

A Guide To Pad Printing

WHAT IS IT?

Pad printing is a method of printing a 2-D image onto a 3-D object. Swiss watchmakers were the first to use pad printing in the 1940's and the first commercial pad printer was invented by Wilfried Philip in 1968. So if you see a watch, golfball, thermos, pen, or any other 3-D object with a logo on it, it's most likely done with pad printing.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

A Plate

The image being printed is etched into the plate. The first photo-etched plates were used by Kodak in the 1960's. Polymer plates are used for small to medium length prints, and acid-etched, laser-etched, and machine-engraved steel plates are for long runs.

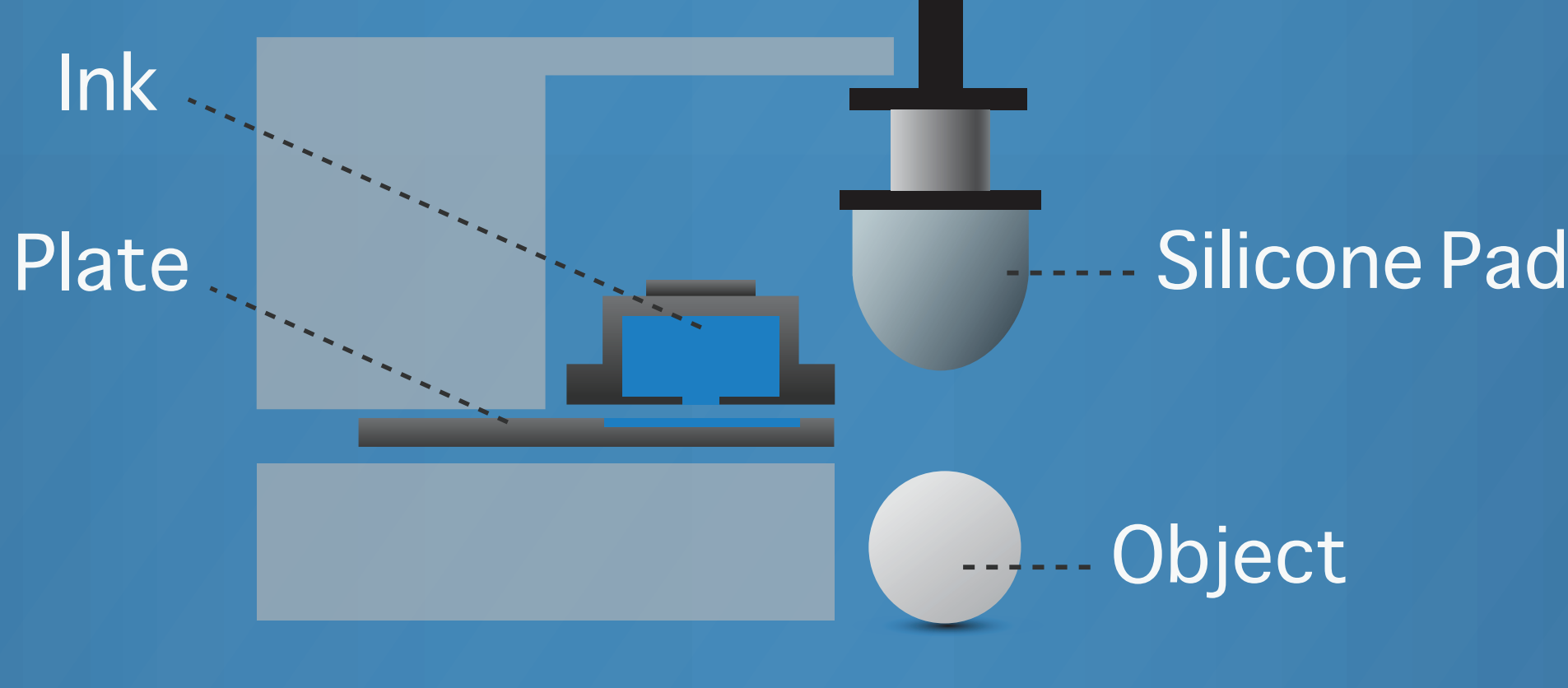
Ink

The inks used in pad printing are made to dry extremely fast, have a high pigment percentage and a faster solvent mixture. When choosing an ink you'll need to keep in mind the material your printing on, it's surface texture and it's color.

