



STAYING POWER: CELEBRATING 40-YEARS AS A SPECIALIST

Charcroft's sales manager, Debbie Rowland, explains how the company's determination to remain independent enables it to provide high levels of service and support

Charcroft Electronics was established 40-years ago as a specialist passives distributor. A lot has changed since then but, whilst some products and distributors have seen major and sometimes disruptive changes, others have had the staying power to continue with only a few upgrades and changes.

Take technology for example: It was in the 1970s that Space Invaders first made their jerky, two-dimensional way across our screens. Today's gamers, however, can experience the dynamic, multi-player virtual reality that is Grand Theft Auto V. The same transformation has also hit our homes. The 1970s saw semi-automatic, twin-tub washing machines and introduced an exciting choice of colours such as avocado green, harvest gold and tobacco brown. So, whilst 'white goods' are still available in a rainbow of colours they now offer fully-automatic operation, energy-saving features, touch-screen controls and even remote control via a smart phone. It was also in the 1970s that the Hawk Trainer Jet aircraft made its maiden flight and it continues to be used today by over a dozen air forces around the world and by the Red Arrows display team.

The consumer sector has also undergone a similar high-speed transformation with the introduction in the 1980s of the Sinclair C5, mobile phones with batteries the size of a house brick, and the Sony Walkman. All of these products have been replaced, or radically changed, by the pace of technological change,



Debbie Rowland, sales manager, Charcroft



The first versions of the mobile phone, much like Charcroft, began life in the 1980s

whereas the Eurofighter Typhoon, GPS satellites, and Leopard 2 tanks have evolved at a slower pace.

It was also in the 1980s that the landscape of electronic component distribution underwent a radical change. Developments in computing, including the introduction of the server/client architecture and a little thing called the Internet, paved the way for worldwide information systems. Big distributors went on a global acquisitions rampage in their attempts to get bigger, faster, and to develop a global distribution network. Many independent distributors were engulfed in this tide of acquisitions, but Charcroft remained firmly independent and focused on servicing customers in high-end and high-reliability sectors such as aerospace and defence, instrumentation and rugged industrial applications.

Of course, Charcroft has changed, but the changes have been less dramatic and almost always driven by customers' needs to maintain continuity of supply and service. These changes have

included the addition of interconnect, e-mech, power components and modules to the original passives product lines and the creation of a UK-based manufacturing facility. This was a direct result of providing continuity of supply for the obsolescent VK series of ceramic capacitors. One year later, in 2004, the manufacturing facility was only the third Precision Centre, worldwide, to be approved by Vishay for trimming ultra-stable Bulk Metal Foil resistors to any standard, or non-standard, resistance value.

Today, Charcroft is one of the few remaining independent, specialist distributors in the UK. It is this determination to remain independent, however, which enables Charcroft to provide high levels of service and support to customers whose product life-cycles are measured in decades rather than in years. It is this staying power which is essential in helping customers to maintain a continuity of supply against a background of the fast-paced, throw-away nature of high-volume markets.



The first versions of the Eurofighter began life in the 1980s

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