

Legacy components are special case in the military market

Military component procurement still relies on the specialists, writes **Ian Ford**, purchasing manager, Charcroft Electronics

In the military sector the past year has seen a significant reduction or postponement of new capital programmes and an increase in refurbishments and urgent operational requirements (UORs).

Typically, these programmes require relatively small volumes and use components which are either obsolete or difficult to find due to the acquisition of the original manufacturer and potentially also subsequent manufacturers.

This change in strategy has added the new challenges of higher levels of support, manpower and knowledge of legacy components, to the relatively low volumes and high reliability which are typical of military procurement.

Paradoxically, the rise in refurbishments has coincided with a continued fall in the number of independent specialist distributors, as they were acquired by global broadline distributors.

The technological landscape for passive components also changed in



2012. Medical and down-hole applications, in addition to the handful of new military projects, all moved to more powerful electronics, often combined with tighter constraints on size and the need to meet higher operational temperatures.

The principal outcome is that passive components have had to be manufactured to more exacting standards, using more advanced manufacturing techniques.

Such combinations did not come without a price tag for the component

manufacturers who looked to re-coup their investments in more advanced technologies by identifying more design opportunities.

With a narrow linecard of manufacturers to support, and a detailed understanding of the products and the applications and technology trends into which they fit, specialist distribution has been used by component manufacturers to offset the reduction in their own direct sales force.

There has been a subtle change in the procurement and design landscape during 2012.

Broadline distributors continue to provide the logistics, inventory profiles and IT systems which can support global operations.

While the remaining specialist distributors have provided tailored support to customers whose markets and products do not have the simplicity or the volumes to warrant the attention of the broadliners.

Charcroft Electronics
www.charcroft.com

Cautious optimism for industrial

Business activity from industrial projects gives me cautious optimism for the growth of the business in 2013, writes **Peter Hannon** UK managing director of Harting

Overall, 2012 was relatively flat. Growth in Europe and the Americas was balanced by a slowdown in projects for the Asian market. We saw industrial projects sales continuing to grow, with customers investing in upgrading plant and machinery.

Sales in electronic connectors business slowed, however, reflecting the overall trend in the market.

Quotation activity has remained strong, but decision making has slowed, with projects often being put on hold.

Long-range prospects and the scheduling of orders has definitely reduced, and there appears to be

a general feeling of caution in the market, coupled with an avoidance of long-term commitments.

The company has made significant strides for its established product ranges in relatively new sectors, including the events market for theatrical productions and stadium rock concerts, and the railway and urban transport industry, where both heavy-duty connectors and Ethernet spines are proving to be essential features of modern rolling stock.

In the UK, the company has invested in upgrading its value-added business unit in Northampton, which manufactures backplanes and offers sub-assembly capabilities. These

investments include automatic crimping machines, testers and tooling equipment, greatly improving the company's capability and capacity to service local customers' needs.

In a market environment where limited visibility on future business currently prevails, it pays for any company to be locally close to its customers, and to be as responsive as possible.

Personal contact with customers and a good stream of new products gives cautious optimism for the growth of the business in 2013.

Harting
www.harting.co.uk

PLASTIC ENCLOSURES

Advanced designs for Electronics Equipment!



HANDHELD ENCLOSURES



DESKTOP ENCLOSURES



IP RATED ENCLOSURES



WALL MOUNT ENCLOSURES

For a huge range of modern enclosures visit our website:

www.okw.co.uk



OKW ENCLOSURES LTD
01489 583858

OKW