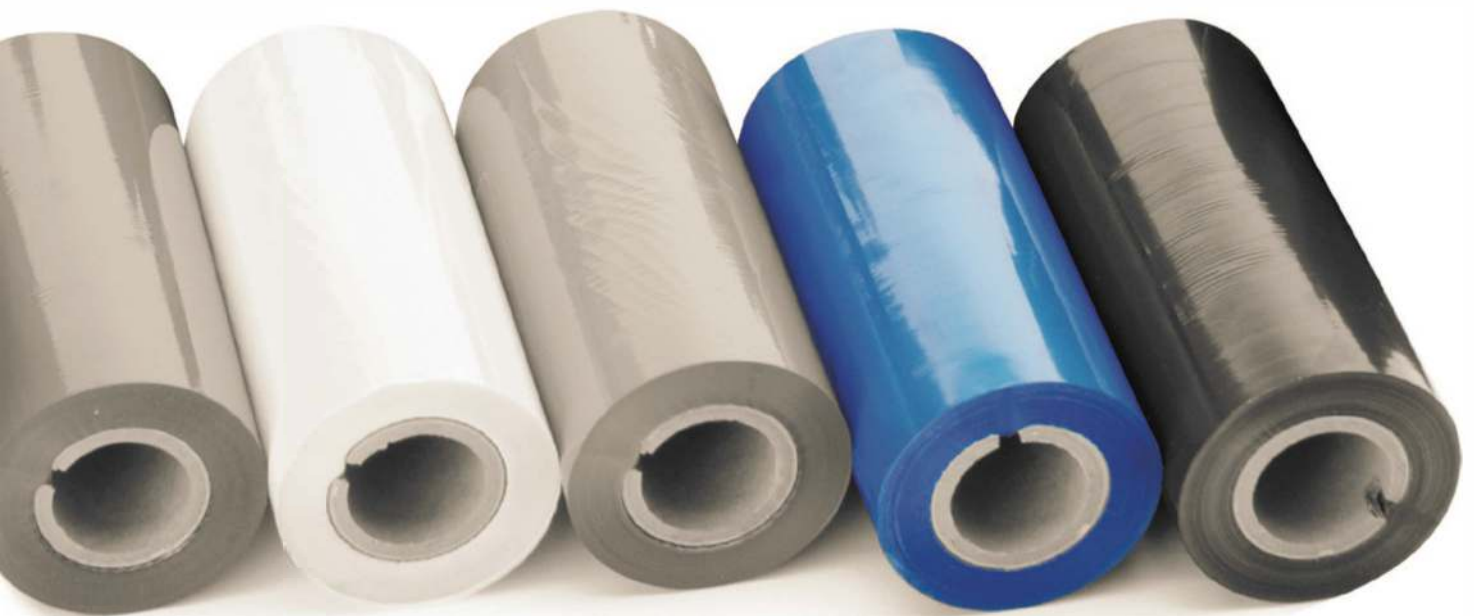# how to find the
correct ribbon/grade
for your application/printer

step by step…

Find the correct ribbon size and type for your thermal transfer printer and then find the correct ribbon grade for your application. There are 100's of different thermal transfer printer models and 100's of different applications requiring different combinations of substrates and ribbon grades. Some printers need ribbons to be wound with the ink coating on the inside and some need the ink coating on the outside. Some printers need ribbons wound onto cardboard cores with notches or centre wound onto wider cores.

To help you simplify finding the correct ribbon we recommend that you follow these simple steps to ensure that you do not end up with a ribbon that does not fit your printer or a ribbon that is not suitable for your application.

1 Identify the Printer - Manufacturer and Model Number

This is the most important first step. You must find out the manufacturer's name and the model number of the printer or printers being used. You must find out the model number as some manufacturers use different types of printhead technology or require different types of cores within their own product range. A ribbon that fits and works within a Toshiba B852 printer will not work in a Toshiba B872 printer.

For example, if you needed a new exhaust for your car you would not tell your mechanic that you just had a Ford car. He would need to know which model of Ford that you have as each model could require a different type of exhaust. This is the same for thermal transfer printers.

2 Identify the type of label or substrates to be printed

Find out what the substrate is that is being printed. There are many different types of labels or packaging films that can be printed with thermal transfer ribbons. Labels can be made from paper or synthetic films and will require different types of thermal transfer inks to achieve the best print results. If you do not know what is being printed then it will be difficult to select the correct ribbon grade that should be used.

3 Learn more about the application

It is important to find out what the application is that the printed label or packaging film is for. This will help you select the correct ribbon grade for the application. Are there any special durability requirements? Does the printed label or substrate need to be resistant to high heat temperatures? Does the printed label need to be UL approved?

4 Locate your printer within this guide

Once you have identified the manufacturer and the model number of the printer turn to the appropriate section of this guide to see the available sizes and grades that are available for that printer. If your printer is not listed within this guide then log on to the TTS dealer zone to use the printer search wizard. This will then cross reference you back to the correct section of this guide for the appropriate selection of available grades and ribbon sizes.

5 Select the correct ribbon grade from the available options

Select the correct ribbon grade for the application and substrate to be printed. You can use the guide on page 8 to help you find the best option for you to supply.

6 Select the best ribbon size

The final step is to select the best ribbon size to offer. You should already know what the size of the label is or the size of the printed image if printing directly onto packaging films. This will help you identify which size of ribbon to recommend. It is important to remember that the ribbon should always cover the width of the label being printed and the backing liner.