

# Customer Success Story -Automotive Part Inspection

## Company Profile

Company: VM Automotive  
 Location: South Africa  
 Machine: Planar P1200.100



VM Automotive is a specialist materials company. They provide a blanking service in aluminium and steel to automotive OEMs such as Mercedes-Benz and BMW. The company is Tier 1 supplier, 100% black empowered and privately owned, with plants based in Rosslyn and Berlin.

Early in 2019 the company was awarded the contract for the Mercedes-Benz W206 series. They had previously been supplying Mercedes-Benz on the W205 series, which was the outgoing C-Class series. To service this new contract they set about building a new plant in Berlin, located near the Mercedes-Benz plant in East London, Eastern Cape. The project was three years in the planning stage.

VM Automotive looked to Retecon, a leading South African distributor of sheet metal production equipment, to source the machinery they needed for the new plant. In addition to a new blanking line, they needed to source an automated inspection system for quickly and accurately measuring the parts. Previously, sheet metal part inspection was carried out using tape measure, a method which was both inaccurate and slow, resulting in a lot of time being wasted.



Figure 1: VM Automotive plant in Berlin, Eastern Cape.

Retecon, South Africa's sole distributor of TRUMPF production technology, was aware of InspecVision's capability and thought the Planar 2D would be the perfect

**“We were able to improve productivity and accuracy. It's very easy to use and convenient and only takes a few minutes to measure the part and generate a report”**

Gibson Njenje, CEO, VM Automotive

automated inspection machine for VM Automotive. After initial discussions this was confirmed to be the case as InspecVision had already supplied their optical 2D part scanner to other metal blanking suppliers in the automotive industry in Europe and Asia.

VM Automotive ordered the Planar P1200.100 model, InspecVision's largest 2D metrology tool with a measuring area of 6 x 2 metres.



Figure 2: Planar 2D automated optical inspection system beside the Schuler blanking line in VM Automotive's state of the art facility in Berlin.

InspecVision and Retecon faced their biggest challenge when the Covid-19 global pandemic struck. Installation, commissioning and training were planned to be performed by InspecVision engineers but due to travel restrictions this became impossible.

Hans-Peter Neth, Executive Chairman at Retecon explains, “we had to find a way of instructing and training our service technicians to perform the tasks. Video conferences took place between InspecVision engineers and our technicians. InspecVision prepared excellent printed documentation as

well as video tutorials, instructing our staff to assemble and commission the 6 x 2 metre camera system. The training was given by our metrology applications engineer, after receiving instructions from InspecVision. The cooperation and the material received to perform these tasks by InspecVision was excellent and the metrology equipment was successfully commissioned in time for the customers first parts from the Schuler laser blanking line.

VM Automotive's Quality Manager, Dakalo Kutama, and his team of quality inspectors use the precision measuring instrument three times a day for laser quality control, typically inspecting thirty to forty sheet metal parts per week. The machine is used to do first off release for three shifts. Previously it was taking ten to twenty minutes to inspect a single part and the results were often inaccurate so "it was easy to justify the InspecVision dimensional measurement system given the improvements in production efficiency and quality."

Mr. Kutama said they have only required support from their local distributor or InspecVision once a year for calibration and whenever they had a technical issue the support has "been great".

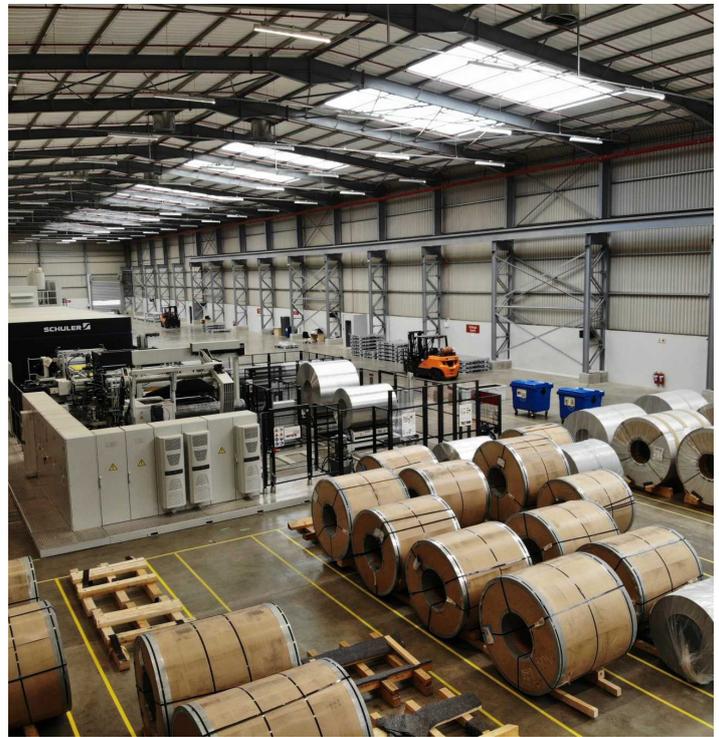


Figure 4: Raw materials ready to be manufactured into metal blanks.



Figure 3: Metal parts ready for packing following inspection on the Planar P1200.100

**“As a state of the art company we needed a quick and accurate way of measuring our parts without wasting time. InspecVision’s Planar system was the system to go for”**

Gibson Njenje, CEO, VM Automotive

To find out more information about the Planar sheet metal inspection system and how it can help your business; please download our online brochure and contact our sales team at [sales@inspevision.com](mailto:sales@inspevision.com).



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