

# Fast, Flexible Laser Marks Pressure Transducers

**Viatran Corporation of Grand Island, NY introduced laser marking in the production of their electronic pressure transducers**

**Founded in 1965**, Viatran employs 110 people in designing and making electronic equipment for the measurement and control of pressure, level and flow.

## Dealing With A Full Plate

Before using laser marking, Viatran's products were identified by metal stamped stainless steel nameplates. These nameplates were typed by hand, and the flat ID plates had to be fixed to the round transducers: a time-consuming process with limited opportunity for adding additional information. Separate installation instructions had to accompany the product for the user. Custom nameplates for OEM customers took

8 to 12 weeks to produce. Now, customer-supplied artwork can be scanned and made laser-ready in a couple of hours. Viatran found that the laser marker from Rofin-Baasel, formerly A-B Lasers, was so user-friendly that they didn't have to hire specially trained or skilled people to program, run or maintain the system. And, Rofin-Baasel's "Uptime Guarantee" offered them the production security they needed to put the new technology to work.

The challenge for Viatran's application was to mark a variety of stainless steels: soft materials, like 316, 304 and Hastalloy; and, hard stainless steels, like 17-4, 15 -5 and Inconel. They had to be able to mark 360' around the circumference of the part. Some products used in enhanced oil recovery applications were going to be subjected to severe environmental abuse. The stamped nameplates had been difficult to read in the field. Their initial concerns about marking durability

were put to rest when it was shown that the LBI-2000 could engrave deep enough to overcome this problem. On their smaller parts (7/8" diameter) space was at a premium, and the charac-

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**... create**

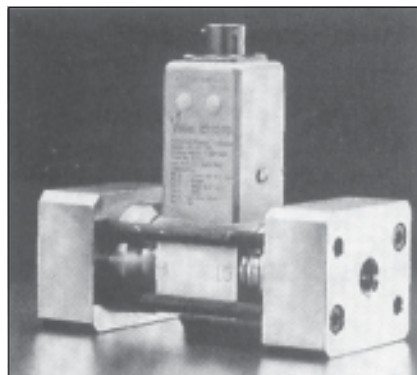
**OEM logos,  
part numbers  
and installation  
instructions  
directly on the  
part.**

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ter size had to be small. With the laser, however, readability was not a problem, even though more information could be "written" on the product than before.

All the features used by Viatran, including the programmable circumferential marking unit to mark around the outside of the parts, are standard options for the system.

A typical pressure transducer with laser marking



## Reaping Extra Benefits

With the implementation of the programmable laser system, they are now able to create OEM logos, part numbers and installation instructions directly on the part. The added convenience of this to the customer and Viatran has resulted in a marked decrease in customer service calls because of misplaced or lost installation instructions, a 25% savings in their finishing department, and a \$2 to \$3 material savings by eliminating the stamped nameplate. The company estimates that the laser has paid for itself in 1-1/2 years. They are also realizing the side benefits of quieter, more environmentally-friendly processing.

Viatran also realized many unexpected benefits from laser marking. Although they originally pursued this technology because of a military application requirement that relevant information be marked directly on the product, they have found many other advantages. They can offer customers their own individual logos on their units. In products used in the food, dairy and pharmaceutical industries, the laser provides a cleaner unit than those with

the old style nameplate, since there are no crevices or uncleanable areas. They have eliminated the need for separate installation instructions, and provided a product that is improved in appearance, as well as being more convenient to install and maintain. Since using the laser marker in production, new applications have been developed. They now mark and identify in-plant equipment, and mark chemical containers using TESA® 6930, a tamper-proof material specifically designed to be marked and cut with the laser.

Product identification and enhancement have become very important in recent years. There has been an increased emphasis on product tracking and traceability, as well as the need for companies to make their products “stand out” from the competition. Compared with other methods, lasers offer significant advantages in flexible programming; the ability to achieve different types of marks on the same material; and minimal impact on the environment. Almost all parts can be handled by the variety of options offered by laser marking: from simple focusing mechanisms, to complex parts-handling and conveyor systems.