

Connie's Charms Links With TherMark To Boost Business

The Challenge: Permanently Marking Stainless Steel Jewelry

Connie Feda, owner of Connie's Charms, a Pittsburgh jewelry and custom engraving company, never imagined her home-based Italian charm business she started four years ago would balloon into a wildly successful full-time retail, wholesale and Web operation, until her team-theme Italian charm bracelet design caught on in a big way.

"We were pretty content doing charm parties and relying on word of mouth for our business," Feda said. "However, three years ago, we were asked to design a charm for a neighbor who loved the Steelers. Instead, we designed an entire team-theme bracelet and that's when our business really got jump started. Needless to say, it didn't hurt that the Steelers won the Super Bowl last year."

Individual charms soon turned into full bracelets bearing the names and numbers for the starting football players. And, word of mouth among crazed fans forced Feda to rethink her entire production process.

Feda's next challenge was finding a system to quickly cover and mark hundreds of bracelets (approximately 2,000 charms) in one pass to keep up with increasing demand. Only TherMark's laser marking method to permanently mark jewelry-grade stainless steel with a matte finish could fill that need.

The Answer: LMM 14 Black Laser Marking Material by TherMark

One might say Feda put the cart before the horse as she was more concerned about finding the proper laser marking inks before choosing the actual laser in the first place.

"I specifically purchased my laser to use TherMark materials," said Feda. "I researched all the options for charm marking and talked with laser manufacturers about the best inks to use for my needs. After speaking with a TherMark executive, who provided me with the 'why and how' their products work, and learning about the extensive testing of their laser marking materials, I thought if it was good enough for NASA, then it was good enough for me."



VERTICAL:

Retail Gifts — Jewelry

REGION:

U.S.A. - Northeast

PRODUCT:

LMM 14 Black

SURFACE:

Stainless Steel

CUSTOMER:

Connie's Charms

— Connie Feda, Owner



Feda started out with TherMark's LMM 14 Black laser marking material in the liquid form. Then as demand for her bracelets increased, she switched first to the 6-ounce aerosol cans and eventually to using the laser marking material in bulk liquid. This switch allowed Feda to not only save money, but also gain tremendous coverage with very little waste.

Using TherMark's LMM 14 Black laser marking material and a 25-watt CO₂ laser working at a 100 percent power level, Feda can now generate 100 bracelets in one run. Taking into consideration drying time and assembly, Connie's Charms can now manufacture approximately 300 to 500 bracelets in a working day.

Feda has found success with all forms of the LMM 14 Black ink. She always keeps the liquid paint in stock because it stores well and can easily be applied with an air brush, allowing for "high production when we need it." However, she enjoys the coverage she gets out of one aerosol can. "It's convenient to just shake, spray and mark," Feda added.

The Result: Professional Quality Bracelets – And Lots of Them

"The TherMark marking material performs beautifully, consistently giving us distinctively clear marks while providing the flexibility we need to quickly and easily customize our products," Feda said. "Customers often bring me charms made by other methods and ask me to remark them. My customers have had the bracelets I've produced with TherMark materials for years, and they still look like new."

In addition to the permanent, high-contrast, high-resolution marking benefits, Feda also realized how the TherMark process allowed her to increase the speed of production for large orders. Once the TherMark laser marking material has been applied to the stainless steel surface, the process is as fast as or faster than the less durable, alternative charm marking methods such as heat pressing or screening. The entire laser marking process occurs in microseconds as opposed to hours.

"We originally leased the \$15,000 package for our first laser," Feda said. "This initially seemed like a scary investment that we weren't sure if we'd be able to cover. However, we more than paid for it in our second year, allowing my husband to quit his 9-to-5 job to expand our operations which now includes five different style bracelets for a myriad of both professional and community sports teams. I can safely say I wouldn't be in business if it weren't for TherMark."

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