

# VariQuest®

Awards Maker 400



## User's Guide

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# 1 Setting up the Awards Maker 400

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**Note:** If you have not already unpacked your **VariQuest® Awards Maker 400**, please follow the steps in the **Unpacking the VariQuest® Awards Maker 400** document.

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The Awards Maker 400 is shipped in reusable packaging materials. Save these packaging materials for future use in case you need to ship the Awards Maker 400 printer.

## 2 Connecting the Power Supply



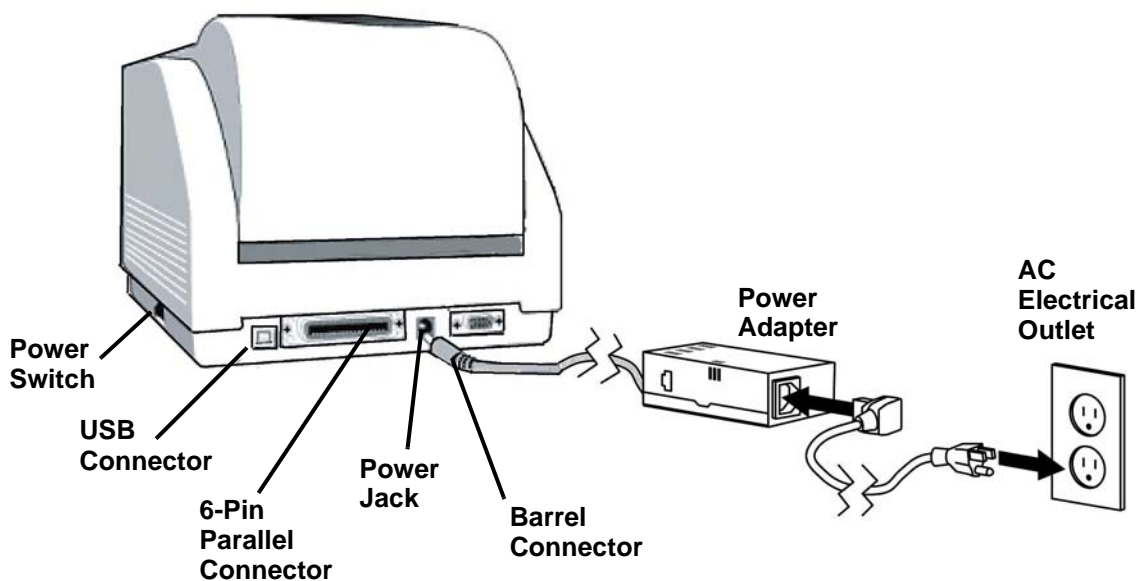
### CAUTION!

*Never operate the printer and power supply in an area where they can get wet.*

1. Insert the barrel connector on one end of the Power Adapter into the power jack on the back of the printer.
2. Plug the other end of the cord into an appropriate AC electrical outlet.

