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.
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.