**Headline:**

Built for demand

**Standfirst:**

Since Doka forged its strategic alliance with AT-PAC at the end of last year, Doka’s decision to include scaffolding as one of its core offerings is set to pay dividend as the construction and oil & gas markets turn their focus to more cost-effective, long-term solutions.

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While previously known primarily as a formwork company, Doka’s alliance with AT-PAC at the end of 2020 pivoted its model to share focus in order to maximise its existing supply chains while rising to meet the adjacent demand for high quality, easy-to-use scaffolding. Since its launch on projects around the world, we spoke to several members of Doka’s team who’ve have had the opportunity to see Ringlock in action and to understand how it’s been able to help clients in a practical environment, but before going into the details of the system itself, it is perhaps better to start by understanding how the markets have changed in the past year, and how it has affected industrial demand.

From a high level, it is safe to say that almost no business was left unscathed by the events surrounding the pandemic, with construction and oil & gas being no exception. Due to a variety of reasons such as greater difficulty in sourcing manpower due to travel restrictions or a significant increase in freight costs and pricing, Ringlock provided the perfect solution to meet market conditions, while Doka’s international network of more than 160 locations worldwide meant fast access with the option to rent, allowing companies to manage the economic uncertainty with greater control.

As Director of Strategic Accounts for AT-PAC, U.S.A, Geoff Mules has seen yet another side of the industry that has encouraged contractors to reconsider their choice of scaffolding. Commenting on a recent project, Geoff said, “In working on the Cameron LNG project in Hackberry, Louisiana, McDermott International Inc and its joint venture partner, Chiyoda Corporation started their project using tube and fitting before quickly realising two things. Firstly, that not all scaffolders in the U.S are sufficiently trained to use tube and fitting and that secondly the result can cause notable delays to the construction timeline. At this stage, we stepped in to provide specialised front-end planning and field coordination for a large freestanding scaffold for a Cryogenic Unit. In supplying over seven thousand metric tonnes of Ringlock, in place of tube & fitting, the project achieved a 30% reduction in scaffolding material and a 35% reduction in scaffold labour.”

When asked about the product’s versatility and what makes it appealing for contractors who need to remain agile, Regional Manager, Rhys Dixon, AT-PAC Australia said, “Thanks to Ringlock’s 8-node rosette connection, clients benefit from a significant reduction in components as well as limitless applications, meaning greater flexibility when it comes to application on site. In addition, Ringlock’s O-type hook planks and ledgers offer a superior solution when compared to the U-type system or omega transoms, allowing for faster and easier modifications.”

As a system which is both 50% faster to assemble, as well as 30% lighter per square metre, it’s not just contractors who benefit, but the labourers themselves. As such, Ringlock has become a universally applicable system, which isn’t tied to any one industry, but any business that requires the use of scaffolding on a long-term or temporary basis.

Unfortunately, a willingness to change isn’t the only reason contractors are sometimes reluctant to make the shift to Ringlock, but because many businesses invested in tube & fitting a long time ago and struggle to justify the cost in replacing it. Speaking with Mohammed Omran, Regional Business Development Manager, Scaffolding, he said, “Traditionally many clients would look at things on a project-to-project basis, so due to the cost pressures on many projects, the first consideration many project managers would face is finding the lowest cost option and therefore compare Ringlock directly with the cheaper alternative, such as cuplock and traditional tube and fitting, resulting in an unfair comparison. I would say moving forward, clients need to have a full lifecycle understanding of the cost, and they need to understand the implications of using a system that is more time consuming to erect and dismantle. In addition, clients need to also consider the overall loss of man hours in installing the systems as well as additional maintenance.”

When looking at the relationship so far, both Doka and AT-PAC have filled a much-needed niche that ticks the boxes for all stakeholders seeking a more efficient and cost-effective scaffolding solution. When asking Diogo Ezequiel, Regional Scaffolding Manager, Doka MEAAP about the partnership to date, he commented, “AT-PAC is a very experienced scaffolding company, which not only provides a very well-thought-out solution in terms of the system but also in terms of the associated services, such as the Scaffold Management Software Hi-Vis®. From Doka’s position, we not only provide a wealth of technical expertise, but also the global presence that can ensure the combined value is accessible for projects as far reaching as Australia to South America. I believe these synergies result in a very good fit for both companies and most importantly for the clients.”

As a final incentive, the global industrial sector’s transition towards higher standards has also supported the spread of Ringlock, as highlighted by Mohamed Omran.

“I believe the oil and gas industry in particular has always had a high level of health and safety, however it is apparent that standards are rising everywhere, particularly through the regular communication provided on site through Toolbox Talks. Companies are no longer taking the risk of using materials that have the potential to deteriorate and cause an accident, for example by replacing wooden boards for steel. In addition, Ringlock’s easy-to-use design means there’s a smaller chance of human error, which again reduces the chance of injury and subsequent delays.”

While the pandemic may have incentivized the industry towards Ringlock in order to meet market demand, the wider picture would suggest that as long as cost-efficiency and safety remain paramount, Ringlock will likely become a staple for the industrial sector for years to come.

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