Point Counter (Very Fine) Point

Sharpie. Let's start with a simple premise. Markers should be able to… Oh, I don't know… mark things? Ever try writing something with a VWR marker on an Eppendorf tube or a petri dish? You push the tip onto the surface and start moving it. And what happens next? Not a whole helluva lot is what! VWRs fail at the most basic function of any marker – to easily mark things! Yes, you can press hard and eventually get something anemic onto the surface. But can you actually read it? Without a dissecting scope? I thought so. Now try a Sharpie. Oh, but which one you ask? There are so many tip-size options and so many vibrant colors to choose from, including the retractable ultra-fine tip line. Retractability. Now there's a concept! Won't find that on any VWR marker. ReMARKable you say? No, that's just what Sharpies do. They mark things. End of debate. No contest.

VWR. Ethanol. E-T-O-H. A common laboratory reagent that's great for everything from precipitating DNA, to sterilizing counter tops, to freezing down bacterial cells. And that's to say nothing of its cousins, isopropyl alcohol, methanol, and a half dozen other solvents bearing hydroxyl groups. Know what else ethanol-and-friends are great at? That's right, dissolving the living crap out of Sharpie marks, that's what! Just show a Sharpie mark a teeny-tiny bit of EtOH and you'll be lucky to be left with a smear. Often, after swirling around for a few seconds, Sharpie marks simply disappear, leaving no trace. 'Leave no trace'. A great slogan for a hiker – not so much for marker though! Suddenly all your carefully labeled tubes become… unlabeled perhaps? Was that sample #1 or sample #7? Does that tube contain pBR322 or pBSKS(+)? No way to know, is there? Sharpies. I rest my case.

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