Italian pizza



AI Tools

- **AI Tools:** Many providers use the terms "AI" when there is no access to key Artificial Intelligence features. What tools are available that are labelled as AI? Can you offer text to image, text assistants, face swapping and other complex AI features from your web-to-print editor? Customers will always default to time saving tools when it comes to creating projects that are labour intensive or time consuming.
- **Prepped and Ready:** Is it possible to pre-populate templates with data prior to editing? Things like names, dates and images are can all be pre-inserted with Printess, streamlining the design process.



AI Prompt: birthday wishes

Happy B!





Template Management

Repository:

A robust template repository is the backbone of design flexibility. What is the solution offering in terms of saving time and building product templates in an efficient and simple way?

- It's imperative to have a solution that will grow and scale with your business. Is there a template repository that is able to handle more than 50 000 products?
- We all know different products require different post production settings, being able to simply manage your production documents from the customer's design documents is the ultimate game changer. Is there flexibility in document management? Can you easily separate design and production documents?
- Is there user-management within the repository? This is particularly useful when working with design teams or various agencies. An option to limit access rights for portions of the repository ensures seamless collaboration.
- If designs have been done in third party design tools like Adobe InDesign, is it possible to import these designs into the personalization solution whilst maintaining the integrity of the design?
- Can templates be edited within your editor without the need for third party design tools and complex import processes?
- Can your repository be integrated via APIs into your eCommerce solution, PIM, or DAM?



KINGDOM

BEST MAMA!

