



Application Note



Thermal Transfer Overprinting Choosing the right TTO for integration into your packaging line

The Challenge

In flexible packaging applications, customers need to consider how they will integrate their chosen coding option into OEM packaging machinery. Integration challenges can be both physical, in terms of space and the need for mounting accessories, or software and communications-based. The cost of a printer is dwarfed by the investment in the overall packaging line. But choosing the wrong coding solution can seriously degrade the performance of the much larger investment.

The Videojet Advantage

Videojet Thermal Transfer Overprinter (TTO) products have been engineered by packaging industry experts to simplify all aspects of interaction from OEM installation to customer operation. Videojet offers TTO solutions to help you keep pace with ever increasing production volumes and can further support your requirements with a range of leading ribbon solutions, all backed by one of the largest field service networks in the industry.

Customer concerned about upgrade due to integration challenges

A leading supplier of high quality meat products for the European market was having difficulty meeting the growing demand from the large supermarket chains they supplied. The company's meat products were irregular in terms of shape and density, requiring each individual pack to be weighed as part of the packaging process, ensuring the full value could be achieved for each pack. The code format required printing of a bar code, product weight, and product price directly onto a label using a Thermal Transfer Overprinter (TTO).

The customer's single biggest challenge was the fact the production volume was limited by the throughput of their existing coding solution. The coder's software and on-board memory created a real limitation in the communications speed with the weighing system, limiting the packaging line to 65 packs per minute. However, the customer was hesitant to look beyond their existing coding supplier out of concern that mechanical and software integration would be too challenging and that operator retraining could introduce yet further problems.

Changing coding supplier came with significant operational benefits

After considering the customer's coding and line integration needs, Videojet recommended the Videojet IP DataFlex® Plus Thermal Transfer Overprinter (TTO) as the ideal solution. The printer addressed the customer's most pressing needs by offering faster software and greater memory capacity, and therefore far greater throughput. Based upon the customer's line set-up, the new system could operate at a maximum 120 packs per minute, almost doubling line throughput.

The customer was also pleased to learn how simple the integration of the IP DataFlex Plus could be and that the integration would be less costly than they originally feared. The Videojet printer was a direct replacement for the customer's competitive TTO solution, which meant:

- All existing brackets could be reused for the IP DataFlex Plus installation
- All existing label formats that had been created using a competitive software package could be downloaded directly to the Videojet TTO with no modifications*

*This functionality is enabled by performing a software update to the standard IP DataFlex Plus.

For the customer, the operational benefits of upgrading extended beyond the critical throughput improvement. To start with, the recommended Videojet TTO is an IP rated product that is ideal for applications where customers wash down the production line frequently. This particular customer required daily washdown procedures, which required its operators to bag the old coders prior to washing down the production line. This was not only time consuming, but it created the potential for incompletely bagging the coders and damaging the printer units during the washdown process. The Videojet IP DataFlex Plus provided IP65 protection for the printer unit once the IP cover was fitted into place. The IP cover is applied in less than 20 seconds – a significant time savings over the prior bagging process.

In addition to the added ingress protection over the prior competitive printers, the customer was pleased with the other standard features of the Videojet printers:

- Available 1200m ribbon length results in long print runs between line stops for ribbon changes
- Clutchless bi-directional ribbon drive enables an industry-leading 0.5mm ribbon gap between prints – ensuring ribbon is not unnecessarily wasted
- Intuitive color touchscreen user interface is incredibly simple for the operators to learn – requiring a minimal amount of training to operate

The Videojet solution addressed all of the customers concerns and requirements from integration to line throughput to other operational considerations.



The Bottom Line

Achieving a trouble-free upgrade to an existing coding solution is entirely possible, and it helps to select a coding supplier that understands how to address the integration challenges from day one. Videojet TTO printers are designed for worry-free integration and help you ensure the optimal performance of your entire packaging line.

Videojet stands ready to help you find the right coding solution for your flexible packaging application.

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