A Silicone Pad

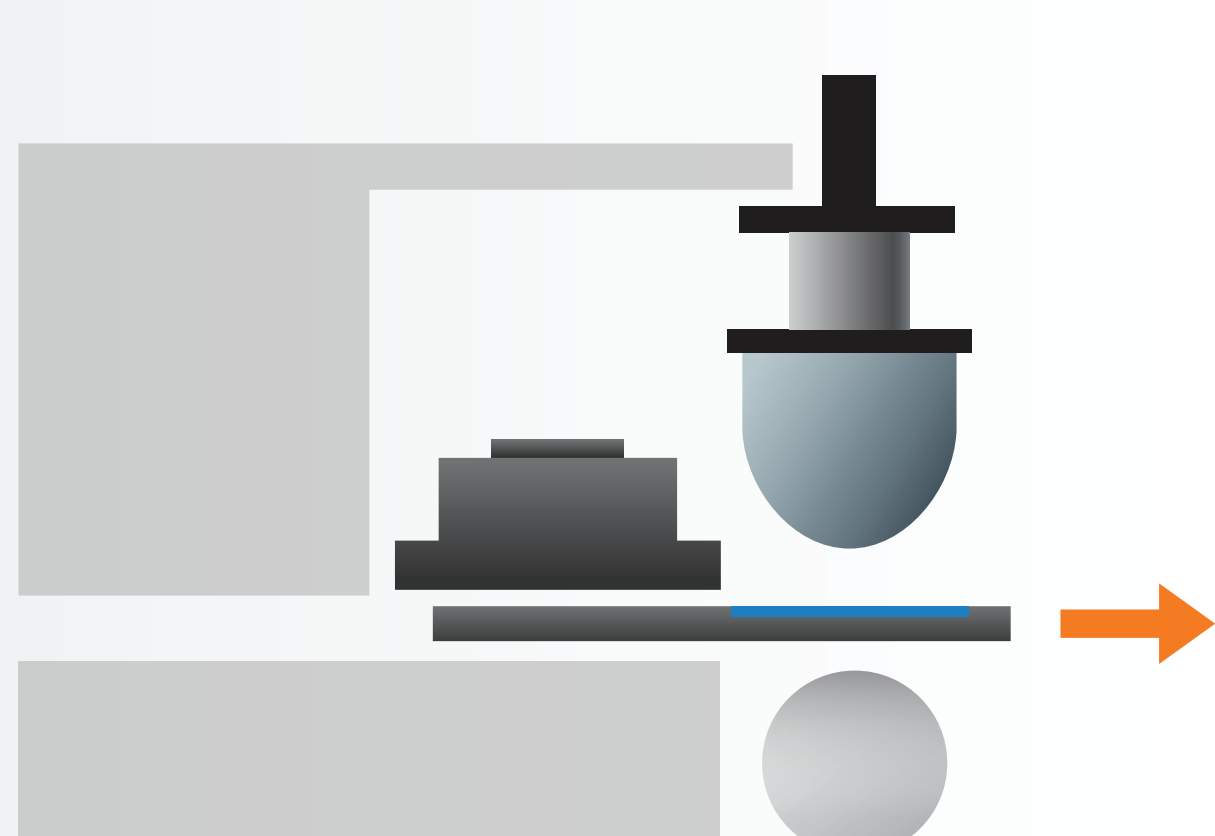
The silicone pad is used to print the image onto the objects surface. The silicone is important because it picks up ink from the flat plate and then transfer the image to the 3-D object without distorting it. Pads can be shaped differently and have a wide range of hardness to best fit the image being printed on.