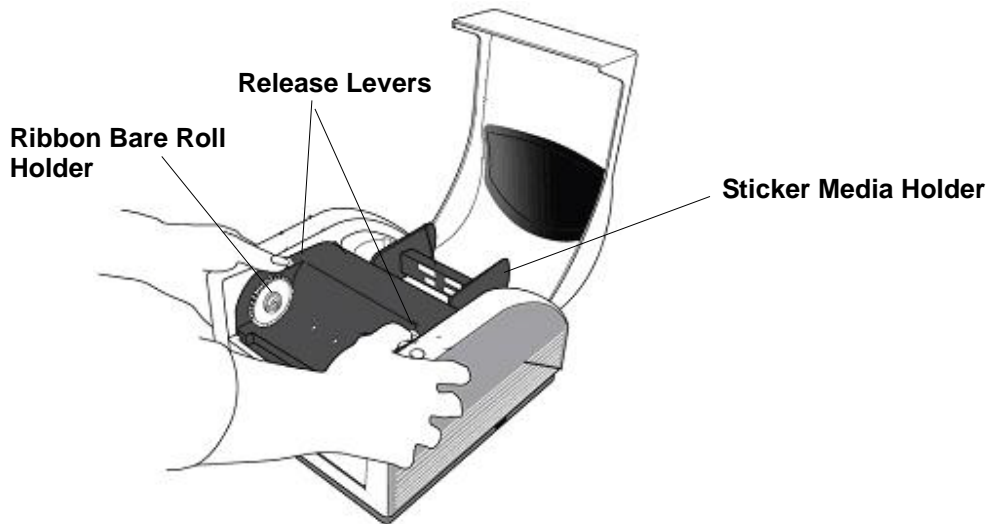
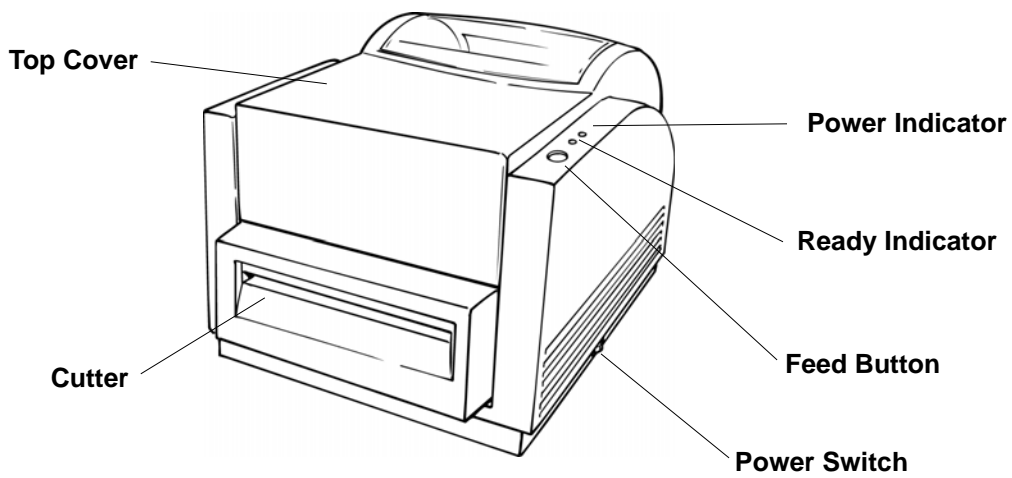
**Note:** When plugging the connector into the power jack, leave the power switch in the “O” position and don’t touch the 36-pin parallel connector.

