

BEST BEFORE  
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berries

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Application note



Thermal Transfer Overprinting

## Thermal Transfer Printing for flexible pouch applications



In the past 3 years, the global pouch packaging industry has grown by over 16% with predictions showing growth of up to 40% by 2017. This trend is rapidly reaching more markets, resulting in a wider variety of products being packaged into pouches, for example squeezable baby food, snack food, personal and household items, juices, and coffee products.

### The Challenge:

This recent trend to convert from conventional packaging to flexible pouches brings many benefits to the producer in terms of lower distribution and logistics costs and better shelf appeal, but the conversion may also require additional capital investment including new coding solutions. Many brand managers find the print quality from traditional analog and low-resolution digital coders detracts from the aesthetics of the pouch design. Additionally, the packaging team must identify coding solutions that compensate for the inherent variation in thickness of the unfilled pouch due to the zippers, gussets, and other fitments that can be up to 4.5mm thick, which is unique compared to conventional packaging designs. With the array of coding options available, identifying a coding solution that complements the high quality of the new packaging designs can be a daunting task.

### Videojet advantage:

Videojet offers a range of thermal transfer overprinting (TTO) products with features specifically designed to address the challenges outlined above. A simple software setting can retract the thermal transfer printhead up to 4.5mm, ensuring that virtually all re-sealable pouch types can be coded with ease. Applications running on rotary machines can benefit from a bespoke traversing bracket that automatically positions the TTO printer depending on whether or not the rotary machine is stationary or indexing. When stationary the printer is moved close to the pouch to print on the film; and when indexing the printer moves away from the pouch to avoid contact during rotation. Additionally, Videojet ensures our customers receive the most comprehensive technical and integration support by providing the industry's largest global network of highly trained and experienced field technicians and integration specialists, who are always ready to help; no matter where in the world that support is needed.

# Pouch coding with TTO

Thermal transfer overprinting is ideal for coding onto pouches, as it is designed to print high quality codes on flat, thin, flexible films.



## The appeal of flexible pouches

As more and more companies look for ways to reduce waste, flexible pouches provide a lightweight, versatile and durable packaging solution. For example, packing nuts in zipper pouches, removes the need for a heavy and rigid can or tub. Flexible pouches also help reduce transportation and storage costs, providing more compact packing options to allow more product to be packed in the same amount of space.

In addition to the operational benefits, pouch producers also gain retail advantage by providing consumers with more attractive packaging that delivers great shelf appeal.

Many practical re-sealable options are available including:

- Zippers
- Re-closable screw tops
- Re-usable tapes

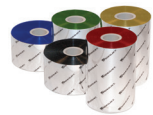
These new sealing options help preserve product freshness and ensure consumers waste fewer products and get more value for their money.



