





Application Note

Candy and confectionery Value-added coding simplifies film management

The Challenge

Many candy and confectionery companies carry a variety of flexible films for their bagging and flow wrapping lines. Companies can use different films on the same line for different product flavors, customers, and potentially different countries and languages. Managing these differences leads to additional cost for the company. This application note explains how Thermal Transfer Overprinters (TTO) can be used to reduce the need for so many varieties of pre-printed film.

The Videojet Advantage

Candy and confectionery companies look to Videojet to provide innovative printing solutions backed by the leading experts in TTO technology.

- With state-of-the-art sample labs, Videojet helps you make the right coding decision for your applications
- The Videojet patented clutchless ribbon drive minimizes maintenance-related downtime and maximizes ribbon efficiency
- Videojet works directly with most of the major packaging machinery manufacturers to integrate printers seamlessly into your existing lines

What issues can arise from using multiple pre-printed films on the same packaging line?

Pre-printed film management

Managing inventory levels of many film types can be challenging, especially for products that do not run very often. Many confectionery companies will have to carry safety or excess stock for each film. More film on hand leads to more money tied up in inventory, more storage space and additional time and labor dedicated to inventory management.

Additionally, any changes to the packaging may require disposal of the old film and significant time and money to create new packaging.

Changeovers

The activities required to changeover the packaging machine range from cleaning the machine to making adjustments based on the size of the new product. Typically, the film will also have to be changed. This requires identifying the film needed, bringing the new film to the machine, replacing the old film in the machine and returning the old film to its original storage location. The time required to modify the printer message will only be a fraction of the film changeover time.

Changeovers are particularly important for smaller companies and co-packers who change products or packages multiple times per day.

How can TTO help deliver higher line productivity?

TTO printers deliver high resolution images on flexible packaging without the need for solvents. They are capable of printing variable information such as ingredients, logos, marketing information, bar codes, lot number, pricing and dates in different languages directly onto the flexible film. A confectionery company can benefit greatly by using generic standard film on its products and differentiating each product using the information printed with TTO instead of using pre-printed film.

Pros:

Reduced Changeover Time. Changeover time can be dramatically reduced by using generic film. Instead of finding, replacing and returning many films, you can simply change the code on the printer and immediately start running the new product. Digital printers have the capability to store content for each product on the line.

Quick Packaging Changes. Whether required by new regulation, design change or product introduction, any changes to the packaging would be dramatically easier and cheaper by using generic film with a TTO printer. If using pre-printed film for a specific product, changes to the pre-printed information requires ordering new film and potentially throwing away the old film still in inventory. With generic film and a TTO printer, all that is required is a simple adjustment to the content of the code using Videojet CLARISOFT® software.

Reduction in Film Inventory. By using generic film on some or all of the products, confectionery companies can eliminate safety stock for multiple films. The amount of film in the facility should be drastically reduced leading to less warehousing space, inventory management and money tied up in inventory. In addition, by buying fewer types of film in larger quantities, the company could potentially receive volume discounts from its packaging suppliers.

Cons:

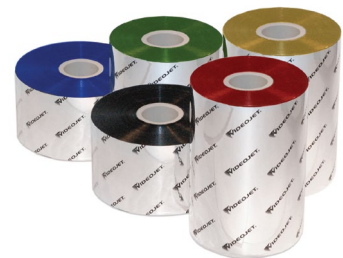
Multicolored Graphics. A TTO printer has the ability to print logos and other marketing information. However, while ribbons are available in more than 10 colors, a printer can only use one ribbon at a time, and thus, the content on the package will not be in multiple colors unless multiple printers are used, each with a different colored ribbon. Therefore, one should carefully consider which content to pre-print on the package and which to print with the printer. For instance, it may make sense to pre-print standard marketing content on the film (such as the logo) and print product specific information (such as product name and nutritional information) with the TTO printer.

Print Area. When purchasing a TTO printer, customers have the option of determining the width of both the printhead and ribbon. The width determines the size of the print area on the package. If the print area is not large enough for all of the content, it may be worthwhile to focus on a part of the package where the content varies the most from product to product and to pre-print the remaining information.



The Bottom Line

Using TTO to print on generic packaging film presents unique benefits and tradeoffs that should be carefully considered. Candy and confectionery companies can save money, improve inventory management, reduce changeover time and simplify packaging changes. Customers need to weigh these benefits against the color limitations and print width options inherent in TTO technology.



Solutions are available for your unique application, but the key is finding the right one. Ask your Videojet representative for more guidance, a production line audit or sample testing on your substrate.

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