

Think twice!

Before forming a manufacturing partnership

It's a critical decision, as every company supplying product needs a partner with a reputation for manufacturing the goods. Reliability, consistency and efficiency are everything.

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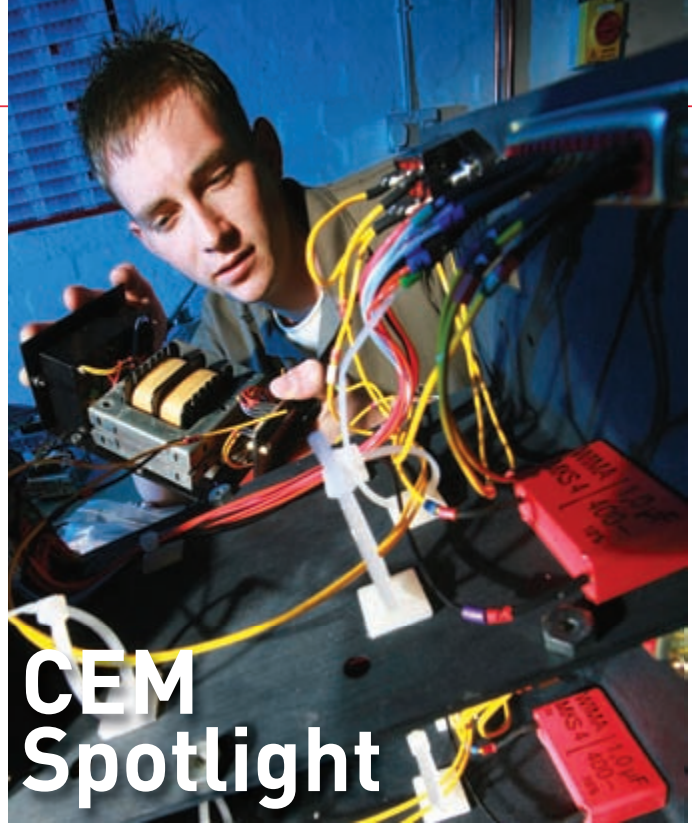
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CEM Spotlight

Most CEMs offer a design service but often this is sourced through a third party company. Hungerford-based Triteq is slightly different from the norm, as it focuses specifically on design and development. Marketing manager, Louise Fairley explains more as she succumbs to this month's Spotlight.

In a nutshell, how would you describe Triteq?

Triteq is an award-winning product design and development consultancy offering high-quality integrated design services. Triteq's customers are multi-sectored and benefit from complete innovative design solutions such as initial concept, research, and strategic planning through to electronic hardware design, software development, specialist prototyping and project management.

The company employs 30 people, based at a rural location near Hungerford in Berkshire and has full design house and pre-production and test facilities. We're very proud of our innovative and talented workforce and recognise that our people are fundamental to the success of the organisation. We also have the following registrations and recognitions:

ISO 13485 (TUV Munich); ISO 9001

Elektra 2006 Award Winner - Design Application of the Year

IDEA 2006 Awards Winners - Design Collaboration Award and Innovative Small Company Award

What services can you offer your customers?

Triteq specialises in electronic design and production services for both consumer and business clients. Triteq's focus is on achieving its customer's expectations and these can range from complete turnkey design projects for new product development through to input into individual

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elements of a design, due-diligence and creative re-engineering of existing designs.

We provide innovative product design from concept; hardware and software design; mechanical engineering; rapid prototyping and manufacturing; due diligence and other lifecycle support services.

What market sectors do you serve?

Triteq's customers include a wide range of industry markets including consumer, telecommunications, datacoms, medical, industrial, defence and automotive.

It assists businesses and entrepreneurs by providing complete innovative design solutions from concept to circuit design, software, prototype, tooling, project management and finished product. The percentage breakdown is approximately telematics 40%, medical 40%, other 20%.

Has the RoHS directive had any impact on your ability to source components?

Triteq has manufactured products for many years using lead-free, 'high-temperature' solder for specialist applications. This has given us a head start over many of our competitors allowing us to gain practical experience of purchasing and using RoHS solders and components. We have invested in converting our flow soldering capability to lead-free as well so that through hole designs can still be manufactured.

The design team is involved in the development of products for high volume applications requiring RoHS compliance, but at the same time also involved in some medical and military design work that is currently excluded. Sourcing RoHS compliant components is treated as a key part of the design process in a similar manner to sourcing industrial temperature range parts where this is required by our clients.

All new designs produced by Triteq are tailored to meet the new directives and Triteq can carry out a design audit for existing products and advise on the route to compliance.

Do you take advantage of offshore outsourcing?

In our experience moving immediately offshore is not necessarily the best solution although certainly in recent years many organisations have been led to believe they can achieve greater savings by using offshore production outlets.

Have you re-aligned your manufacturing strategies to combat offshore manufacturing by adopting lean manufacturing techniques for example?

By using an experienced design and manufacturing partner and taking into account a combination of the product, its owners and market conditions, an optimum solution can be found. For instance, some customers may require manufacturing to begin quickly and continue uninterrupted while the migration offshore is completed. On the other hand, it may be necessary to adapt to short term changes in market demand, which could be best served by ordering small batches in the UK

In your view, how do you see the future for manufacturing in the UK? Is there still a future and if so, where do you think this will lie?

In Triteq's experience, customers seeking the savings in assembly costs that a move offshore can bring must bear in mind the many differences in approaches to manufacturing, for example between Western and Far Eastern assemblers. Greater use of hand assembly in the Far East makes it ideally suited to large batch labour intensive production. However building PCBs in small batches in highly automated processes bears similar costs the world over when return shipping costs are taken into account. When you also consider the potential loss of tight control and possible reduction in quality, production in high volume in the UK rather than in the Far East is economically viable.

Has Triteq diversified its service offering to discover new streams of revenue?

Triteq has invested in experienced staff to provide the knowledge and skill sets in specific technology areas ensuring that we have a broad but controlled knowledge base, which has allowed diversification into new sectors.

A successful spin off company is Connexion2 which was borne out of Triteq, specialising in the design and manufacture of a safety communication device called Identicom. The decision was made to separate this from Triteq's core business in order to gain funding and retain focus and this has proved to be very successful with over 5,000 units sold since the company launch.

So what in your opinion differentiates Triteq from the competition?

Triteq is not a manufacturer – it is a design house with small batch specialised prototype facilities. What differentiates us from our competition we believe is the depth and breadth of experience within DFM. This is a subject that can be talked about but only truly understood through a real knowledge of how manufacturing works, the key elements for successful DFM and the danger areas. Triteq's managing director, Jackie Berry, brings to the business a fairly clear differentiator in that working from the factory floor up she has experienced the real world of manufacturing in the UK, Far East and Europe from an early age and bought that insight into the core business that is Triteq.

What are the key demands placed on you by your customers?

Everything must be considered when providing a turnkey solution for your customers. Every stage must be managed effectively thus not to adversely affect the next. Honesty and integrity are key.



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One Stop!

To form a new manufacturing partnership

Its easier than you think to fulfil the needs of your customers. But you'll need a partner with a reputation for producing the goods. Reliability, consistency and efficiency are everything.

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