## High quality packaging demands high quality codes

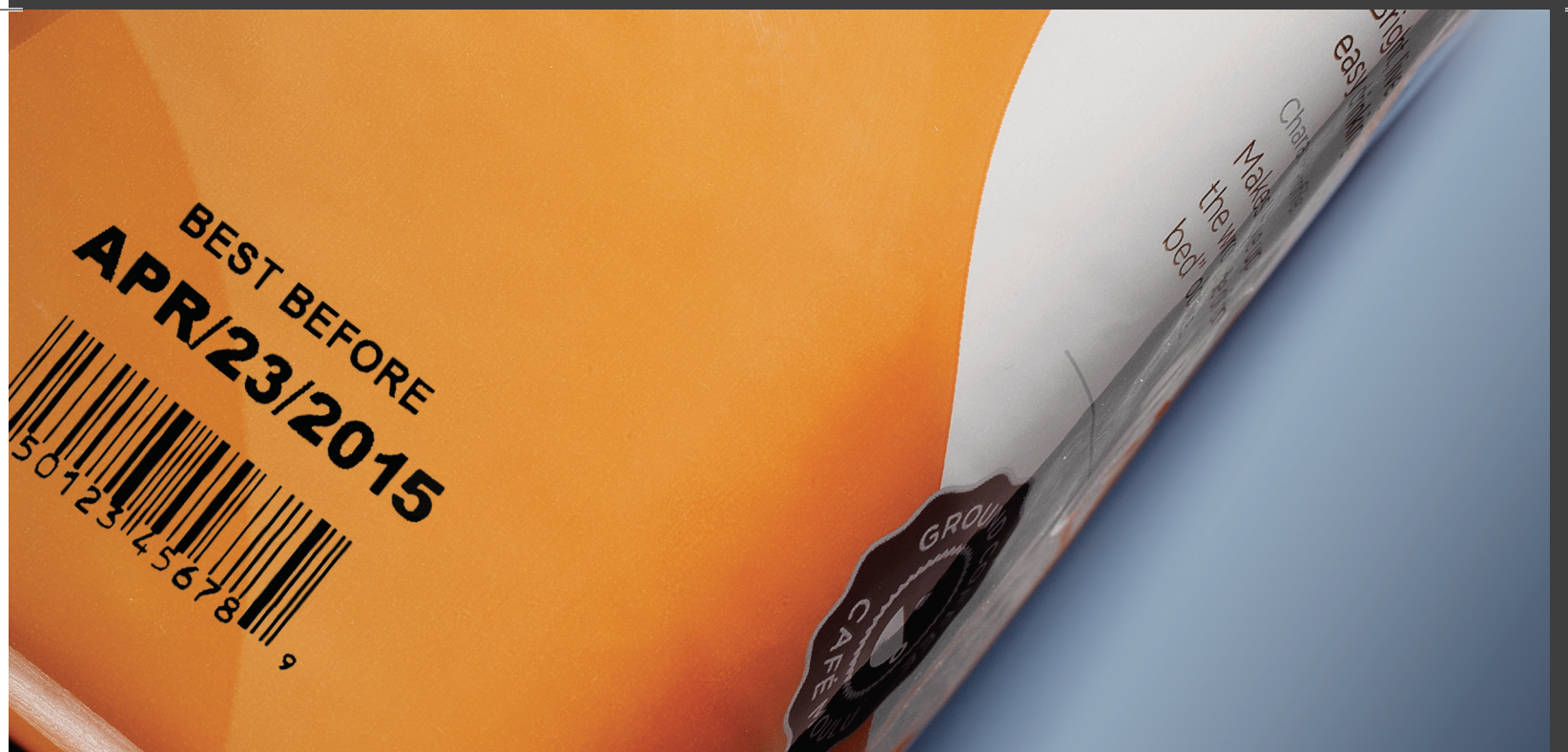
Pouches improve shelf presence and provide increased branding opportunities with attractively colored, high quality artwork. Brand marketing teams aim to maximize the packaging artwork for marketing and promotional purposes and therefore want to avoid unattractive or poor quality codes that could detract from the design.

TTO printers provide 300 dpi (12 dots/mm) print quality – making them a great option for printing high quality text or graphics that don't detract from the pouch design. They can also print very fine text for nutritional and ingredients statements. With a choice of 12 different colored ribbons, producers are virtually guaranteed to find a perfect match for their packaging design.



An additional coding requirement for many pouch producers is the need to print ingredient information. Legislation in many countries requires that specific ingredients are highlighted on the pack to assist consumers with allergies to make educated buying decisions. TTO is capable of wide format, on-demand printing of fine text for nutritional, ingredient and allergen statements. This helps ensure producers can meet the minimum labeling requirements of the Food industry globally, and also reduces the number of pre-printed packaging film SKU's held in stock.

