The Three Methods of Label Application

360A Series Labeling System
How Making a Decision Will Affect Your Purchase
The Three Methods of Label Application: How Making a Decision Will Affect Your Purchase Introduction

Introduction
As you begin to consider your purchase of a 360A Series Labeling System, an important part of your buying decision will be the method of application of which your equipment is capable. The three methods, merge, air-blow, and tamp, each have a unique way of applying labels to products, and the decision you ultimately make is dependent on a variety of factors including the type of projects your company undertakes. Size, shape, and speed are all considerations, and learning about the differences between each method of application is necessary prior to your final purchase.

An Overview of the 360A Series Label Applicator
CTM’s 360A Series Label Applicator is a versatile labeling system that can be easily integrated into your plant due to its ability to be configured as a merge, air-blow, or tamp applicator. Its versatility also includes the ability to be switched to the opposite hand in a short amount of time with few or zero change parts. Plus, onsite software revisions and upgrades are simple with the 360A, aiding in product control.

Versatility is truly the hallmark of the 360A. With its ability to simultaneously manage up to five different tasks, it allows your staff to easily manage variables during use. Take full advantage of the versatile nature of this label applicator by educating yourself about the different methods of application, ensuring that you make the right decision for your plant when purchasing the 360A.

Versatility is Value: Why Three Types of Application Methods?
CTM understands that making an investment in a label applicator is an important purchase for your organization, and that the applicator will become an integral part of the functionality of your workplace. For this reason, we have endeavored to make the 360A as versatile as possible, which, in turn, translates into value for your company. When you purchase a 360A Series Label Applicator, you pay upfront for a core unit which can easily be modified to apply labels using a merge application, an air-blow application, or a tamp application, without the need to make an additional capital expenditure on a new unit for each type of application. This means that your company can implement all of the different types of projects needed by your customers with one core unit. If your company purchases a core unit with the intention of using it with one application, but expands to take on projects which necessitate the use of other application methods, then you can rest assured that your business investment will adapt to meet those demands. Simply replace the merge with the air-blow or tamp, or vice-versa, and a new range of application possibilities will become possible for your plant.

The Three Methods of Application: Merge, Air-blow, and Tamp
When you initially purchase your 360A Series Label Applicator, you will need to learn about the three methods of application in order to decide which one, or how many, of these methods will be necessary for your company’s current needs.

1. **Merge Application** A merge applicator is a wipe-on applicator designed for projects which make it necessary for the applicator to match the speed of the conveyor in order to “merge” the
label, or wipe on the label, to the product as it travels past the applicator. can be used from both the left-hand and the right-hand using the same parts, needing only a simple conversion to take place. The merge applicator is used, for example, on various types of bottles, such as oil bottles or syrup canisters, and can apply labels to the sides of these containers, the tops, or the bottoms, as long as the product is positioned at the correct orientation for application and is moving at a speed which is matched by the speed of the merge applicator itself.

2. Air-blow Application The air-blow applicator, unlike the merge applicator, does not make direct contact with the product as it moves past on the conveyor belt. Instead, it uses a burst of air to apply the label to the product, allowing you to position the applicator in any orientation in relation to the product. The air-blow method of application offers an additional amount of versatility, in that it gives your workers the ability to choose which angle and which position to place the applicator, and does not require you to lock it into the same orientation. The air-blow applicator also does not need to speed match, and the labels can be applied at a higher rate of speed in relation to the merge, or wipe-on, applicator. With an air-blow applicator, your plant has the ability to run labels in the opposite feed direction, parallel to the product, perpendicular, or even at a 45 degree angle. As with the merge applicator, you can use the air-blow applicator to apply labels to the top, bottom, or sides of your product.

3. Tamp Application The tamp application is similar to the air-blow in that there is no direct contact between the applicator and the product being labeled. Instead, that same high pressure blast of air applies the label to your product. The tamp applicator, however, comes equipped with an air cylinder which allows for a longer distance between the position of the body of the applicator and the spot where the label must be applied. For example, if you need to reach between a set of guide rails, or label the side of a pallet, the tamp allows you to do that with ease. Each label size requires a specific vacuum pad that matches the label size. With the tamp applicator, you may run your labels on the top, bottom, or sides, upside down, or from any angle, depending on your requirements. In fact, you’ll want to talk with your sales support staff member about exactly how a tamp applicator can meet your needs. For example, you may require a swing-arm tamp, a dual-action tamp, or a corner-wrap tamp applicator, depending on whether you need an applicator which can swing out to label the leading side of a product, label two different sides of a product, or wrap around the corner of an item.

Important Questions to Discuss Before Buying
When you meet with your manufacturer’s sales support team member, you’ll likely have several questions about their products and your choices. Your sales support staff member will have multiple questions as well. A reputable sales professional, who understands his or her products, will know exactly which questions to ask you about your site, the projects your plant needs to complete, and the products your customers produce, in order to determine exactly which type of applicator will meet your needs.

The first consideration that your sales support staff member will likely discuss with you will be speed. If your product runs on a conveyor belt that can be adjusted so that the speed of the belt matches the speed of the label applicator exactly, then a merge applicator may be an appropriate choice for your plant. However, if your team does not want to factor speed matching into their labeling process, then an air-blow or a tamp applicator will be a better choice for your organization.
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Your sales support staff member will also want to talk about the specific dimensions of the products that you commonly label. For instance, if you primarily label round products, you may find that your needs are met with a merge applicator. If, however, some of the products you label include a concave area or any sort of depression, such as a lid on a canister or jar, then an air-blow or tamp applicator may be necessary in order to accommodate those types of products.

Of course, the questions you address with your sales support staff member will go beyond the three applications. For instance, a dirty or dusty environment, or one that becomes extremely hot or cold, may necessitate a special enclosure for your equipment. CTM's sales team conducts a comprehensive site survey before manufacturing your equipment, in order to determine not only which type of applicator is best for your plant, but also to determine which factors, unique to your worksite, should be considered when building out your labeling system.

Action Plan

Once you've read through these descriptions of the merge, air-blow, and tamp applicators, you may have a better understanding of the versatility of CTM's labeling systems. You also understand the importance of asking specific questions and providing concrete information about the nature of your plant and the projects that your company handles to a sales team member. CTM's labeling systems can be customized to meet your specifications exactly. We encourage you to request a consultation today to learn more about precisely how we can meet your needs. One of our sales support staff members will be more than happy to answer your questions and discuss the products which might be best for your workplace.

Ed Schneider is the Director of Sales and Marketing for CTM Labeling Systems - a leading manufacturer of pressure sensitive labeling systems located in Salem, Ohio. He has held this role for over 10 years. Prior to joining the team at CTM, Ed spent 22 years with a major plumbing manufacturer in Salem, Ohio where he held various positions during his professional development, ultimately holding the position of Plant Manager for 7 years prior to his departure and current position held at CTM. Ed earned his Bachelor's Degree from Malone University in Canton, Ohio where he received his degree in Business Management. Ed currently resides in Columbiana, Ohio with his wife Cindy.