



Application Note



Tobacco

Label print & apply for tobacco track and trace



With ongoing track and trace regulations such as the EU Tobacco Products Directive and the global implementation of FCTC protocols, it is essential that coding for bundle and master case is compliant with these standards for tobacco product manufacturers.

The Videojet® 9550 Label Print and Apply (LPA) system is able to meet both the speed and data requirements of tobacco case identification. The 9550 integrates and is fully compatible with all known leading serialization and aggregation systems to receive and apply compliant track and trace codes.

The challenge:

Product identification for tobacco and other nicotine products is critical not only for individual packs but also for bundles and master cases that are used to move products from manufacturers to store shelves. Ongoing and time sensitive roll outs of track and trace mandates from bodies such as the European Union (EU) and the World Health Organization (WHO) include aggregation and tracking for bundles and master cases and their contents. Speed and accuracy are paramount to meeting production requirements and producers cannot afford to have bottlenecks if labeling systems can't keep up.

Conventional print and apply labeling (LPA) technology has remained essentially unchanged for over 20 years, and most designs are no longer adequate to match line speeds or to provide the type of uninterrupted operation that is required. Moreover, in 24 hours/day, 7 days/week production environments, it is impossible to make up for the inefficiency by running longer. The mechanical processes of conventional LPA machines are often significant contributors to labeling errors and downtime.

Videojet advantage:

Tobacco manufacturers can look to Videojet to provide a wide range of reliable, high-speed coding and track and trace solutions. Videojet has a proven record of supporting producers from small, local companies to global industry leaders, integrating our coding solutions into nearly any type of production machinery used in the tobacco industry.

The Videojet 9550 offers a fundamental change in the approach to conventional LPA systems. The 9550 print engine and applicator are designed to work as a coordinated system that directly applies each label, enabling speeds that weren't previously achievable when a separate mechanical tamp was required. With Intelligent Motion™ Technology, the 9550 also helps improve throughput by eliminating the requirement for frequent manual adjustments of the labeler. Additionally, the system eliminates more than 80% of the wear parts that have traditionally been a cause of maintenance-related downtime and offers simple ribbon and label changes in 60 seconds or less.

The importance of reliable case tracking



Tobacco and nicotine product manufacturers are under pressure both to manufacture their products as efficiently as possible and to track those products through the point of sale to fight illicit trade and comply with active and growing global guidelines.

For all tobacco and smoking products, the track and trace imperative includes labeling and aggregation of bundles and master cases with serialized and aggregated data for the contents of each case. Demands for greater product security are already driving coding needs from the individual unit level through to the master case. Local regulations also may require producers to move more quickly than EU or WHO track and trace requirements. Additionally, some current and fast-paced legislation is making it imperative to implement track and trace solutions immediately.

