The challenge
Colored plastic bottles, jars and containers help personal and home care products stand out on crowded consumer shelves and enhance your brands. However, codes on colored plastic often are difficult to read, may rub-off or may be challenging to correctly place on a package. Unclear, non-permanent or misplaced codes can diminish brand reputation.

The Videojet advantage
Videojet offers a wide range of solutions for achieving your desired code on colored plastic bottles, jars and containers.

- With over 640 application-unique fluids, Videojet manufactures more fluids and supplies than any other industrial coding and marking manufacturer and can help you determine which ink is best for your plastic package
- Videojet offers the widest selection of laser marking systems, providing a permanent code solution for virtually any application
- Videojet’s advanced thermal transfer overprinting technology produces high-quality coding directly to pre-printed labels placed on bottles, jars or containers

Over 80% of personal & home care bottles, jars and containers are made from HDPE or PET1. These substrates pose coding challenges due to material surface, shape and color. Follow these three steps to ensure the optimal coding solutions for your colored plastic package.

1. Evaluate your code needs
An optimal code solution is specific to the product and package. Before you determine the best coding solution for your products, it is important to think about why you are coding and define your code goals. First, consider the following questions:

Should the code stand out?
While high contrast codes can make it easier for the customer to find a code, not all products require prominent coding for consumer attention. For example, expiration dates should be clearly visible to consumers, however standard batch / lot information used for recall or tracking may not require the same high contrast. High contrast codes, if not necessary for consumers, may also detract from brand image. Determine if your code content requires a high contrast code or if a less prominent code is more desirable for your product.

Will the code rub-off?
While permanent codes are usually optimal, plastic packaging includes slick plasticizers which support plastic flexibility but make coding adhesion difficult. Also, many personal and home care products contain ingredients that can easily remove ink codes. Fragrances, cleaning products and detergents which, if spilled, often smear or remove ink codes on plastic. Additionally, some personal and home care products are used in wet environments which can erode a code over time. However, a permanent code is important for many products to protect customers and the brand. For example, many home care chemicals can be harmful to consumers, therefore must be correctly marked. Evaluate your product characteristics to determine if a permanent code is important.

Where should the code be located?
Often overlooked, code placement can impact both contrast and permanence of a code. If possible, considering coding on a label instead of directly to the plastic can increase code contrast and permanence, especially on dark colored bottles. Often special print windows – areas on a bottle or label which have been pre-printed with a different color – can also increase code contrast.

1 Euromonitor packaging database. Based on 2012 package type estimates.
The bottom line

Plastic bottles, jars and containers are advantageous for conveying your brand position but can be difficult to code. Videojet can help you code on your plastic bottles, jars and containers. Our experienced sales team can help you determine your coding requirements, discuss the trade-offs of the different coding technologies, and provide you with code samples on your packaging to help you be confident in your coding decision.

With a wide range of advanced coding technologies and over 640 application-unique fluids and supplies, Videojet has a coding solution for your plastic packaging.