I Love You

HAPPY Birthday NAME

Happy BIRTHDAY Name

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NAME

Happy Birthday NAME

HAPPY Birthday NAME

Happy Birthday NAME

HAPPY Birthday NAME

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NAME

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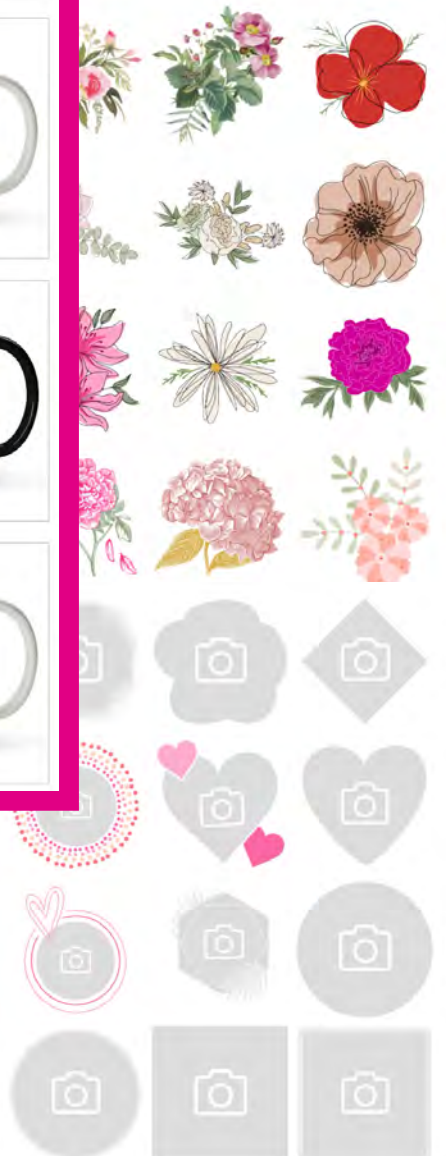
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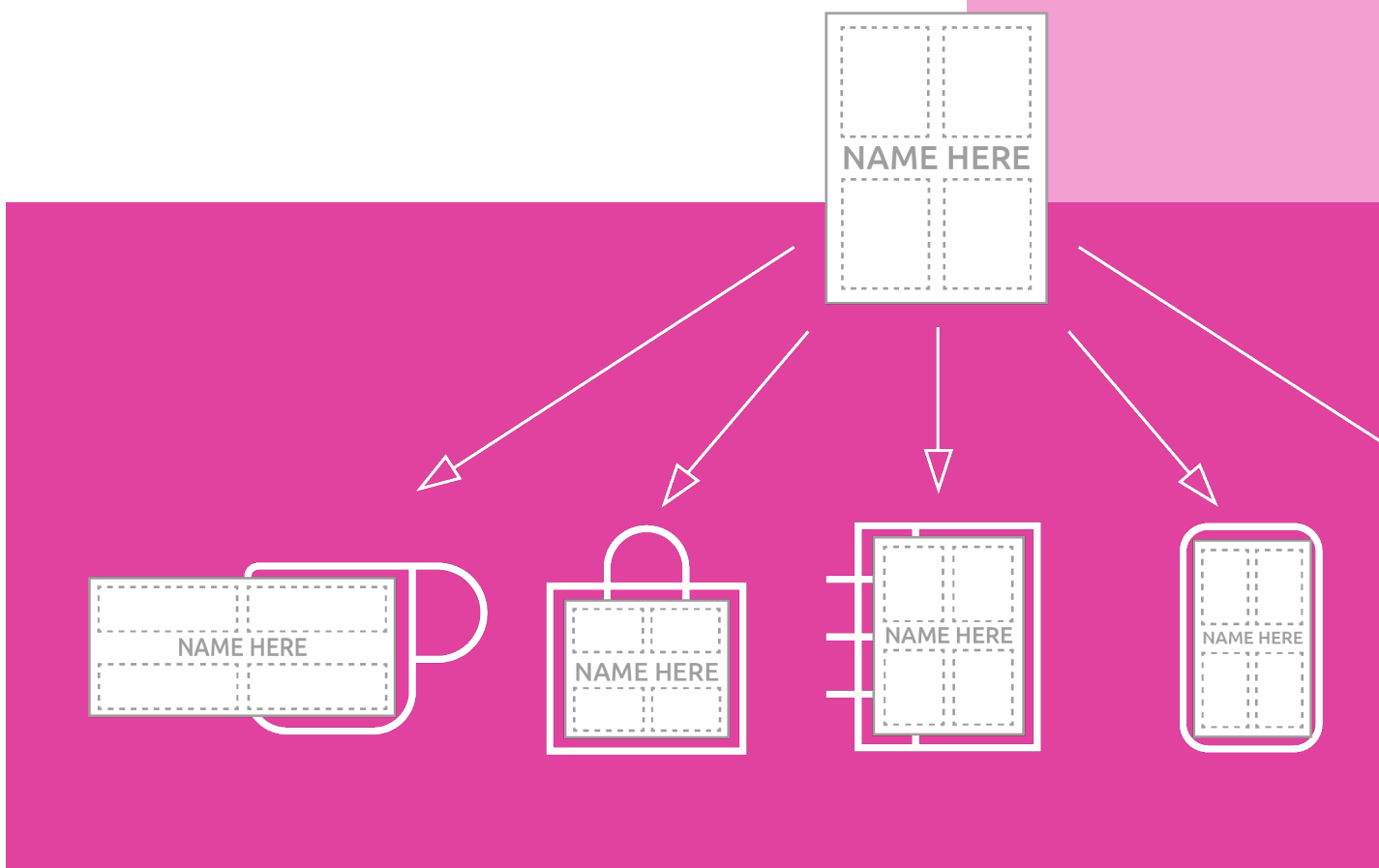


FLEXIBLE?

Designs and Layouts

Even if you have multiple design teams, efficiency is needed to reach your ultimate success goals. Many solutions might sound promising, but repetitive design tasks mean that launching new products can become a slow process. Here are some good questions to ask about design and layout functionality:

- Can we apply Designs to different products and formats or do we need to recreate the same designs over and over to fit different sizes or products?
- Is the solution versatile enough for my team to create layouts and design elements ourselves?
- Can layouts handle multiple languages/translations for example on stickers and calendars or is it necessary to recreate designs per language?
- Is there scripting support for complex products?
- Is it Easy to import High Street Designs?
- We are currently using a different solution, can we get help converting our existing templates?