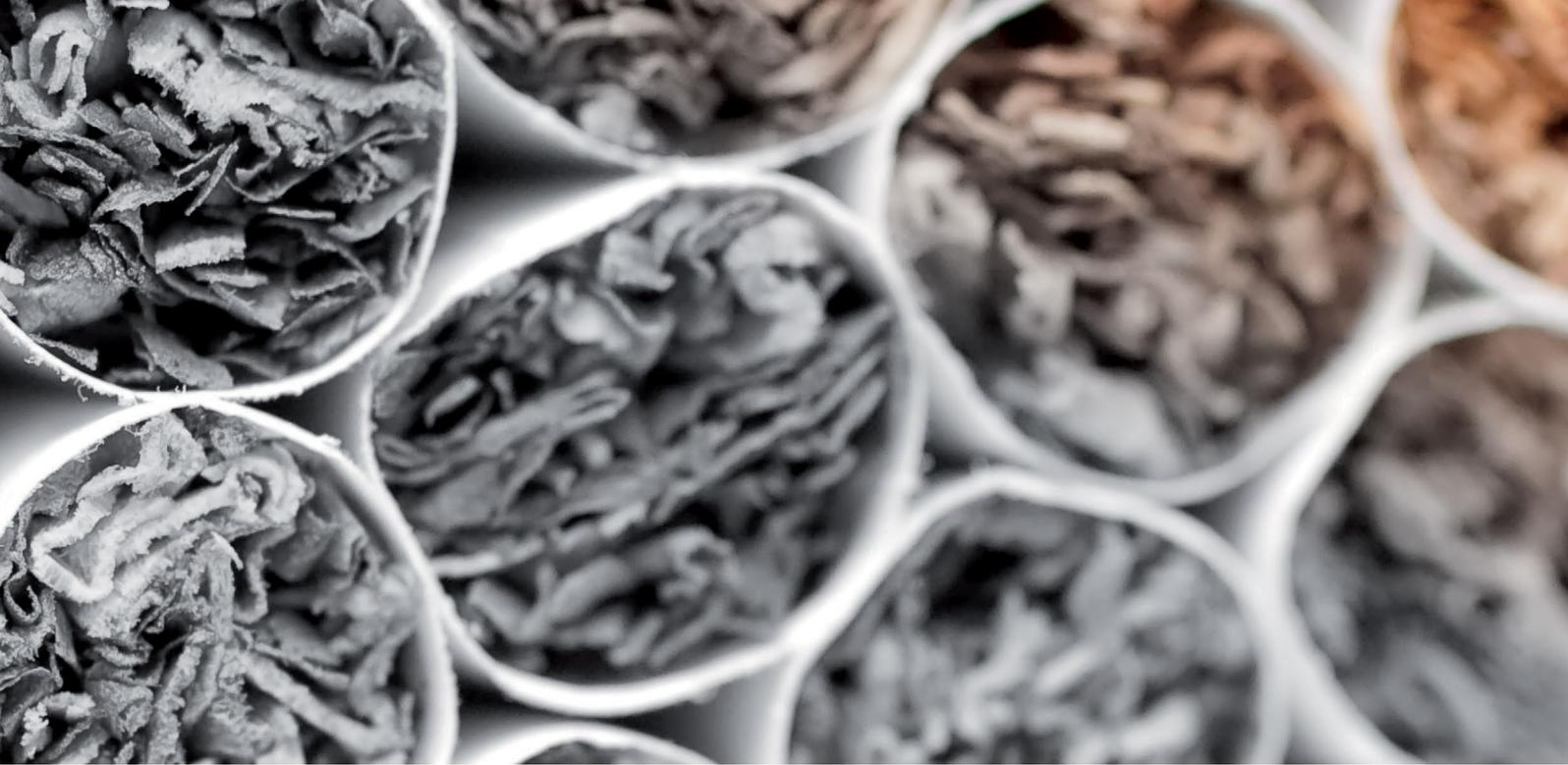
Production interruptions and downtime can be incredibly costly for tobacco manufacturers, especially for high-speed, 24x7 operations. In these instances, running longer to catch up to production targets is not an option. For smaller producers, production interruptions can strain maintenance staff and also substantially impact overall output.

Conventional LPA systems have shortcomings that are inherent to their two-part nature, with separate print engine and label applicator systems. Such systems present numerous ways for labels to be misplaced on the applicator, causing jams and missed packages.

Because the label printer and applicator in traditional LPA systems operate almost independently, the printer produces the label in advance and holds it on the tamp via vacuum until it is ready to be applied. This multiple step process using many moving parts, combined with

the need for the mechanical stroke of the tamp, often limits throughput to fewer than 80 bundles per minute. Conventional LPA systems also require plant air to hold the label prior to application, adding running costs and maintenance complexity to the system.

For tobacco and nicotine product manufacturers, an easy-to-use LPA system that minimizes unplanned maintenance and has fast label and ribbon changes means fewer worries for labeling. The ability to use the Videojet 9550 LPA as part of a track and trace solution means that this system supports near and longer term coding requirements for all tobacco producers.