3. Plug the connector into the power jack.

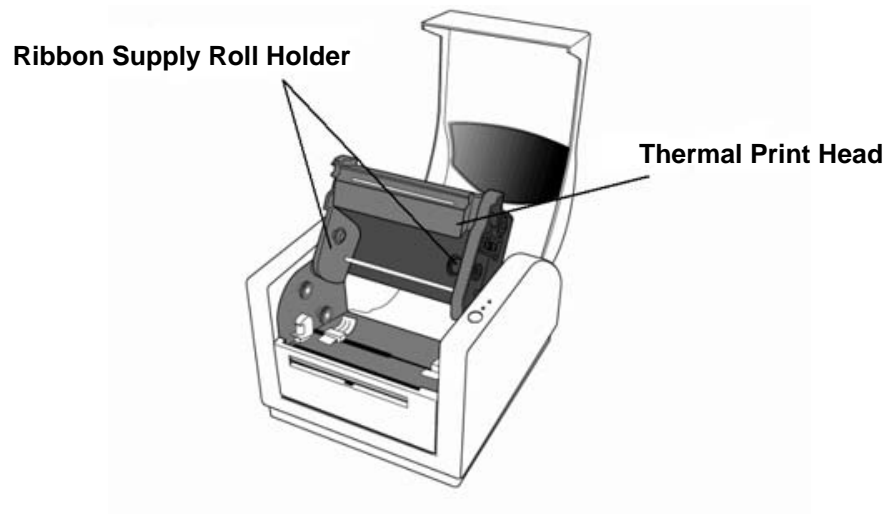


### 3 Parts and Features

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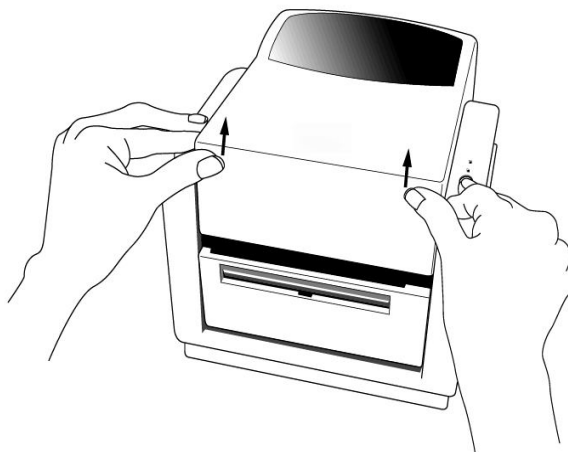


## 4 Loading the Sticker Media

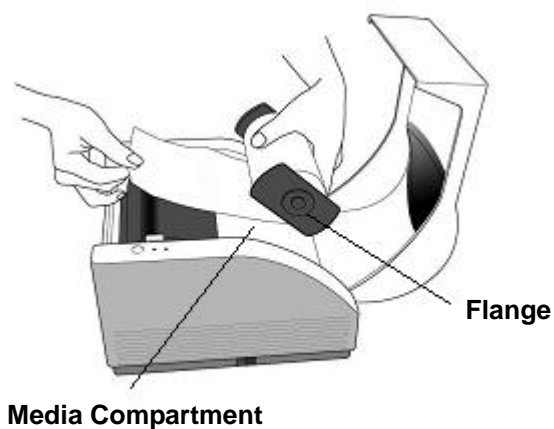
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**To load the sticker media:**

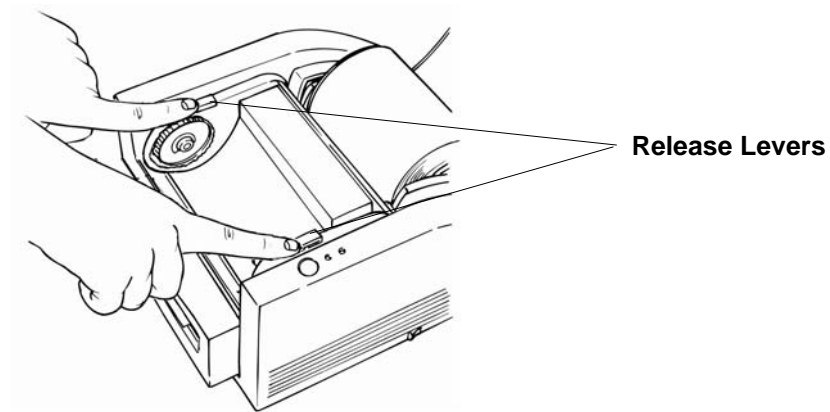
1. Lift the top cover and remove the sticker media holder.



2. Load the media roll onto the holder and secure both sides with flanges. Insert the holder back into the media compartment.



3. Open the print head by pressing down on the two release levers.



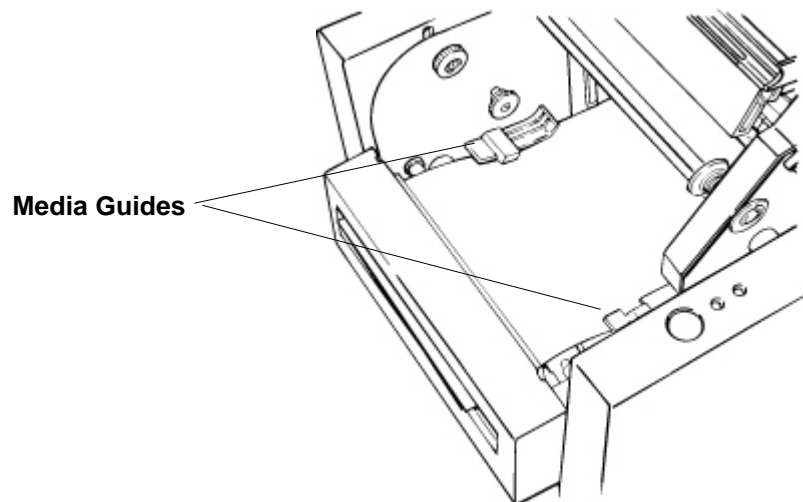
4. With the sticker side facing up, pull the media underneath the print head until the leading edge sits on top of the rubber roller.

