



Application Note



Thermal Transfer Overprinting

Achieve a quality code to match your quality snack brand image

The challenge

Brand marketers have long understood the high stakes of fighting for impulse purchases. Brand representation and packaging can make the difference between capturing a sale and losing one. Clean, crisp codes can only add to your brand's appeal while poor quality codes can have a detrimental effect. Though only a small component of your brand experience, code quality can be an influencer at the point of sale and therefore, it is important to consider your coding solution as part of your branding efforts.

The Videojet advantage

Videojet understands how important code quality is to the visual appeal of your packaging. We offer a wide array of Thermal Transfer Overprinters (TTO) and supplies that can provide high quality codes that won't detract from that appeal. With decades of coding experience in the snack industry, we can provide expertise on both printer and supply selection and help you to seamlessly integrate the ideal solution into your production line.

Code quality matters

In an extremely competitive industry, companies must fight for every share point. 70% of consumer buying decisions are made at the retail shelf¹ and with decisions being made in mere seconds, packaging visual cues can impact that decision. While there hasn't been specific research on the effect that poor quality coding has on purchase decisions, there are logical benefits to maximizing shelf appeal by avoiding anything that could detract from a product's appearance.

Analog technologies historically used in the snack industry include hot stampers and roller coders. Both of these use metal stamps that are heated up on a block. A main detractor of these technologies is the downtime associated with a code change since the stamps need to be cooled, manually replaced and then reheated before printing. As is often common with these coding methods, stamps are often worn or broken, which can lead to poor print quality and even perforation of the packing film. These issues hinder your ability to run your line at peak performance, create waste and rework, and detract from the critically important visual representation of the package and brand.

Improved visual appeal and ease of use

TTO is a digital coding technology for flexible film packaging, including snack bags, and was engineered not only to avoid these pitfalls but also allow you to add visual variation to your packaging. Advanced suppliers of TTO offer:

- High resolution coding (300 dots per inch/12 dots per mm) that mimics pre-printed print quality
- The ability to alter the height and thickness of the characters in the code
- A printhead that is a solid ceramic block with no sharp edges, helping to eliminate the possibility of perforating the packaging film
- Fast, simple code changes

¹ Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper's Mind, Heart and Wallet, Deloitte, 2007

Advancements in coding technology can bring new opportunities for enhancing the visual representation of your packaging on the shelf, but there are other systemic elements (including supplies) to consider before making the transition. Snack production has unique environmental challenges as well as varying types of filling machinery and packaging types. These elements, in addition to production workflow, ease of integration with your existing equipment, processes and staff should all be carefully evaluated and planned for when selecting a coding technology.

Identifying the right ribbon for your application

Selecting a coding solution also includes picking the right ribbon. Not all ribbons are created equal.

Specific application needs, such as smudge resistance or high-resolution bar codes or even packaging film type can affect ribbon selection. Additionally, applications utilizing cooking oils, salt or that experience airborne particulates will dictate which ribbon is best for the application. Understanding these factors, experienced suppliers should offer an advanced portfolio of high-quality TTO ribbons, and their expertise can help you get the most from your TTO printer. With variations engineered for optimal substrate adhesion in a wide selection of colors, snack producers are sure to find an ideal Videojet ribbon for their unique application, packaging type and brand image.

The right solution for a high quality code

Videojet recently helped a US potato chip manufacturer upgrade to TTO from hot stamping. They wanted to improve their code quality with high resolution printing, lessen their downtime for code changeovers and achieve the ease of printing real-time data. The installation was such a success that the manufacturer replaced 22 of their hot stamping machines with Videojet's DataFlex® line of TTO printers.

Given the challenges, TTO is an effective, digital coding solution for snack producers using flexible film packaging. Digital coding allows quick and easy online code changes, and advanced TTO technologies can be equipped with intuitive software systems and user-friendly touch-based controllers. These controllers take the guesswork (and potential error) out of code selection. When combined with high quality ribbons that are optimized for your production environment, packaging type and coding requirements, TTO printers can provide producers with clean, crisp, high resolution coding with near letter quality results.



Poor quality hot stamp code



High quality TTO code

The Bottom Line

When fighting for impulse purchases, every element of your packaging presentation counts. Videojet understands the importance of code quality, and with over four decades of coding experience in the snack industry, we can help you specify the right TTO solution and ribbon for your application.

If you are interested in learning more about advanced TTO technology or upgrading your line, ask your Videojet sales representative for more guidance. Also, visit our website at www.videojet.com for more information.

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