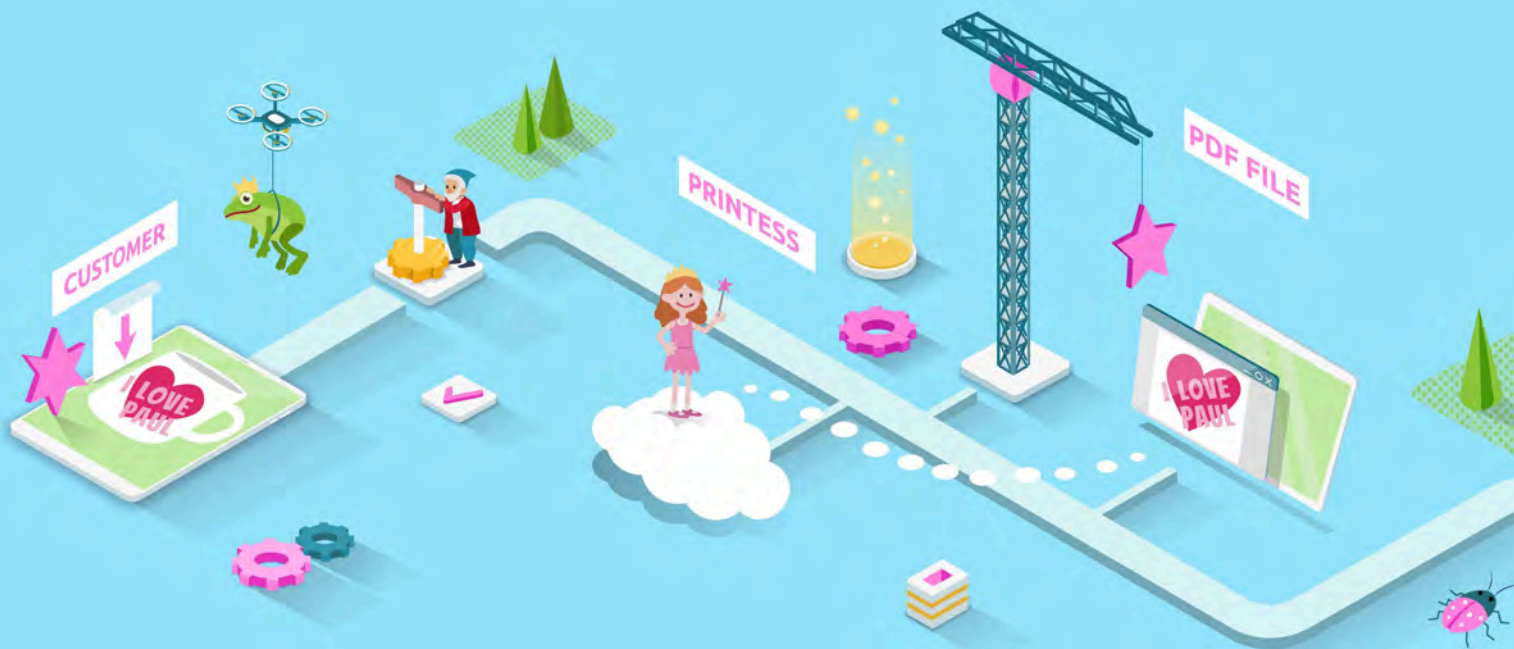


Workflow & Backend

Scalability

Having the ability to adapt to your online store's traffic and demand, is a key necessity for your personalization business to thrive. It's important to understand the architecture of your solution as many solutions are not easily scalable and could add enormous issues and costs additionally.

- Is the system flexible enough to handle order spikes, especially during promotions or peak seasons, such as those driven by TV commercials, where load spikes of 100:1 can easily occur?
- Does every component of the system scale independently or is it based on multi-purpose servers?
- Does the system require local servers, or does it primarily operate on CDNs, ensuring consistent speed in every region and under any load scenario?