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**Note:** To prevent waste, do not pull the media any further than the top of the rubber roll.

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5. Adjust the right- and left-media guides to ensure a snug fit. The media guides can be adjusted to fit different sticker sizes.



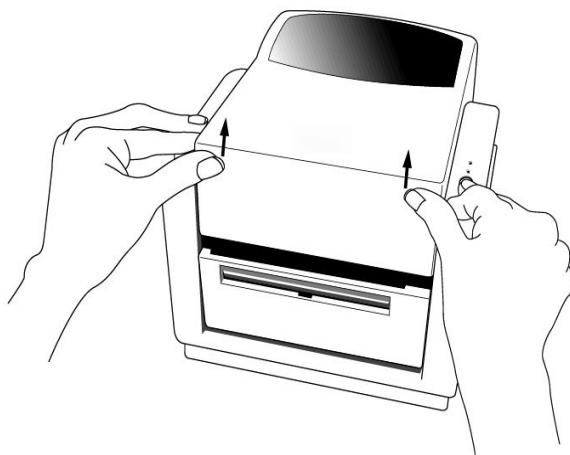
6. Close the print head by firmly pressing down the print head module until you hear a click on each side. Snap in one side at a time to ensure proper closure.
7. Close the top cover.

## 5 Loading the Ribbon

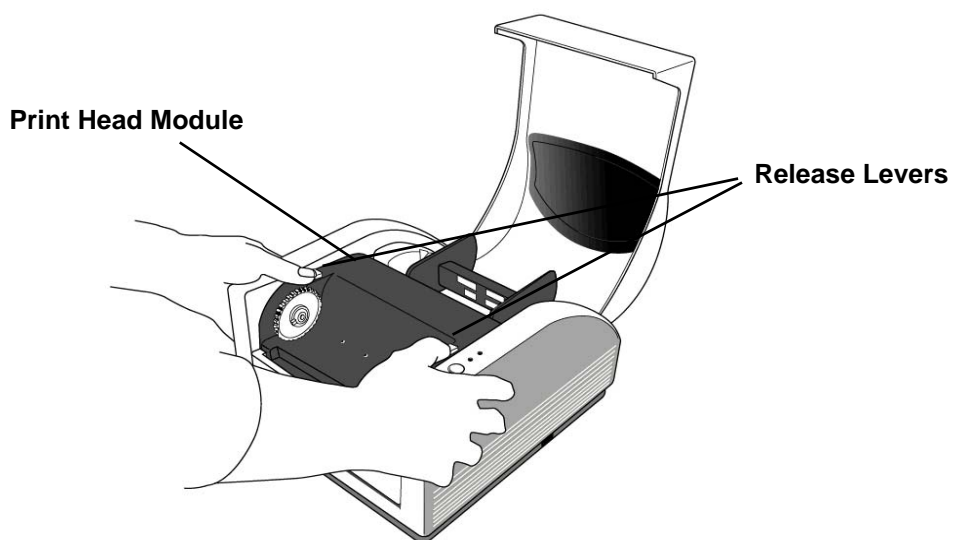
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**To load the ribbon:**

