

## Laser inscriptions at a manual workplace – the solution for the inscription of components in tool-making

To avoid having to inscribe metal components in in-house tool-making by hand, KODA Stanz- und Biegetechnik GmbH in Dortmund made use of a laser marking solution by Datalogic. The UniQ fibre laser marker inscribes all parts cleanly, evenly and permanently.

KODA Stanz- und Biegetechnik GmbH in Dortmund manufactures punching and forming parts, pipe bending parts as well as springs and contacts, for example for customers from the automotive industry, and deliver into 42 countries worldwide. The in-house tool-making department produces progressive tools up to 4,000 mm in length, band/wire bending tools, Bihler and welding tools, fixtures, gages, hand samples / prototypes as well as small batches and pilot series. A punching tool can consist of 2,000 to 3,000 individual parts that all need to be inscribed. So far employees would inscribe the parts more or less legibly by hand at a manual workplace, using a marker or a small milling tool. With Datalogic's UniQ fibre laser, a laser marking system has now been acquired that not only ensures clean, uniform and permanent labelling, but with its inscription speed also saves valuable time.

### Easy to operate, quick to get ready

"For some time now, we had been looking for a suitable alternative to labelling by hand. Finally we decided to go with Datalogic's laser marking solution. It was just ideally suited for our purposes," Tobias Hommen, project manager at KODA, explains. "We even have to label components made of metal as well as additional measuring equipment. One of the main challenges is that the device is simple to operate and the laser is at the workplace pretty much ready to go, so that one of our workers can quickly go over there and put an inscription on something – same as they did before with the hand signing device." The UniQ fibre laser marker offers excellent inscription quality, and thanks to its simple operator software is ready for use very quickly. The pre-installed basic software ensures that no additional adjustments were necessary after the implementation. After an initial training, the employees have already marked all kinds of objects to specify different settings for the material. An additional plus of the new high-performance laser marker is its compact construction – all the functions and interfaces are contained in a single housing. Not least, the price was a clear argument for the purchase of the UniQ," Tobias Hommen explains.

The UniQ is the smallest all-in-one fibre laser marker in the IP 54 protection class on the labelling solutions market and due to its small construction can also very easily be integrated in small machines or – as in this case – at manual workplaces. The pilot and guide laser allows a simple alignment of the laser marking system. The user is shown the size and position of the inscription field on the product, which makes a simple configuration of a print job possible. With Datalogic's own integrated marking software Lighter, which offers an intuitive user interface with all the



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necessary functions and tools, all industrial inscription tasks can be accomplished. "The UniQ is not only extremely easy to operate, it is also a very economic device," Benjamin Westdickenberg, Head of Sales at D/A/CH Factory Automation at Datalogic, emphasises. The laser is due for its first service after at least 50,000 operating hours. The UniQ does not require any consumables and offers razor-sharp inscriptions, all without the use of solvents or ink cartridges. This means there are no maintenance costs, for example for filter or pump replacements. The ongoing costs in the production are economical and can be planned. Since all components and parts are integrated in one housing, no fibre lines need to be placed outside the device. "The UniQ thus represents an extremely compact and flexible solution for industrial customers who greatly value user-friendliness, the form factor and a good price-performance ratio," says Benjamin Westdickenberg.

### **Added value through process optimisation**

The company achieves added value by being able to use the device across a wide range of applications: the new laser is now being used for many other things than originally intended, Ranging from hand tools in the maintenance department and hydraulic hoses to chocolate boxes made of metal sent out to customers at Christmas with a special Christmas greeting. The employees' hand tools are especially important: When power tools, for example a drill, were loaned out, that was usually handled via a central issuing system. Previously, these tools used to be marked with labels that were barely legible after ten or more uses. "Being able to label them with the new fibre laser and not needing the traditional labels any more is very interesting for us," Tobias Hommen explains. "An additional advantage from which we are hoping to benefit with the laser marking system is that we can use the laser to apply Datamatrix codes to the parts, and then later, for example, simplify the acquisition of spare parts using these Datamatrix codes – basically a kind of process optimisation in our spare parts management," says Tobias Hommen.

Of the 85 employees at the KODA site in Dortmund, five employees were trained to use the system. They now know exactly what is to be labelled and with which parameters. The parts to be labelled are collected and then inscribed at the manual workplace one after the other, once a day. "So far, we have been more than satisfied with the new fibre laser marker. All components being sent to our customers all over the world are now labelled cleanly and uniformly," Tobias Hommen sums up.



*Figure 1 Manual workplace with screen and UniQ / Caption:*

At the manual workplace at KODA, tool components made of metal and measuring equipment are now labelled by laser.



*Figure 2: Close angle on UniQ:*

The UniQ combines a very small form factor with the highest laser marking quality. The robust housing integrates the fibre laser source, power supply and controls with a full functional range.