Redundancy

We've all seen the impact of a lack of redundancy measures in systems. (Think/Facebook/Instagram/Whatsapp outages or the recent CrowdStrike failure). Any e-commerce business should have contingencies in place to ensure maximum up- time.

- Are there any single points of failure in the systems infrastructure which can leave us dead in the water? Ask for the processes that are in place to ensure customer designs can be restored. What does a system rollback look like in the case of a critical fault or error?
- Is it possible to create a geo redundant system?

Security

System security is critical to ensure users have complete faith that their data and files are 100% secure at all times. A lack of GDPR/DSGVO/UK GDPR compliancy can lead to major fines upwards of €200, 000 in some instances. Yet, we still find many clients forget to ask these important questions when it comes to their personalization solution vetting. Here are some important questions to remember asking:



- Is the System GDPR/DSGVO/UK GDPR compliant?
- Is data that is stored and transferred encrypted?
- Are customer jobs immutable (Data immutability is the idea that information within a database cannot be deleted or changed. In immutable - or append-only - databases, data can only ever be added. Meaning the database will not overwrite or change an item when new information is made available) for GDPR and tracking compliance?
- Does the system provide an audit trail for who made what changes?
- Can we get business interruption ensured?
- Will we have a staged Service Level Agreement?

Output

We know that different personalization services require different output criteria, but most customization solutions, aren't flexible enough to support the necessary outputs. This usually means that your postproduction teams spend time prepping files to make them print or production ready. The ideal solution has the versatility to provide the output files precisely as you need them, ensuring automation of workflow and maximum efficiency. Here are some output related questions for you to consider when comparing web-to-print personalization solutions.

- Does the system handle all types of mass customisation workflows (digital print, laser engraving, dye sublimation, foil cutting, embroidery)
- Can the system output all necessary file formats for production (PDF, JPG, PNG with transparency)
- Are the PDFs guaranteed to print correct on all std. RIPs (ISO conformance) and is imposition supported?
- Can customer edited documents contain late binding elements which are added (e.g. OrderNr, delivery address, collection code...)
- Can the system ensure that only non-corrupt user data is added to avoid workflow interruptions in production?
- Can the system supply upselling images / mockups for logged in users of the store with users' designs already in place?

ENGRAVING

Embroidery

Embellishment

AUTOMATION?

Fulfilment

Fulfilment automation is important to ensure your mass customization business will thrive. This can be a tedious and manual process if you don't have the right systems in place. Will you be able to deliver fulfilment of orders seamlessly down to the tracking code?

- Can the system handle fulfilment (e.g. multiple fulfilment locations, multiple suppliers, multiple product specific output formats)
- Can the solution connect with industry standard platforms (HP Siteflow, KornitX, FTP, Dropbox) and can it get integrated in your custom workflows with APIs?
- Does the system throttle at high volumes or need additional servers to speed up output?
- Does the system track all jobs and allow for editing of failed jobs?
- Does the system allow for pure data driven output (mail merge, database driven personalisation)?

BOOK A DEMO!

Additional Considerations

We've covered many points to consider when choosing the right personalization tool, but there's more. These are questions your IT team might raise while vetting customization solutions—critical factors for ensuring the success of your print personalization business and providing a seamless user experience that drives conversions.

- Are there extensive APIs available (backend/frontend/image upload/text) that will make sure you can achieve your goals?
- Do you have analytics within your solution? Are you able to track things like conversion rate, design and element usage to determine where your conversion focus should be?
- Importantly, is the solution shop/e-commerce agnostic? Can you integrate wherever you choose, or are you forced to choose a storefront that has the easiest integration?
- How simple is it to integrate into new workflows
Website/Shop/POS- Terminal/Native App?

With over 20 years of experience in the personalization industry, as the founders of DirectSmile, we've faced the unique challenges of personalization and mass customization firsthand.

We created Printess because no existing solution could fully meet our customers' needs without compromise.

If you'd like to discuss your specific requirements or just geek out over all things personalization, our passionate team is ready to chat. Get in touch with us today!