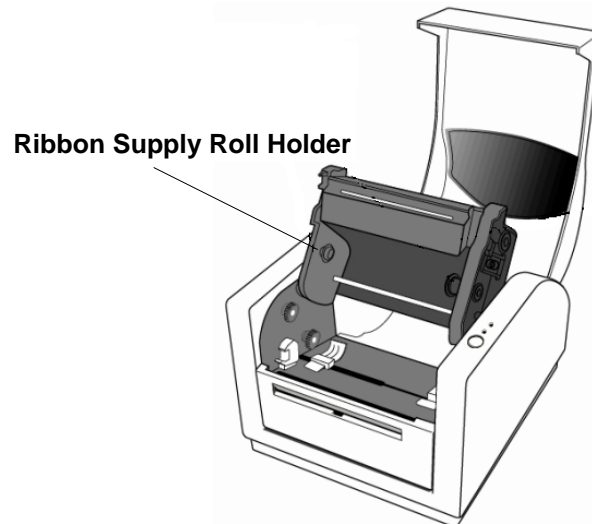
1. Lift the top cover.



2. Unlatch the print head module by pushing the two release levers.



3. Lift the print head module to expose the ribbon supply roll holder



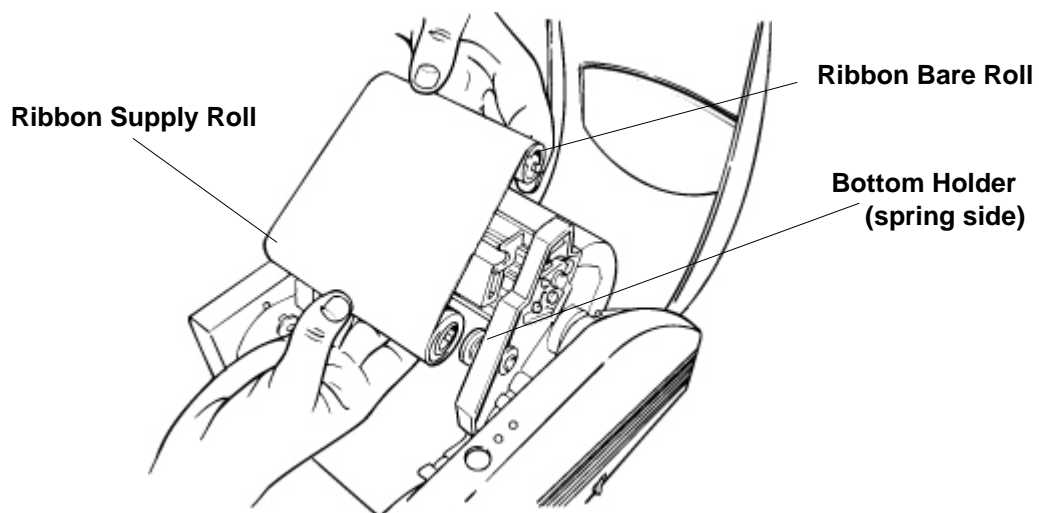
4. Unwrap the ribbon roll pack and separate the supply roll from the bare roll.
5. Roll the clear part of the ribbon supply roll onto the bare roll until you see the ribbon color.

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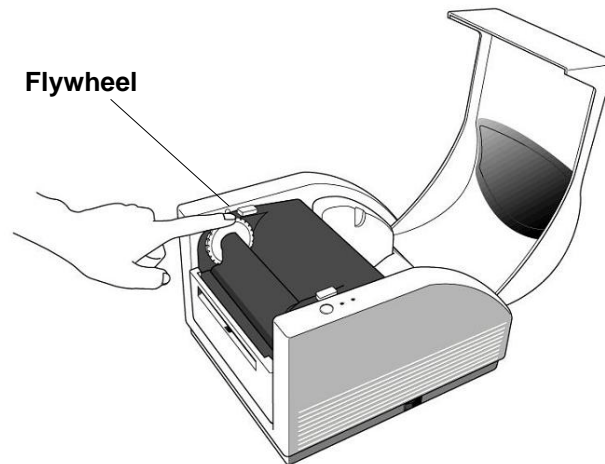
**Tip!** Hold the bare roll with your left hand and supply roll with right. Wind the ribbon a few times by turning the bare ribbon roll clockwise.

