insignia's guide to:
Buying a Thermal Label Printer

Thermal printing technology has become widespread across the globe for printing labels, tags, tickets, receipts, plastic cards and more. This popularity comes down to the three key benefits of thermal printers:

- High speed and efficiency of output
- Low cost of operation and consumables
- Low maintenance

insignia offers a wide range of thermal label printers. Our leading global brands including Zebra, Datamax O'Neill, Bixolon, Intermec and Carl Valentin each provide a choice of models within their ranges for varied printing applications.

So, with all these brands and models available how do you choose the best printer for your need?

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WHICH PRINTER MODEL IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Daily print volume

The most important thing to consider when determining the right label printer is the quantity of labels you will be printing (on average) per day.

The table below shows the recommended print volumes for each range of printer models.

Recommended Label Printing Volume

Printer Model Range	Label Volume (per day)
Economy (Desktop) Range	500
Mid-Industrial Range	3,000
Industrial Range	7,000
High-Industrial Range	10,000

These suggested volumes are based on consistent printing over 8 hour work days.

Be aware that exceeding these recommended volumes means you risk damaging your thermal print head (an expensive replacement part), lessening the quality of the printed image and reducing the effective life of the printer, so choosing the right model up front will save you money in the end.

Footprint

A second aspect to consider is the available area where your printer will live. If your workspace is limited you will need to keep the printer footprint small.

The Economy range printers are also known as Desktop printers due to their smaller size and footprint.

As you move up the range, the printer models increase in size, with the biggest size gap between Economy and Mid-Industrial ranges.

Label Size

It is also important to consider the width of the label to be printed. Label size varies with each model of printer, all Economy through Mid-Industrial printers only have the ability to print maximum width of 4 inches or 102 mm.

For wider printing requirements you will need to consider buying an Industrial-High Industrial model printer which are available in 6" or 8" models. Though there are maximum label widths, the label length can vary as per your requirements.

If you need to print logistics labels for major freight carriers such as Toll or StarTrack, or for Serial Shipping Container Code (SSCC), the labels measure 4" wide x 6" long (102mm x 148mm) and all **insignia** thermal printers capable of printing this size label.

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WHAT TYPE OF THERMAL TECHNOLOGY DO I NEED?

Thermal Direct

Thermal Direct printing is a digital printing process which produces a printed image by selectively heating special thermal paper as it passes over the thermal print head. The coating turns black in the areas where it is heated, producing the intended text/image. Thermal direct technology is most appropriate when the label's life is short or the product is stored at low temperatures, away from direct sunlight, making it a popular choice in the freight and logistics industry.

Thermal Transfer

Thermal Transfer technology uses a heat-sensitive carbon ribbon, rather than heat-sensitive paper, but still utilizes a thermal print head. The ribbon is melted on to the label which forms the image on the surface. Thermal Transfer labels are often tougher in nature, making them less likely to scratch or fade. If the label is intended to last a longer length of time, is exposed to higher temperatures, direct sunlight or rougher conditions like rubbing or scuffing during transit, then Thermal Transfer technology is what you need.
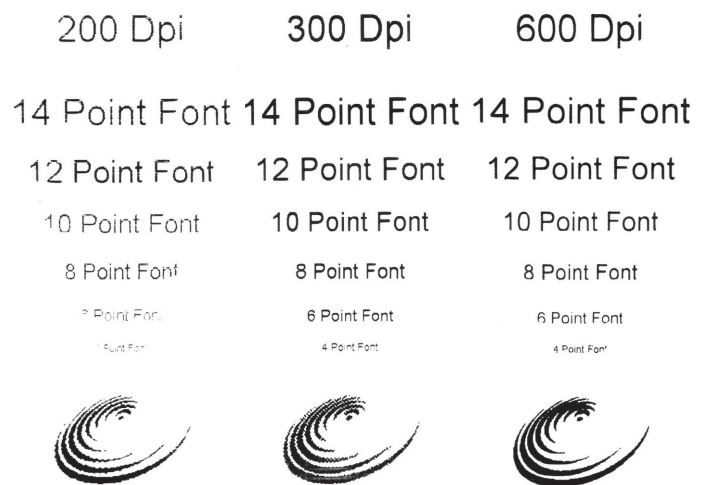
WHAT RESOLUTION SHOULD MY PRINTER HAVE?

Resolution for themal printing is measured in **DPI** *(dots per square-inch)*.

All printers offered by **insignia** are available in the industry standard 200dpi resolution.

For printing barcodes and text (above 8-point font) on to your label, a 200dpi printer will be suitable for your operation.

However, if you are looking for a more professional finish or a detailed logo for your label, then 300dpi or 600dpi resolution printers are definitely worth considering.

On the right is an example of the differences between the resolutions.

200 Dpi	300 Dpi	600 Dpi
14 Point Font	14 Point Font	14 Point Font
12 Point Font	12 Point Font	12 Point Font
10 Point Font	10 Point Font	10 Point Font
8 Point Font	8 Point Font	8 Point Font
6 Point Font	6 Point Font	6 Point Font
4 Point Font	4 Point Font	4 Point Font

HOW WILL I CONNECT TO THE PRINTER?

If you will be printing from just one computer that sits directly next to your printer, then a USB, Serial or Parallel connection is all that is required. All the printers from **insignia** come standard with USB connection, as it is the simplest way to connect to print.

