



ONE CLICK AND EVERYTHING IS READY FOR CODING

For machine maintenance, recognition of the correct parts is of great importance. That is why Ensa Machine Building in Eersel started laser coding its own parts for cigar production machines years ago. After the company's engraving laser was due for replacement, the choice fell on the LC 3000 laser marking system from Panasonic Industry. The collaboration led to a joint development process, resulting in an infinitely large SQL database.

Ensa Machine Building is not that big; the family business has about 40 employees. "So it is actually quite striking that multinationals also use our machines for running core business operations," says Martijn van de Ven. "It says a lot about how specific our machines are and about the service that comes with them. No machine will leave here without being fully tested. Everything has to be right, everything has to be deburred and without a scratch anywhere." Excessive? Not if you ask the employees here in Eersel. Creating a good product together, that's what it comes down to, according to Martijn, who took over the company from his father Harrie in 2012 together with his sister Margriet. Harrie himself started Ensa in 1997, after years of experience in machine construction for cigar production. Ensa grew, developed its own expertise and increasingly presented itself as the specialist machine manufacturer it is today. From development and engineering to construction and maintenance: the company controls the entire process. Of course, technology itself plays a major role in all of this, but the involvement of every employee is essential, according to Martijn. "The responsibility for a good end product, therefore, lies with everyone within the organisation. If someone sees an opportunity for improvement, that person is given the chance to work on it."

PLUG & PLAY INSTALLED

Ensa's machines are based on specific platforms.

Once on location, the installation of the machines is plug & play as much as possible, anywhere in the world. The vast majority of machines go to regions such as Indonesia and Latin America, very few are given a place in the Netherlands. It makes Ensa somewhat invisible close to home, although trainees know where to find the machine manufacturer. "They are given every opportunity here," says Mikel Theuws, head of the business office at Ensa. "Assembly, drawing: if you like technology, you will like it here quickly."

Yet, at Ensa, they are well aware that the image associated with the final product is not the most favourable. "That is why we are currently very consciously looking at how we can use our knowledge and skills for other industries," says Martijn. "We don't know now what such a second industry will look like, it is still too early for that. But it will in any case achieve a greener and healthier image. We want to be less vulnerable and we can head in any direction to achieve that. We already have the capacity for this in-house."

EVERYTHING CODED, NO MATTER HOW SMALL

Whatever the new sales market may be, it will immediately be clear to the customer that the machine comes from Ensa. Just look at today's machines: almost every part is coded, no matter how

small. It fits in with Ensa's aim to simply keep things in order, for both customers and their own employees. While technicians can move forward quickly, the coding also keeps supplies and therefore internal logistics in order. It was therefore already in 2007 that Ensa purchased the first engraving laser. Soon followed by several laser systems, for the coding of both metal and plastic. "That worked well for a long time," says Mikel, "but as the systems needed to be replaced due to wear and tear, the technology also turned out to have changed significantly. That's why we looked for an alternative and that's how we ended up at Panasonic." After the initial discussions and demonstrations, the choice fell on Panasonic's LC 3000 laser marking system, including a 3D lens and 50 Watt fibre laser, which were two important features for Ensa operator Erik van Beers. "A fibre laser requires less energy than other types of lasers, and it also engraves faster and deeper. In addition, the 3D function ensures that product shapes themselves have no impact on the coding. We no longer need accessories to get a coding sharp in one go."

INTENDED FOR COUNTLESS ITEMS

And yet, despite the specifics, Panasonic's marking system did not quite provide what Ensa was looking for. While the LC 3000 system's memory has room for nearly three thousand items, Ensa wanted to

expand to a multiple of those. So an extensive development process followed, aimed at an infinitely large SQL database. Mikel: "We have over 25,000 different items. Not all of them are manufactured products, but they are all items that each require a code. In addition, this number will continue to grow in the future and certainly with a second industry on the horizon."

In collaboration with Ensa, Panasonic modified the operating shell, thus providing not only the creation of a database with space for the many item numbers but also increased usability. "However fast and energy-efficient the laser marking system is, flexibility is a plus," says Erik. "That's why we went through the interface together with Panasonic and looked at how we could work with it as smoothly as possible. As far as I am concerned, that was certainly successful: all parameters are immediately correct at the touch of a button. I also immediately see the logo, text, and position, as well as the numbers and corresponding drawing. All those parts in

one overview: control has increased enormously." Just as Ensa looks back on the project with satisfaction, so does key account manager Ronald van Seters on behalf of Panasonic Industry. "A development process like this: it also takes us further. The customer questions were specific and went into great depth, although that was also necessary to come to this solution. Without Ensa's input, we could not have achieved this. We have learned from each other and that makes a collaboration like this all the more valuable."

THE WHOLE CONTROL PACKAGE

Panasonic provided the converter with a user-friendly HMI (human machine interface), with a magnetic and therefore easily movable screen. Panasonic also provided the customised printed circuit board, the team wrote the control software and also provided the housing for the control unit.

In other words, an almost complete control package, says Roel Lommers, key account manager at Panasonic. "That also made this project special for us. Everything came together in this, and all that in the short time that Ranpak had in mind. It seemed ambitious, but we managed it together."

The project for the Guardian was the first collaboration between Ranpak in Heerlen and Panasonic in Best. Ad: "We didn't know each other yet. But it soon became apparent that everything was properly coordinated. The condition is that you are as clear as possible with your documentation for a quick effect." Rob also looks back on the collaboration with satisfaction. "No question was ever too much. Moreover, in addition to an extensive product selection, we always received solid advice. They just have a skilled team in Best. With this versatile control as a result."



ALWAYS THE DISERED MARKING | At Ensa Machine Building, the LC 3000 laser marking station is controlled with an SQL-database. The system ensures that the necessary data for thousands of positions is managed, adjusted and sent from one point. Ensa offers the ideal combination, although a central, overhead system is not a must for anyone who also wants to get started with the LC 3000. In fact, the laser marking station can be used as a stand-alone solution in almost any process. Compact, versatile and just as robust: once equipped with the desired laser marker, the LC 3000 offers the solution for every marking.