**Whether it's to produce a code that looks like part of the artwork, or to print large amounts of variable data, Videojet's TTO can support the need.**



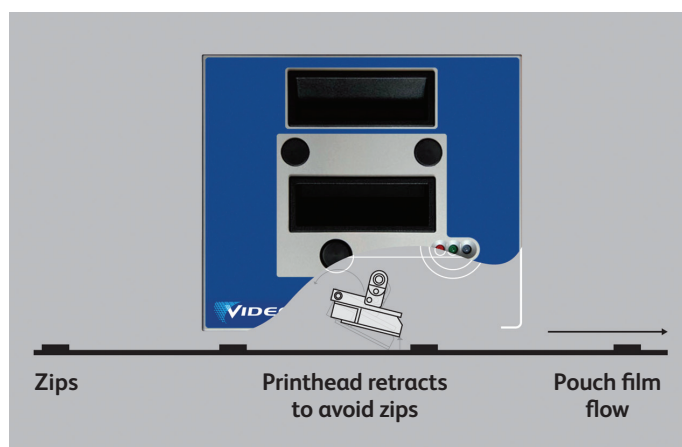
## Pouch coding with TTO

Thermal transfer overprinting is the ideal coding solution for pouch applications as it is designed to print high quality codes on flat, thin, flexible films. Printing on roll stock before pouches are formed allows the printed film to be formed into different pouch types such as zipper, 4-sided, gusseted, stand-up and other pouch variations.

Being able to use zippers, fitments, gussets and package seals are some of the benefits of using pouches. However, all present unique challenges for thermal transfer printing in the packaging line, especially if they are already part of the package before they are printed. Videojet has Custom brackets available for pouching machines, including bespoke traversing system for rotary pouch fillers, to allow printing before pouches are filled.

By using a simple software setting, users can benefit from a printhead that retracts between 0.5mm and 4.5mm, helping ensure that virtually all re-sealable pouch types can be coded without any interference to the various seals.

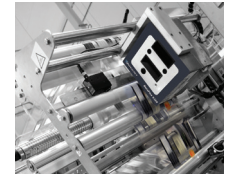
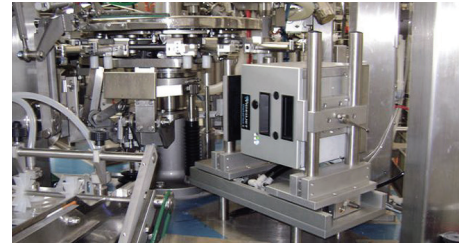
Because pouches can help to prolong the shelf life of perishable goods, many pouch machines are in a washdown environment. Videojet's IP DataFlex offers an IP65 rated printer body that can go from printing to washdown with a simple cassette change in just a few seconds with no special enclosures required.



**A simple software setting can retract the thermal transfer printhead up to 4.5mm**

**Videojet's DataFlex® thermal transfer overprinters are engineered to maximize production line uptime and support waste reduction goals through a number of innovative design features.**

1. The DataFlex line features a patented and proven clutchless ribbon drive which is totally software controlled. This unique design eliminates the ribbon control devices required by other TTO products; devices that can contribute to unscheduled production downtime related to ribbon breaks or ribbon wrinkling.
2. Total automated ribbon control from beginning to the end of the ribbon roll results in consistent print quality and minimizes ribbon waste between prints to 0.5mm.
3. A 1200 meter ribbon length produces more coded pouches per roll of ribbon and subsequently less downtime for replenishment.
4. As operator error is the most common cause of coding errors, the DataFlex line makes it fast and simple to get codes right, and practically impossible to get them wrong. Built-in Code Assurance features ensure the right code is going onto the right pouch time after time, helping to eliminate the need for rework or scrapped product.
5. The intuitive, easy-to-use touch screen interface has intelligent data rules to help operators select the correct code. To further aid the reduction of operator error, a USB scanner option is available to provide fast, easy and fool proof job selection. These features all add up to less chance of error and more correct coded product.
6. The DataFlex thermal transfer overprinters also have multiple power saving options that can be configured to match individual production needs.



## The Bottom Line

Implementing high quality coding on your pouch filling line requires thoughtful planning. Videojet stands ready to help you think through the best solution for your production line. We work closely with the major OEMs to help ensure your printers will integrate seamlessly into your packaging lines and that your coding process is perfectly suited to meet your business needs.

**Ask your Videojet representative for more guidance, a production line audit or sample testing on your substrate.**

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