If you plan to print from a network of if the computer not situated close to the printer, then Ethernet LAN or Wireless LAN is needed. LAN options are available for our entire range, with wireless LAN available as an additional extra.

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WHICH BRAND?

Brand choice is often a personal or corporate preference. It could be based on the printer brand already onsite or the brand your team members are familiar with. Also, some brands tend to be preferred in different industries or for particular printing applications.

insignia stocks and supports a wide variety of high quality printers to suit any situation.

datamax·o'neil
right by our customers.

ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES

BIXOLON

Intermec®

CV valentin

WHAT ABOUT WARRANTY?

Warranty is an important element to any buying decision. Each manufacturer backs their printers with different levels of warranty coverage.

All printers come standard with at least a 12 month manufacturer's warranty, though some have longer warranty periods depending on the make and model of the printer.

If you are interested in extended warranty information including comprehensive coverage, please contact your **insignia** customer service representative for specific details on each printer make and model.

1 **Standard Warranty -** Includes all manufacturing faults within the printer over the specified warranty contract period.

2 **Extended Warranty -** Available for most makes and models at an additional cost (and only available at the time of purchase).
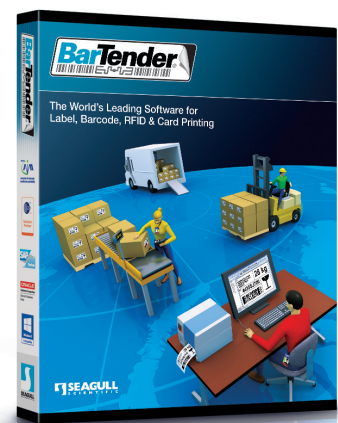
3 **Comprehensive Warranty -** Coverage for all manufacturing faults as well as accidental damage to the printer and its components.

HOW DO I DESIGN MY LABEL OR TAG? DO I NEED SOFTWARE?

All printer models come with basic label design software on-board, but this has limited capability. For simple printing operations this may be sufficient, but if you are looking at designing a label template for your business, perhaps incorporating a barcode on your label, or if you will be printing variable label information from a database, then label design software will be required.

insignia recommends BarTender, the world's leading label design software. It is Windows-based and prides itself on its user-friendly technology, allowing users to design and edit their labels, add GS1 approved barcodes and even import and export graphics.

Different licence editions are available, starting with their Basic or Professional licences for one PC user. However, if you will be using the software over your network or in multi-site locations, then Automation and Enterprise licences are the ones to consider.

BarTender
The World's Leading Software for Label, Barcode, RFID & Card Printing
SEAGULL

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WHAT ACCESSORIES ARE AVAILABLE?

There are some additional items available to make your label printing process more efficient. Below is a guide to the extras that you might like to consider.

Option	What it does	Why would I use it?
Cutter unit	Enables labels to be cut directly after being printed, so each label is an individual sheet rather than on a roll.	Allows for easy distribution of labels.
Internal rewinder	Allows for labels to be rewound onto a new roll inside the printer.	If you wish to batch print small rolls of labels, to use at a later stage, and is ideal if space is limited as labels are rewound inside the printer.
External rewinder	Allows for labels to be rewound onto a new roll outside the printer.	Batch printing large rolls of labels to use or apply labels at a later stage.
Peel & Present Kit *Must be fitted with internal rewinder*	After the label is printed, this unit automatically peels away the backing paper so the label is presented at the face of the printer ready to be applied. The backing paper is then rewound inside the printer on the internal rewinder.	Reduces time and frustration associated with removing label backing paper and reduces mess as backing paper is wound neatly inside the printer.

WHAT ABOUT LABELS, TAGS OR THERMAL RIBBON?

insignia provides its customers with the complete labelling package. We ensure your labels are fit for purpose, backed by expertise in thermal paper stock, adhesive, thermal ribbon, barcodes, production environments and supply chain requirements.

Take your pick from custom-made labels for any application, or stock labels and thermal ribbons on the shelf and ready for dispatch. As one of Australia's largest manufacturer of blank labels, you can be confident your labels from **insignia** will do the job!

ARE THERE ANY ON-GOING COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATING A THERMAL LABEL PRINTER?

Similar to replacing your car's tyres from time to time, there are some parts of a printer which need to be replaced due to general wear and tear.

The key consumable parts within any thermal label printer are the platen roller (a plastic roller which ensures the label is being applied to the print head with pressure) and also the print head.

Prices on these parts are dependent on the printer make and model. **insignia** stocks a full range of replacement parts, these parts should be installed by a qualified service technician either on site or at the **insignia** national service centre.

For further information about general printer care, check out our Guide: *Maximise the life of Your label Printer.*

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ABOUT INSIGNIA

We know how important your business is to you and how different it is from the next. This is why we work directly and collaboratively with you to understand your situation and needs, so we can create thermal label solutions tailored to add genuine value to your operations, and help build your market competitiveness.

Since 1967 we have been providing identification solutions to Australian industry. Our family-owned values, our people, our products and our services are the reasons we've become the nation's leading manufacturer of labels and tags, and distributor of top-tier thermal printing, marking and coding brands, including Datamax-O'Neil, Zebra, Bixolon, Intermec, Carl Valentin, and Domino.

Labelling & Coding Solutions For Every Industry

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HEALTHCARE

FOOD

BEVERAGE

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INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING

CHEMICAL

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