Bonding properties of labels

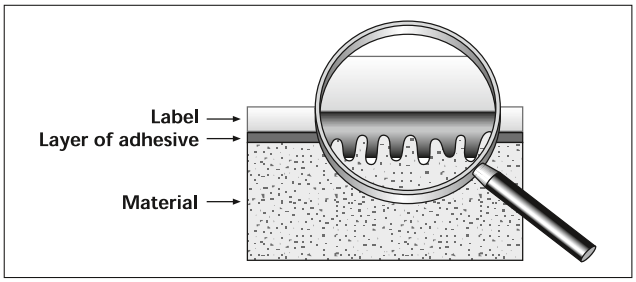
The great variety of places where adhesive labels can be used require a broad range of different materials and adhesives. The information given below will explain all the important aspects of this adhesion.

To enable you to make the right choice for your particular application quickly and efficiently, we have set out the most important selection criteria diagrammatically in our flowchart.

Initial and final bonding

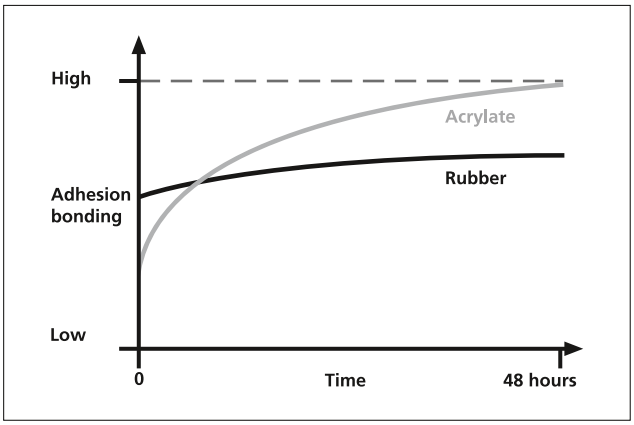
In principle there are two different bonding conditions for labels: The initial bonding which occurs immediately after the label and surface are brought together and the final bonding which represents the permanent bonding status between label and surface following the application, pressing on and curing of the adhesive. The bonding of labels is measured in a defined test process (FINAT FTM) and stated in N/mm.

The initial bonding (or tack) describes the bonding ability of the label after it has been applied to the surface, without being pressed down. The final bonding of labels is ultimately affected by the combined factors of material quality, adhesive basis, curing time, pressure applied and surface tension.



Adhesion: powers of attraction between two materials

Adhesion can be described, in principle, as the ability of the adhesive to form a bond with the substrate; the substrate is the surface of the material you need the label applied to. The influencing factors for optimum bonding are the quality of the material's surface and the creep ability of the adhesive. The crucial factor is the proportion of the surface which is actually to be 'wetted' by the adhesive. Most surfaces appear – from a microscopic point of view – like a mountain range with peaks and valleys; i.e. the effective surface is much bigger than that seen by the naked eye. No matter how smooth and flat a substrate may appear to be, there is always some roughness. The better the adhesive flows into the valleys, the more bonding points it can form and the better the adhesive will bond to the surface. A thicker layer of adhesive does allow these uneven areas to be filled in better, but a thicker coat of adhesive has negative effects when labels are processed by machine (e.g. leakage of the adhesive or limited storage life).



Adhesive basis

HellermannTyton currently uses acrylate and synthetic rubber as adhesive bases. Acrylate adhesives belong to the family of thermoplastic resins and at normal temperatures they provide high and lasting adhesion. When considering the final bonding of acrylate adhesives, however, it must be noted that the relatively high final bonding is only attained after a certain curing period. This is especially true of labelling materials which may be used for rating plates. Normally you must wait for at least 48 hours in a dry office environment.

Synthetic rubber-based adhesives, unlike acrylate-based adhesives, are distinguished by their high initial bonding. But this adhesive technology does not achieve a final bonding comparable to acrylate adhesives (see graph). Special mixtures of synthetic rubber are used in labelling technology, for example for removable labels, e.g. HellermannTyton material type 270.

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