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6. Insert the **supply** ribbon roll into the bottom holder by pushing in the spring side first.



7. Lower the print-head module and insert the **bare** roll into the top holder by pushing in the spring side first.
8. Close the print head by firmly pressing down the print head module until you hear a click on each side. Snap in one side at a time to ensure proper closure.
9. Turn the print head module flywheel away from you a few times to ensure the ribbon is tightly wound.



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**Tip!** To ensure secure closure, tap each release lever with your finger a few times. If it springs up, that side is not properly closed. If it's tightly locked, that side has been properly closed.

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10. Close the top cover and turn on the printer. You are now ready to send print jobs to the Awards Maker 400 using your **VariQuest® Design Center Software**.

## 6 Operating Functions

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Power Switch: Controls the printer power

- **On.** Normal operation (I position)
- **Off.** The power should be turned off before connecting or disconnecting the USB cable and the Power Cable (O position)

Feed Button: Advances the starting point position of the sticker media

1. Press to advance a small length of tape to make sure the sticker is fed through properly.
2. Press to take the printer out of a “pause” condition.
  - **Ready Indicator:** Indicates the status of the printer:
    - **Green.** Printer is ready to operate
    - **Blinking.** Printer has paused

Power Indicator: Shows the power and error status

- **Off.** Printer power off
- **Green.** Printer power on
- **Blinking.** Error has occurred

## 7 Connecting the Printer

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Use this procedure to connect the printer to the **VariQuest® Design Center** or PC

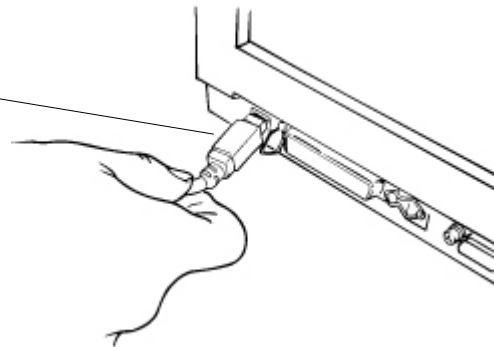
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**Note:** Use only the USB cord that is supplied with your printer to connect to the **VariQuest® Design Center** or PC. **Do not** use a parallel or serial cable.

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You can connect the Awards Maker 400 to any available USB port on the Design Center.

Connect to any  
USB Port



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**CAUTION!**

*This printer complies with FCC "Rules and Regulations," Part 15, for Class A Equipment, using fully shielded six-foot data cables. Use of longer cables or unshielded cables may increase radiated emissions above the Class A limits. The power supply barrel connector must be inserted into the power jack on the back of the printer before connecting the communication cables.*

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## 8 Troubleshooting

Typically, when there is an error, the Power LED will keep blinking. The printing job and the communication between the Design Center or PC and printer will stop.

To understand the nature of the problem, check the following:

### A. Power and Ready LEDs Blink at the Same Time

Power LED	Ready LED
ON	ON
OFF	OFF

Possible Problems	Solutions
Sticker not feeding through	Load the sticker media as indicated in "4. Loading the Sticker Media" on page 7-5.
Sticker not loaded	Load the sticker media.
Sticker jam	Remove the sticker media and load again.

### B. Power and Ready LEDs Alternately Blink

Power LED	Ready LED
ON	OFF
OFF	ON

Possible Problems	Solutions
Ribbon not loaded	Load the ribbon as indicated in "5. Loading the Ribbon" on page 7-8.
Ribbon jam	Remove the ribbon and load again.
Ribbon sensor error	Ribbon sensor may need to be changed. Please contact your Dealer or Varitronics® Technical Support for assistance.

