

Thermal Transfer Ribbons: A miniguide

Discover which ribbon is best for your
industry and labelling needs



 skanem

Thermal Transfer is a reliable printing technology for applying traceability data to labels and packaging.

Using robust materials, which effortlessly print onto various substrates, ensures high-quality results and minimises maintenance costs. Choose from various cost and performance options to match your application needs.

You can use this miniguide to get an overview of the four main elements necessary to achieve your intended labelling results. The right ribbon must match your: 1. Application needs, 2. Substrate, 3. Durability requirements, and 4. Printer technology.

Want to find out more? Reach out to us directly – our team at Skanem Africa is more than happy to make your labelling needs come to life!

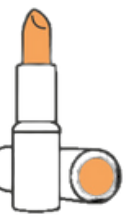
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APPLICATION

Start by identifying your industry and what information you need to print onto your label. We have ribbons that can be applied for different labelling purposes in nearly every industry, including:

- **Medical** (*pharmaceuticals, patient ID wristbands*)
- **Chemical** (*chemical labels, transport labels*)
- **Retail** (*fresh produce, price, size tags*)
- **Warehousing & Logistics** (*shipping, pallets, racks*)
- **Appliances, Electronics & Tools** (*printed circuit board*)
- **Automotive** (*tires, license plates*)
- **And many more...**



SUBSTRATE

Next, consider what label material you will be printing on. The surface of the substrate determines which combination of ribbon, ink, and printer you need to achieve the correct result:

- **Paper or Synthetic?**
 - *Glossy or Matt?*
 - *Coated or Uncoated?*
- **Smooth or Rough?**

DURABILITY

In most cases, your labels will be exposed to certain environments which they must withstand throughout their life cycle. Therefore, both the substrate and the print must be durable enough for the product's intended use:

- **Indoor or outdoor?**
- **Exposure:**
 - *Heat, cold, or humid*
 - *UV*
 - *Smudges, scratches, or corrosion*
 - *Chemicals*
- **Longevity:**
 - *Days, weeks, months, or years?*



PRINTER AND RIBBON

The last step is matching the three previous criteria to the right ribbon, printer, and printer head technology. Not all ribbons fit into each printer, but each printer's head can be adjusted. There are three main types of ribbons, each offering a specific set of qualities when combined with the right type of printer head:

RESIN (Near-Edge + Flat Head):

- *Resistance and Durability*
- *High-End Technical Applications*
- *Super Premium Quality*

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WAX (Flat-Head):

- *Economy and Quality*
- *Short Term Labeling*
- *Limited Durability*

