

REDUCING COSTS WITH IMPROVED PART TRACEABILITY

Part traceability has become a critical issue for manufacturers in all types of industries. There is increasing pressure to implement traceability systems to reduce errors and meet the needs of customers who require that the products they purchase are marked to their specifications.

Having a good mark on your product improves in-process quality control, provides cradle-to-grave traceability, and improves the appearance of your part and your brand. Integrated with readers, verifiers, and vision systems, marking systems function as efficient and vital components of automated assembly lines.

The Real Cost of Your Marking System

Part marking and tracking, in the overall scope of a manufacturing operation, is often overlooked as an area for improvement. Even as the need for part traceability increases, a surprising number of manufacturers still use labor-intensive, error-prone, manual marking techniques. Others who were early adopters of part marking systems find that the equipment they installed years ago is barely keeping pace with increased production demands.

Today's manufacturers are under great pressure to produce the best quality products possible while maintaining or reducing costs. While it may be difficult to find money in the operating budget for something like marking equipment, it is important to consider the real cost of ownership of any marking system.

The consequences of using equipment that is outdated or that needs constant maintenance can be measured in terms of lost production, direct labor, high consumable costs, and scrap due to mis-marked product. Then there are the downstream costs to consider. If parts are marked incorrectly – or not marked at all – manufacturers are open to the risks of production errors, shipping customers the wrong product, fraudulent warranty claims, and losing future business to competitors.

Improving product traceability also allows manufacturers to pinpoint product defects more precisely. If products fail, a manufacturer can limit its liability on product recalls, service, and warranty claims.



Reducing Costs through Efficiency

When evaluating manufacturing cells to identify opportunities to cut costs and increase throughput, take a closer look at the marking and verification process. There are several things to consider when evaluating the efficiency of the marking operation.

- **Amount of operator intervention required.** Could the process be fully automated?
- **Equipment reliability.** Does the equipment need frequent cleaning, adjusting or maintenance?
- **Ease of mark changeover.** Does production slow down or stop when the mark changes, for instance when switching to a new color, changing date or shift codes, or adjusting the equipment for marking a different item?
- **Automatic data capture.** Are you taking advantage of every opportunity to integrate your marking process with your host/ERP systems?
- **Mark quality and error rates.** How much product needs to be scrapped or reworked due to incorrect or low-quality marks?



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207 Sandusky Street • Pittsburgh PA 15212-5823 USA
412-323-4900 tel • 412-323-4962 fax • sales@pannier.com • www.pannier.com

Evaluating the Solutions

Once opportunities for improvement have been identified, the search begins for the most suitable marking technology for the application. There are many types of marking systems available, from simple hand-held marking tools to fully automated marking, verification, and data collection systems. There are many factors that influence the selection of the right system, including the type of material being marked, the production speed, the information being marked, how often the mark information changes, the environment where the equipment must operate, and the processes and environments the mark must survive.

Pannier Corporation, a marking systems manufacturer since 1899, works with manufacturers in a wide array of industries to provide a variety of solutions. Pannier's marking consultants work with each client to conduct a thorough marking needs analysis, during which several possible solutions are evaluated and the benefits of each system are weighed against the costs.

Pannier has the ability to provide turnkey systems for many marking applications, with full hardware and software integration capabilities. Common technologies are contact printers, ink jet printers, impact stamping machines, programmable dot peen markers, lasers, and industrial tags and labels. Each marking method presents a different set of advantages and disadvantages. Let Pannier help you find the marking solution that's right for your application. Call us today at 1-877-PANNIER.



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