### C. Only the Power LED Blinks

Power LED	Ready LED
ON	ON
OFF	ON

Possible Problems	Solutions
Memory full	Contact your Dealer or Varitronics Technical Support for assistance.
Cutter failed or jammed	Contact your Dealer or Varitronics Technical Support for assistance.
Hardware error	Contact your Dealer or Varitronics Technical Support for assistance.

### D. Miscellaneous

The **VariQuest®** *Design Center Software* shows “Printer Time Out”:

1. Check if the USB cable is connected securely to one of the USB ports on the Design Center or PC and to the connector on the printer at the other end.
2. Check if the printer power is turned on.
  - If the power cord is connected, the power switch is at position “I” and the power LED is still not illuminated, contact your Dealer or Varitronics Technical Support.
  - If data has been sent but there is no output from the printer, check the *Output Device Selection Screen* to be sure that Awards Maker has been selected.
  - Vertical streaks in the printout usually indicate a dirty or faulty print head. Clean the print head first as shown on page 15. If they still persist, call your Dealer or Varitronics Technical Support.
  - Poor printout quality (streaks):
    - The ribbon may not be an approved **VariQuest®** *Awards Maker 400* ribbon.
    - The sticker media may not be approved **VariQuest®** *Awards Maker 400* sticker media.
    - Adjust the print density in the **VariQuest®** *Design Center Software*.
    - See “*Cleaning the Print Head*” on page 9-1 for information about cleaning the print head.

## Recovery

To continue your print jobs after the error conditions have been corrected, press the **Feed** button or restart the printer by turning the power off and on. Make sure that the LED is not blinking and resend your files by going into the **VariQuest®** *Design Center Software* and reprinting the job(s).

## 9 Cleaning the Print Head

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**Note:** Disconnect the printer's power plug before performing any maintenance procedures.

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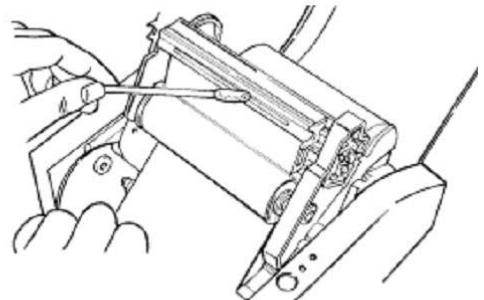
**Thermal Print Head.** Over time, the sticker media and ribbon will release debris on the print head and degrade printing quality. Clean the print head with a foam-tipped swab dampened with isopropyl alcohol.



**CAUTION!**

***Do not** touch the heater element with your fingers. **Do not** soak the foam-tipped swab excessively.*

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## 10 Technical Information

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Specifications	VariQuest® Awards Maker 400
Print Method	Thermal Transfer
Print Resolution	203 dpi
Print Speed	1 - 4 ips
Print Length	1" - 45"
Print Width	Max 4.1"
Memory	2 MB DRAM 2 MB Flash ROM
CPU Type	32-bit RISC microprocessor
Media Sensor	Reflective See-through
Display	LED indicators x 2
Operation Interface	Button x 1
Communication Interface	USB (Full Speed)
Software	VariQuest™ Design Center Software
Sticker Media	Continuous Sticker Media Vinyl / Polyester Max width 4.25" Min width 2.25" Thickness .0025" - .01"
Power Source	110/220 VAC ± 10%, 50/60 Hz, external power adapter
Agency Listing	UL, CUL, FCC Class A
Operation Environment	40°F - 100°F ; 10-90% non-condensing
Cutter	Rotary Cutter

 **CAUTION!**

*This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class A digital device, pursuant to part 15 of the FCC Rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference when the equipment is operated in a commercial environment. This equipment generates, uses and can radiate radio frequency energy and, if not installed and used in accordance with the instruction manual, may cause harmful interference to radio communications. Operation of this equipment in a residential area is likely to cause harmful interference in which case the user will be required to correct the interference at his own expense.*

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This Class A digital apparatus complies with Canadian ICES-003.

Cet appareil numérique de la classe A est conforme à la norme NMB-003 du Canada.

