



Polypipe Civils “Fit for purpose”

Featuring small character inkjet printers
Traceability of pipes ■ ■ ■



“Productivity has increased, downtime has been cut dramatically and the continued commitment to excellent customer service demonstrated by Markem-Imaje is invaluable.”

**Andrew Janney,
Manufacturing Manager,
Polypipe Civils**

Improving overall efficiency ■ ■ ■

Polypipe Civils has been manufacturing drainage, sewerage and cable protection systems for more than 30 years. Established as a leading European supplier of piping solutions, Polypipe identified an opportunity to improve its product coding on the wide range of underground pipes manufactured at Horncastle, that would increase the plant’s overall efficiency and improve its customer offer.

With 38 production lines, some of which required one coder and some two, the Horncastle plant was seeking reliable and cost effective coders that could easily be moved between lines when necessary. High performance equipment capable of printing clear, accurate and high contrast product codes, as well as descriptions and dates, on plastics with low adherence properties such as electric cable ducts was essential. Reducing the plant’s expenditure on consumables and maintenance costs was a further challenge while quickly accessible technical support and fast response times from engineers were also vital in order to limit downtime. Polypipe required codes to be printed on the raised section of its corrugated pipes while allowing for contraction and expansion of the pipe, due to temperature changes or the cutting process, further down the line.

In 2011, Polypipe consulted several suppliers, seeking a more reliable alternative to the expensive

Name: Polypipe Civils

Group: Polypipe (UK)

Date of creation: 1980

Production site: Horncastle (Lincolnshire)

Business: Manufacture of plastic pipes for the civils market sector (utilities, construction, civil engineering, agricultural, sports and leisure)

coding equipment in use at the time. Markem-Imaje recommended its 9232 E inkjet coder. A three month trial was implemented with two coders. The like for like comparison with other manufacturers showcased consistent and reliable start-ups as well as the speed and ease with which consumables could be changed. The real-time print capacity display helped managers to plan production runs accurately and efficiently while the compact size and options for vertical or table top mounting provided the flexibility Polypipe required.



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A technically advanced solution ■ ■ ■

Fifteen 9232 E inkjet printers using white ink were installed to code Polypipe's extruded pipe work. This piping is corrugated to prevent kinks developing due to bending which makes the pipes difficult to code as any print that sits between the corrugations becomes very difficult to read. Paul Longman, Markem-Imaje UK business development manager, said: "In order to ensure codes were only printed on the raised section of the pipes, we developed a new software solution using

With help from Markem-Imaje, Polypipe Civils – a European leading manufacturer of plastic pipe systems – has upgraded its printing equipment at its Horncastle plant in Lincolnshire.

fibre optic sensors to control the print signal and coding interval. The software package was created within eight weeks and implemented immediately, providing Polypipe with a reliable, accurate and effective coding solution."

Andrew Janney, Polypipe manufacturing manager, added: "Prior to the installation of the Markem-Imaje coders, reliability and the frequency of servicing required was our number one problem. Following the trial I had no reservations about replacing all of the 15 coders in use at our Horncastle plant. Not only have the 9232E coders proved to be more technically advanced and entirely fit for purpose, providing clear high quality codes, the attention to detail demonstrated by Markem-Imaje and the company's commitment to delivering the best result has been greatly appreciated. Polypipe was kept fully informed during the installation



Fifteen 9232 E inkjet printers using white ink code Polypipe's extruded pipe work.

process after which Markem-Imaje provided first class training making a number of site visits during the first two months. Productivity has increased, downtime has been cut dramatically and the continued commitment to excellent customer service demonstrated by Markem-Imaje is invaluable."

Following this successful installation at Horncastle, Markem-Imaje has subsequently supplied other Polypipe manufacturing plants with 9232 coders using blue, yellow, red and black inks in addition to the white ink used at the Horncastle plant.

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