

How to efficiently code flexible film?

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Flexible film one of the primary packaging materials of choice for food manufacturers and other companies in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. It is inexpensive, efficient to work with and available in a wide range of materials with diverse properties.



And, when it comes to coding flexible film, companies are turning away from mechanical technologies, such as hot stamping and rotary coding, in favour of four digital options that improve traceability and uptime: thermal transfer overprinting (TTO), continuous inkjet (CIJ), thermal inkjet (TIJ) and laser marking.

The challenge for manufacturers is to find the best technology for their application.

How to improve flexible film coding accuracy and cost?

Traditionally, rotary coding and hot stamping have been used to code flexible packaging. However, now that variable data is increasingly used to optimise inventory and enhance traceability (among other benefits) these inflexible, high downtime and expensive methods are ill-suited for modern manufacturers, particularly those with Industry 4.0 initiatives underway or in mind.

The improved performance of the packaging is matched by the increasing functionality of coding solutions.

Coding is steadily becoming more versatile, enabling manufacturers to print increasing amounts of variable information on products, such as the legally required expiry dates, as well as additional data for traceability and for commercial benefit, such as promotional information and QR codes.

Traditional, mechanical technologies, such as hot stamping and rotary coders, are still used in many places, but offer none of these benefits. With their high downtime and susceptibility to human error, they are a drain on the productivity of manufacturers' packaging processes.

Instead, digital technologies are increasingly being used in vertical and horizontal packaging lines to deliver greater productivity, efficient traceability and attractive packaging that meets the expectations of manufacturers, retailers and consumers.

Each of the four digital options – TTO, CIJ, TIJ and laser marking – have advantages and limitations, so manufacturers need to carefully assess which best suits their objectives.

Selecting the right coding technology begins with an analysis of the factors driving the popularity of flexible film and the trend to more complex codes.

To assist customers with this determination, Markem-Imaje has published a white paper that includes setup, handling, required code quality, speed, product type and the size of the print area. It also reviews the rising popularity of flexible film and considers the pros and cons of the various coding choices available.

To download the white paper, visit: <https://www.markem-imaje.com/industries/solutions/how-to-code-flexible-film-efficiently>.

About Pyrotec

Pyrotec is a privately-owned South African company that specialises in providing innovative, top-quality product identification solutions. The company's extensive service offering includes on-pack product identification solutions – including self-adhesive label systems, coding and labelling equipment – as well as financing and cloud-based brand protection, track and trace and consumer engagement services. Founded on a dedication to quality, operational reliability and excellent service, the Cape Town-based company has a national footprint with centres in major cities across the country. With more than 50 years' experience, Pyrotec has two brands operating under its ambit: Pyrotec PackMedia, which includes Pyrotec PackVerifi; and Pyrotec PackMark, including Pyrotec Finance. This proudly independent company is headed up by the managing director, Rowan Beattie. For more information, visit www.packmark.co.za.

About Markem-Imaje

Markem-Imaje, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the US-based Dover Corporation, is a trusted world manufacturer of product identification and traceability solutions, offering a full line of reliable and innovative inkjet, thermal transfer, laser, and print and apply label systems. Markem-Imaje provides global reach to over 50,000 customers with 30 subsidiaries, six technology centres, several equipment repair centres and manufacturing plants with the most comprehensive marking and coding portfolio available in the marketplace. For more information, visit www.markem-imaje.com.

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