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# YOUR IDEA ... YOUR DESIGN ... YOUR SHOP ... **AMITY SHIRT FACTORY**

Looking at their operation, it is hard to believe that so much work is done in such a small place. Coming up on 8 years, located in the Olde Swede Office Complex in Douglassville, there is a hidden gem of a business known as Amity Shirt Factory. "We do everything here ... nothing is shipped out ... Screen Printing, Embroidery, Vinyl Press on Jackets, Sweat-shirts, Pants, of course Tee-Shirts ... you name it ... all completely finished in-house". But owner Charlie Wedemeyer is quick to say Amity Shirt Factory is NOT "his company". "No, it's not mine, It's the community's ... I work for them, this is their place ... and they can get almost anything and everything they need right here." Amity Shirt Factory ... Your Idea ... Your Design ... Your Company.



**CW:** I'm building a fort! [laughing]. Yes, it is working! No, my product isn't any better or worse. Side by side it would appear to be exactly the same.

**Q:** So then why does Amity Shirt Factory have so many customers, couldn't they just go anywhere? **Editor's Note:** At that moment a student from Pottstown High School came in to pick up the soccer warm-ups for her team. Charlie not only knew her name, but asked about the game she was playing today and if her knee felt better. He also knew details of the earlier game where this player was injured.

**Q:** Nevermind, I think I am beginning to understand. Do you know all of your customers by name?

**CW:** I try to. Hey, [the customers] work hard for their money and they have chosen to come to Amity Shirt Factory. Like you said, they could go anywhere but they choose to come here. The least I can do is make them feel welcome, learn their name and find out what they do. It's fun for both of us! Isn't that the way it's suppose to be?

**Q:** I think it is but most of the time it isn't. What does this tee cost to print? **Editor's Note:** I am holding a black tee with 2 colors on the front and 2 colors on the back.

**CW:** For just one, about \$20.00 the price goes down based on quantity.

**Q:** Wait, you can get just ONE tee shirt made at Amity Shirt Factory?

**CW:** [Laughing] Yep! Amity Shirt Factory does NOT have minimum order requirements. Guess what else, we DONT charge design fees, we DONT charge screen fees, NOR do we have any set up charges. Let "Brand X" charge that stuff, you'll never see that here.

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When I met up with Charlie at the Amity Shirt Factory shop on Olde Swede Road, in Douglassville, I could hear him working in the back. When he came out to greet me, his hands were stained with ink, his hair a bit desheveled and there was his famous huge welcoming smile on his face.

**Q:** Driving around, there seems to be a lot of competition, how do you feel about that?

**CW:** I have never been worried about competition ... there is plenty of work to go around. Besides, when I was on the other side needing to purchase uniforms for my daughters softball team, I learned very quickly that "Brand X" is very difficult with which to work. I took what I had learned, and keep learning, and decided to do the opposite [laughing] **Editor's Note:** "Brand X" is a composite of several screen printing companies in the area.

**Q:** It seems to be working you have a lot of boxes, is your product better than most?

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## AMITY SHIRT FACTORY

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**Q: So is this why your pricing may be a bit higher than "Brand X"?**

**CW:** Per shirt maybe yes, in most cases Amity Shirt Factory's pricing is the same. However, when you factor in the fees "Brand X" may have, my product is considerably less. With the example of this shirt, it would take 4 screens to complete ... a minimum charge is \$25.00! Per Screen! That's \$100.00 right there that Amity Shirt Factory has saved our customers. Editor's Note: After some investigating, it was discovered that some screen fees cost upwards to \$45.00 per screen needed for a project.

**Q: Is it true you have turn work down?**

**CW:** Yes I have ... but allow me to explain. We have start up businesses come in all the time and they want to get two, maybe three hundred shirts at a time. I don't care who you are ... that is a lot of money! What I do is explain our business model and offer them a manageable project ... getting only 30 or so garments to start ... I would love to take the \$2,400.00 and run but I was there. I know they don't have that kind of money ... some day they will .... but if I can help them out now, hopefully they will come

back ... and you know what? They do.

**Q: I bet you get a lot of work for pink tees around this time of year? Editor's Note: The interview was conducted in September 2021**

**CW:** I do, for Breast Cancer Awareness and for Relay for Life as-well. Amity Shirt Factory never makes any money off of these tees, we try to do them for cost. We also help customers sell the tees on our on-line store and guide them to a good price point. Amity Shirt Factory has donated thousands of dollars thru the sales of our shirts as-well-as cash donations. I get thank you cards all the time ... I like to hang them up.

**Q: Tell me about TSA.**

**CW:** Technology Student Association or TSA has Marketing Competition that includes screen printing. Students have to do everything from the design, to burning the screen, to the actual screen printing ... Twenty-five test prints and three final tees. The print also must have 3 colors. The winner's design goes on to be the tee for next years competition. Amity Shirt Factory donates the shop and everything necessary to complete this project. I am allowed to teach but I cannot do the project.

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One of the girls actually came in first one year. She was great ... better than me .... she is tiny and developed a technique that really worked for her. I actually use that technique when I apply ink to the screens.

**Q: The million dollar question ... Why do you do this?**

**CW:** Amity Shirt Factory's victory is seeing how their work affects people's lives. Some people see this [pointing at his shirt] as only a tee shirt. Amity Shirt Factory knows it is much more than that. It is something that can help buy food, medicine or treatments ... it can make you feel like you belong ... it can promote a

cause or a business. This [again pointing to his shirt] is a lot of different things to a lot of different people. This idea is not lost on Amity Shirt Factory, we have the best customers in the world, the amount of love they have for the community is truly amazing. We feel very lucky and honored that they come to Amity Shirt Factory for help.

*Charlie Wedemeyer is an award winning graphic designer. Graduating top of his class at Anthem Institute in 2009, his work can be seen at small businesses as-well-as multimillion dollar companies. Feel free to contact him via text, phone or e-mail at 610-858-9441 and [amityshirtfactory@yahoo.com](mailto:amityshirtfactory@yahoo.com)*

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