

Screen Printer interview questions

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What to expect

Screen printing interviews usually blend a practical assessment with a conversation about your colour judgement and press setup habits. Employers want to see that you can work accurately, manage tight deadlines and keep a clean, safe workspace.

- **Technical:** Questions about screen preparation, ink mixing, curing and press mechanics.
- **Process:** Walk-throughs of how you set up a job from artwork to finished print.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of solving colour problems or catching defects before a run goes out.
- **Scenario:** What you would do if registration is off, ink is drying too fast or a deadline shifts.
- **Safety:** How you handle chemicals, emulsion and equipment safely, including WHS practices.
- **Client-facing:** How you communicate with clients about custom colour matches or artwork requirements.

Typically a single interview with a production manager or senior printer, sometimes after a short practical test. You might be asked to demonstrate screen setup, ink mixing or a press run on the spot. The conversation then moves through your technical habits, past jobs and how you handle common production pressures.

1. Walk me through your process for preparing a screen from artwork to exposure.

Why they ask

This is the core technical foundation. Employers want to hear the steps and see if you understand each one, not just the machine operation.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through. Start with artwork separation, then coating, drying, exposing, washing out and drying again before setup.

Example answer

"First I check the artwork and separate colours, then output film positives. I coat the mesh with emulsion using a scoop coater, making sure the coating is even on both sides. Once it's dried in a dark room, I place the film on the screen and expose it under the exposure unit for the right time. Then I wash out the unexposed emulsion with a pressure washer, dry the screen and inspect it for any pinholes or undercutting before it goes on press."

2. Tell me about a time you had to match a difficult colour for a client. How did you go about it?

Why they ask

Colour matching is a daily challenge. They want to see your method and how you handle a client's expectations.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Describe the situation, the task, the action you took and the result.

Example answer

"A client wanted a specific teal for a run of tote bags that didn't match any standard Pantone chip. I started by mixing a base and adding small amounts of blue and green until it was close. Then I printed a test patch on the same canvas fabric, cured it and compared it under daylight and indoor light. It still looked slightly off, so I adjusted with a touch of white to soften it. The client approved the

final match and we used that formula for their repeat orders."

3. You're setting up a six-colour job and the registration is off on the third screen. What do you do?

Why they ask

Registration problems are common. They want to know you can troubleshoot calmly without wasting materials.

How to structure your answer

Scenario judgement under pressure. Outline immediate checks, adjustments and how you prevent a full run of misprints.

Example answer

"I would stop the press and check the registration marks on the third screen first. If the screen itself has shifted, I'd loosen the clamps, realign it using the micro-registration knobs and lock it down. Then I'd print a test on a scrap garment or test paper to confirm alignment before running the full order. If the issue is the artwork or film, I'd flag it to the supervisor so we can remake the screen rather than risk a whole run."

4. How do you ensure prints are cured correctly and won't wash out?

Why they ask

Curing affects durability and client satisfaction. This tests your technical knowledge of dryers and inks.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation. Cover temperature, belt speed, ink type and how you test the finished print.

Example answer

"I set the conveyor dryer temperature and belt speed based on the ink manufacturer's recommendations and the fabric weight. For plastisol on cotton, I aim for the ink to reach the right temperature for a full cure. I check with a temperature strip or infrared gun, and then do a stretch test on a cooled print. If it cracks or flakes, I adjust the dryer. I also keep a wash test sample from each run to confirm it holds up after washing."

5. Describe your experience with automatic carousel presses and manual presses. How do you adapt?

Why they ask

Many shops run both. They want to know you can move between them and understand the differences.

How to structure your answer

Comparative experience. Talk about what you've used, then explain how you adjust your setup and printing technique for each.

Example answer

"I've run both. On a manual press, I focus on consistent squeegee angle and speed because that's what controls ink deposit. On an automatic carousel, I set the squeegee pressure, flood speed and print speed, then check the first few prints for opacity. I also pay more attention to registration on the automatic because once it's set, it runs fast. I'm comfortable switching between them, and I know that a manual press often needs more frequent ink checks on long runs."

6. Give an example of a time you caught a defect before a large run went out. What did you do?

Why they ask

This shows your attention to detail and your ability to protect the client and the business from costly reprints.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"I was printing a run of 400 shirts for a school event. After the first twenty shirts, I noticed the ink was starting to bleed slightly on the edges because the ink viscosity had dropped. I stopped the press, added a thickener to the ink and cleaned the screen. I then printed a test shirt and confirmed the edges were sharp. I checked the first twenty again and they were fine, so I continued the run. We finished on time and the client received clean prints."