



SUCCESS STORY

PRODUCT MARKING DIRECTLY IN THE LATHE

**INCREASE
PRODUCTIVITY
WITHOUT ADDITIONAL
STAFF**



A Japanese manufacturer of pneumatic fittings produces around 3,000 different products, ranging from standard valves and high-pressure solutions to valves for special applications. This results in around 100 different items being produced each month — a total of around 30,000 components. The company deliberately operates according to the principle of “high variety with low quantities.”

For many years, production has been heavily focused on automation. A particularly characteristic feature is 24-hour operation without a shift system, which enables impressive productivity with only a small number of staff. **However, despite all the progress made, one task remained a bottleneck for a long time: the marking of components.**



The transition from manual labor to automation

Until a few years ago, part numbers, batch codes, and OEM names still had to be punched manually, which was a time-consuming process. For operators, this meant inserting the part, aligning it, and stamping it with a lever and punch—sometimes for 1,200 to 1,300 parts a day.

One employee recalls: “It was extremely inefficient; sometimes you spent four hours straight just stamping.”

Laser engraving initially appeared to be an alternative, but this proved to be too time-consuming and cumbersome to handle. The search for a better solution ultimately led the company to the marking tools from Hommel+Keller, which were introduced in Japan via the tool trading partner Noah.

The solution: Marking directly on the lathe

The marking tools are based on a simple but ingenious principle: a marking roll transfers the desired characters directly onto the workpiece by rotating with it. The key feature is that the tool can be integrated into the turret or holder of the lathe like any other tool. This means that the component is deeply embossed during machining – without re-clamping and without additional work steps.

“It was revolutionary that the parts came out of the lathe already marked,” says a production manager, describing the introduction. Instead of manual reworking or separate processes, marking is now done fully automatically in a single pass.

EFFICIENCY THAT CREATES ROOM FOR GROWTH

The change brought several advantages:

- Significant increase in efficiency by eliminating manual punching processes
- Productivity gains, as operators can monitor several machines simultaneously
- Process reliability, because machining and marking are performed in a single step
- Durable marking on the component

The result:

Operators have their hands free, machine capacities can be expanded more easily, and the company has been able to scale up its production significantly—without additional personnel.

A look into the future

Today, the manufacturer already has more than 20 different marking rolls in use and plans to expand the application to high-volume products. Marking on flat surfaces instead of only on cylindrical components is also being tested. In view of the ongoing shortage of skilled workers, the goal is clear:

Continue to eliminate inefficient tasks and design a production process that achieves even higher performance with fewer personnel. With marking tools from Hommel+Keller, it is possible to realize such efficiency potential in manufacturing and support companies in sustainably increasing their productivity.

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The head of the production department and his successor

This best practice example is based on the press report in the May issue of the Japanese magazine "Machine Technology" - provided by Noah Corporation.