Key advantages of the Videojet 9550 LPA solution

Designed to help producers eliminate jams and never miss a label, the Videojet 9550 LPA system can help improve throughput and keep lines running, even in high speed, 24/7 environments. With less required maintenance than traditional LPA systems and ribbon and label changes in 60 seconds or less, the 9550 empowers maintenance personnel to concentrate on other line needs. A proven thermal transfer print engine delivers automatic ribbon save as standard to help minimize ribbon usage.

The DirectApply™ technology utilized by the 9550 LPA is specifically designed to correctly place labels every time without an applicator or air, preventing missed cases or unreadable labels. Tamp applicators on conventional LPA systems have up to 11 adjustable items that must be finely calibrated to correctly receive labels from the print engine and then apply them on every package. With Videojet DirectApply™ technology, these adjustments are not necessary. If DirectApply™ technology isn't suitable for your application, Videojet offers various high speed tamp applicator options and a range of label sizes.

The Videojet 9550 can support line speeds up to 30 meters/min (or higher in certain situations) and has proven installations at tobacco producers running at up to 130 bundles per minute. This higher throughput is possible in the 9550 because there is no waiting for a tamp arm to extend and retract for every label. In some instances, a single 9550 can replace multiple conventional LPAs, thus potentially avoiding the need for split lines in high-speed tobacco operations.

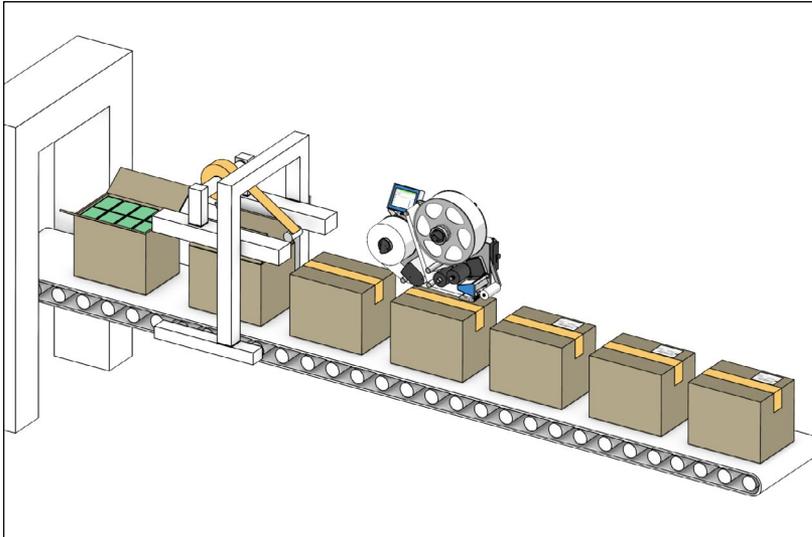
Because conventional LPA systems often print labels in advance and have multiple labels between the printhead and the applicator, the likelihood of applying labels to the wrong package is increased. With Videojet DirectApply™ technology, labels are applied directly to a case as they are printed, so there is no potential for mix-ups from the time of printing to the actual application. This is particularly important in operations where track and trace information must correspond with every master case.

The Videojet CLARiTY™ user interface minimizes and mistake-proofs operator inputs and delivers built-in code assurance features to help limit waste and potential product recalls resulting from coding errors. This single user interface for the complete 9550 system replaces separate print engine and label applicator control systems on conventional LPAs.

Unique features of the 9550 help drive reduced downtime caused by things such as:

- Misapplied labels and label jams that require line stops to clear and realign
- Frequent system adjustments
- Repair of wear parts
- Extended change time for ribbons and labels
- Inconvenient and cumbersome process for loading new jobs





Tobacco line integrated with a Videojet® 9550 LPA system with DirectApply™ technology.



The Bottom Line

The Videojet 9550 LPA is track and trace compatible and removes some of the most common reasons for downtime:

1. Label and ribbon jams
2. Misapplied labels
3. Changeover time
4. Mechanical failures
5. Mechanical adjustments

Contact Videojet today to find out more about tobacco track and trace solutions and the benefits of Videojet DirectApply™ technology.

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