Using social media for product application

YouTube videos demonstrate use of test equipment

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Today's test and measurement equipment provides a wealth of features, which allows engineers to perform extensive analysis on their systems. If an engineer or technician is using a piece of test equipment on a frequent basis, it is worth the investment in time (and reduced frustration) to read the manual and get familiar with the equipment's features, controls and general operation.

As the product managers and field application staff at TDK-Lambda have found, using one of our engineering test benches to perform a test on a power supply is no longer a simple task. One is now faced with a bewildering array of buttons and menu driven features on what used to be an 'easy to operate' oscilloscope, leading to a plea for help.

During internal product training for TDK-Lambda's new Z+ series of programmable dc power supplies, it quickly became obvious that this product line was going to fall into the same category as the new breed of high tech oscilloscopes.

Our previous generation of programmable power supplies, the ZUP, had simi-lar buttons on the front panel, but their functions were simpler to access. For example, one button was used to set the voltage adjustment range to either coarse or fine. The additional features that are now included in the new Z+ mandated the use of menu-driven programming. Having multiple buttons on the front panel was
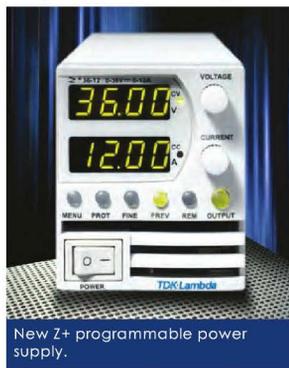
New Z+ programmable power supply.

out of the question, due to the ultra small size of the new Z+ (just 3.27" high x 2.76" wide) compared to its predecessor.

The product feature enhancements of the Z+ include the ability to store multiple test sequence programs, preset alarms, OVP and OCP protections, and more. In addition, the user can choose their preferred digital communications interface from a selection that includes RS232, RS485, USB, IEEE & LAN. To make matters a little more complex, turning the unit off to reset any programming mistakes is not possible because one of the main features of the Z+ is the flash based 'last-setting-memory'. This feature allows the unit to be stored for years, and upon power up, it will remember its previous settings. However, this trait can be disabled if not desired.

Since the Z+ power supplies are often used in a laboratory environment they tend to be borrowed by a large number of engineers and technicians. Web downloads of the existing ZUP instruction manual are very high on the monthly TDK-Lambda website statistics.

As an analogy, we have all experienced purchasing a new smart phone only to either spend frustrating hours trying to program/operate it or giving up and handing it to your teenager who ends up doing it in seconds. During our group training on the new Z+, one thought crossed our minds — many do-it-yourselfers (DIY) refer to YouTube videos to be reminded of the procedure for changing a faucet, or even how to replace a tail light on a car.

The TDK-Lambda team quickly decided that creating simple, short videos and posting them on our website and YouTube was the answer. Web statistics already showed that most of our videos were viewed on smart phones. This way an engineer could take their phone into the laboratory, start the video and follow the carefully timed steps while programming the Z+ power supply.

The first video produced by TDK-Lambda explains how to reset the Z+ back to its factory settings. This facilitates the sharing of these power supplies between several users and/or assists those who had initially set the unit incorrectly to modify the settings.

Currently 11 videos have been produced and are available at **http://www.us.tdk-lambda.com/lp/products/zplus-series.htm** or on YouTube at **http://www.youtube.com/user/tdklambda?feature=results_main**

For more information on the Z+ programmable power supply from TDK-Lambda Americas, go to http://ept.hotims.com/40524-80