THE PROCESS



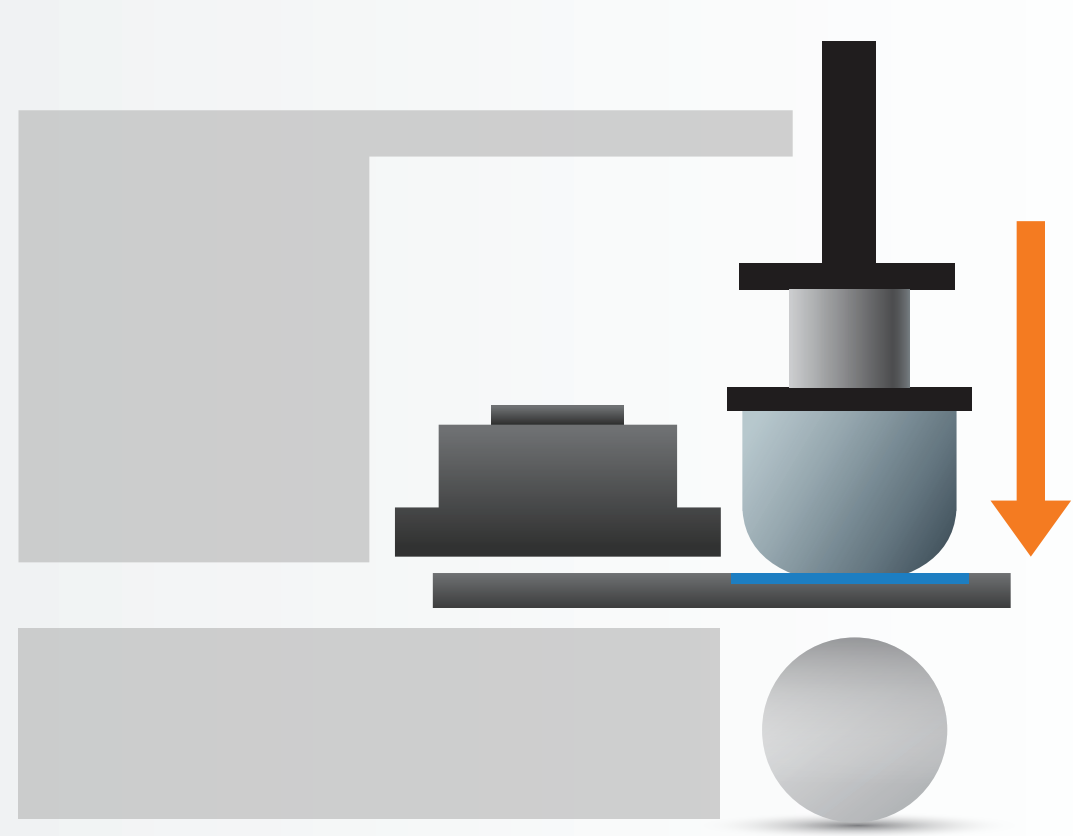
1

The inked plate is slid out below the pad.



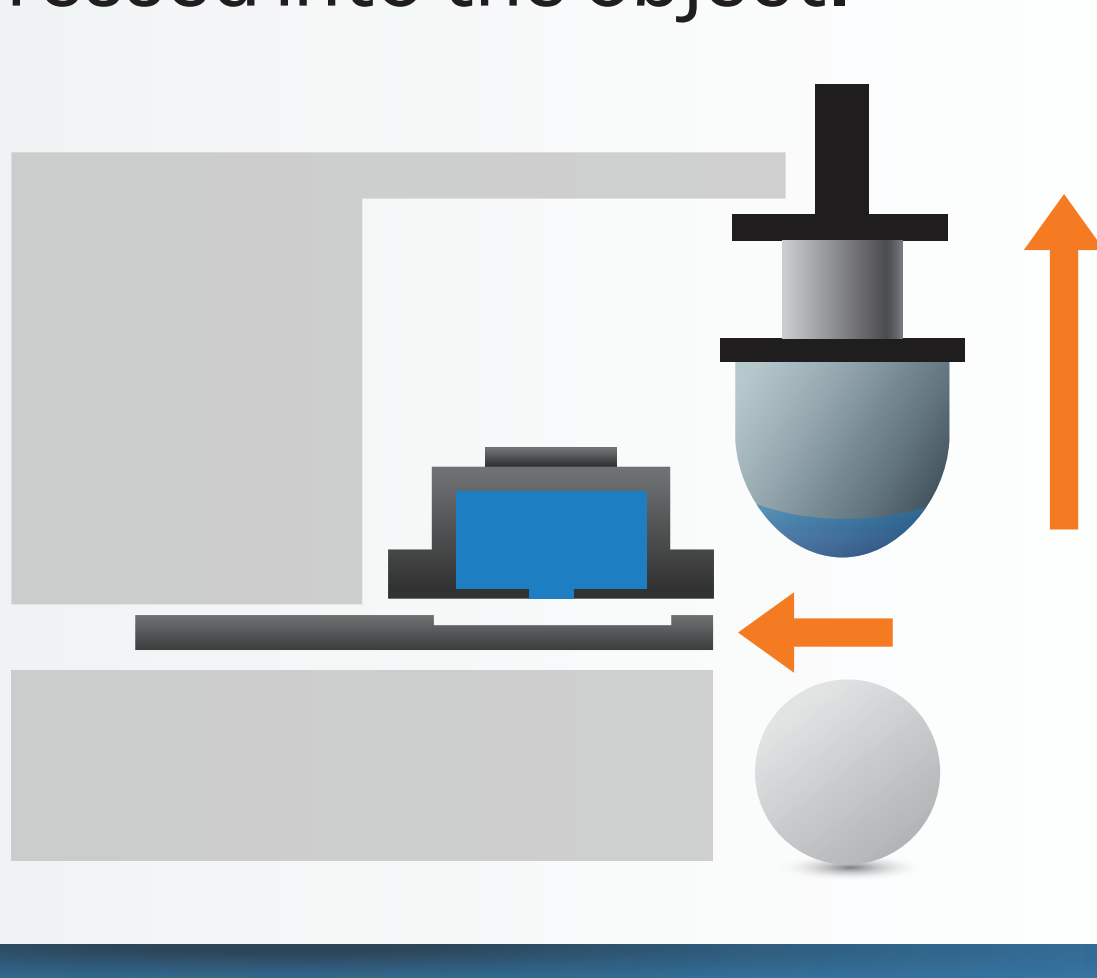
2

The pad is then presses into the plate and soaks the ink.



3

The plate is then slid back so the pad can be pressed into the object.



4

The inked pad is then pressed into the object to leave the image.



5

The object is left with the image printed on it and you're done.

