

# Design your own T-shirt, bumper sticker online



John Deans

Last November, we talked about VistaPrint.com and how easy it was to upload your own images, design business cards, and have them shipped to you.

I still use VistaPrint, but recently I was trying to find a certain bumper sticker and I stumbled upon a similar site called Zazzle.com which did even more.

Being a conservative activist I am always on the lookout for cutting edge (sometimes bleeding edge) slogans put on T-shirts and bumper stickers. Last month I saw a hard hitting slogan painted on the complete tailgate of a pickup truck.

To avoid the red editing pen of *The Banner-Press* or worse yet my wife, I'll leave out the actual slogan.

After searching on all my usual conservative Web sites and not finding it, I became frustrated and began a new effort to find a site that I could easily and cheaply make my own bumper sticker. The problem I ran into

was that I had to order a quantity of at least 100 and that jacked up the total price way too high.

While on that new vector of a search I found that exact slogan available in numerous fonts, colors, shapes and variations by several authors.

These authors were actually designers and sellers of at least a dozen versions of that exact slogan I had been looking for all over the Web.

I found this array of products, designers, and sellers at [www.Zazzle.com](http://www.Zazzle.com).

Turns out many other people had my same idea, made their own version of it and then started selling customized slogans on T-shirts and bumper stickers at Zazzle.com. I chose the clearest version of the bumper sticker with that funny yet strong slogan and ordered five copies of it for a few clients.

Next I discovered how easy it was to not only purchase these propaganda items but to create them myself and even start to sell

my own productions! Just think of the trouble I could get into designing and selling my own right wing laced clothing, bumper stickers, and even dress ties!

Now I was on a mission. A mission to start a new product line of Deans Consulting marketing products loaded with my own slogans and political statements while we still have some free speech left in this country.

To get started I took a public domain image of the red and blue states voting map of 2008 and overlaid my own slogan on top of it.

I had used this version of my political slogan atop this map before on a t-shirt I had designed and bought from VistaPrint.com, but this time I was able to pick the shirt it was to appear on, set my own profit margin which determined the price, and put it out there on my own online store at [www.Zazzle.com/DeansConsulting](http://www.Zazzle.com/DeansConsulting).

Zazzle enables us to determine our profit margin but advises to keep it below 50 percent for it to sell better. I set my bud-

get t-shirt at 16 percent profit which automatically adjusted the price to \$13.95.

Though I'll only make \$2.23 a shirt I figure that is just fine since I do not have to store, print or even ship the product. All I did was spend half an hour at home surfing a Web site uploading and customizing text over an image.

To help advertise this endeavor I have imported the HTML window code into my Web site which displays my t-shirt that is available for purchase at Zazzle.com. The plan is after I add more products to my Deans Consulting online store a Zazzle, I'll dedicate a complete Web page on my site to help market those products.

My test t-shirt is up and available for purchase and depending on how that sells I may add additional shirts, stickers, hats and even ties with that same map/slogan combination. I am hoping it will do well since I get positive feedback whenever fellow conservatives see me wearing that shirt. Of course the

negative responses from lefties inspire me just as well.

Robert Beaver founded Zazzle.com 10 years ago with the help of his two sons. They really took off with the \$16 million in venture capital funding they got in 2005 from an earlier Google backer named John Doerr.

Now Zazzle is the leader in online custom printing services that also offer the ability for people to design and sell their own products.

Zazzle.com even has a deal with the United States Postal Service to offer customized postage. This means I could upload my Deans Consulting logo to Zazzle and produce my own postage stamps. It would be cool, but a bit too expensive for postage. I already have some customized stickers I use on envelopes that I have not used up yet.

Deals were struck to enable Zazzle users to access and utilize images from companies and franchises like Disney and Star Wars. This opens up hundreds of images not before legally available to use on t-shirts and

stickers due to copyright issues.

The international quest is on for Zazzle after establishing a local presence last year in the United Kingdom and just this month starting offices in Australia and Canada. In November of 2008 they linked up with Pitney Bowes in a collaboration to launch a new online retail center of customized business products.

This enables complete organizations to purchase and personalize one-of-a-kind and high quality products to reflect their business and marketing needs.

Bottom line: The next time you have an idea for a t-shirt or bumper sticker go to Zazzle.com to create it quickly, start up your own online store and began your journey to becoming an Internet-based business sensation.

Next week's column: Continuing Malware battle.

*John Deans of DeansConsulting.com is a Brenham area computer networking consultant who can be reached at 289-2233 or [John@DeansConsulting.com](mailto:John@DeansConsulting.com) for questions and comments.*