

CAN YOU AFFORD TO IGNORE ANTI-COUNTERFEITING?

Anti-counterfeiting recommendations put pressure on distribution to step up parts tracking. Charcroft's Debbie Rowland asks who should carry the cost of this data management

Last month's editorial comment in *Electronics Sourcing* highlighted an interesting fact about counterfeit components by pointing out that there are very few press releases issued about suspect counterfeit parts. It seems that, while manufacturers and distributors are keen to promote their new products and services, they are significantly less active in providing above-the-line communication about counterfeiting.



Sales manager at Charcroft, Debbie Rowland

This low-key approach means that original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and contract electronics manufacturers (CEMs) have had to rely on their peers to provide information on suspected counterfeit components, via organisations such as the Component Obsolescence Group (COG) and the Electronic Systems Community (ESCO).

Driving change

It is hardly surprising then, that it is the OEMs and CEMs who are driving a transformation that could have far-reaching implications for distribution. The change: customers across all sectors of the industry are routinely asking distributors to supply a copy of the manufacturer's Certificate of Conformity (CofC), with the lot numbers and date codes for each shipment of components.

Initially, this seems like a simple request, but consider how many shipments are made every day by distributors worldwide. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that some distributors are beginning to charge fees of up to £15 to supply a copy of the manufacturer's CofC, or only supplying them on back-to-back orders on lead-times.

The response to a recent European Aviation Safety Agency's (EASA) safety bulletin reflects the seriousness with which customers are treating the detection of counterfeit goods. The

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9-089-1101-918911	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1101-918912	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1301-918913	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1401-918914	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1501-918915	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1601-918916	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1701-918917	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-1801-918918	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-1901-918919	02	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2001-918920	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2101-918921	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-2201-918922	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2301-918923	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-2401-918924	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2501-918925	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-2601-918926	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2701-918927	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-2801-918928	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-2901-918929	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF
9-089-3001-918930	01	MANUFACTURER'S C OF C	PDF
9-089-3101-918931	01	MANUFACTURER'S DELIVERY NOTE	PDF

Charcroft operates a searchable documentation archive

bulletin names a few potentially counterfeit parts and strongly recommends the use of advanced parts tracking based on the components' lot numbers and date codes. Charcroft first received the bulletin when a major UK defence OEM issued it to all of its suppliers. Several more copies of the same bulletin were then sent to Charcroft from other customers who also happen to be tier one and tier two CEMs to the original OEM.

Multiply this activity by the number of OEMs and CEMs within the industry and it is easy to see why asking for lot numbers and date codes could dramatically increase the workload for distributors whose IT systems are not set-up to automatically handle these requests.

Automate data handling

With counterfeiting still rampant throughout the industry it seems as though every distributor will need to have a system to automatically log and archive the batch numbers and date codes for every component in its inventory.

Charcroft's own document archive was first introduced in 1985, following a request from a single customer to supply this information. The system is now fully automated to include this information with all shipments as part of Charcroft's standard service and at no cost to the customer. The archive also provides a searchable database for fast retrieval of information from historical goods-in deliveries and customer shipments.

It will be interesting to see whether some distributors continue to see traceability as a chargeable service, rather than a key factor in helping to avoid counterfeit components from reaching customers' production lines.