



The YB3 marine tracking device in action at the Volvo Ocean Race

Quality comes first

Despite the recession and historic trends towards offshoring, the electronics industry is still very much alive and kicking in the UK, says Esprit.

Demand for British manufactured products is as strong as it has ever been and firms that once looked to cut costs by moving production to low-cost emerging nations are now returning to the UK as these countries' economies mature and labour costs rise. According to a recent report from manufacturers' association EEF, over the past three years, one in six UK based manufacturing businesses are now bringing operations back to British shores.

A case for quality

But this is not just an issue of cost. Companies are increasingly looking to capitalise on Britain's reputation for excellence and quality. This is compounded by an ability to create shorter, more responsive supply chains and the ease of communication with customers that being in the UK brings.

Many organisations are proud to say that their

products are manufactured in the UK because of the long-standing association that British manufacturing has with quality, reliability and excellence.

In today's throwaway society mass-produced, short-lived disposable items, you might question the importance of quality and reliability in electronics manufacturing, however, there are many industries where well-built, reliable technology is essential.

Reliability required

Esprit Electronics claims a position as a provider of quality electronics manufacturing services supporting a range of demanding applications across diverse market sectors. It boasts a reputation for developing bespoke, robust solutions underpinned by its supply chain expertise.

Services include new product introduction (NPI), design for manufacture (DFM) and design for test (DFT), surface mount technology (SMT) and through hole printed circuit board assembly (PCBA), in-circuit and functional test, through to full box build, integration and logistics.

Continued on p32



Esprit provides PCB manufacture and in-circuit test solutions for the rugged YB3



Shorter supply chains and an emphasis on quality and reliability make the UK a great location for electronics manufacture, according to Esprit Electronics



Savings in communication time, shipping costs, and improved quality mean it's cheaper to buy British

One example, which illustrates the need for quality, reliable technology is the marine sector. Here Esprit provides PCB manufacture and in-circuit test solutions to YB Tracking for its rugged YB3 tracking device. The device is designed for operation in the toughest environments, often being used in offshore yacht races across the world, including the Fastnet, Sydney Hobart, and the Volvo Ocean Race.

The YB3 tracking device works beyond the reach of WiFi and global system for mobile (GSM) networks. It automatically sends the boat's position and allows users to send and receive short messages from anywhere on earth. It obtains a position using the global positioning system (GPS) satellite network and then transmits that position back to YB Tracking using the Iridium satellite network in a matter of seconds. The message is relayed to YB Tracking from Iridium, where it can visualise positions on an online map.

Thought to be one of the most robust and reliable satellite tracking systems available, YB3 is used by many leading yachtsmen to track their position as they navigate some of the harshest ocean environments in the world.

Being able to rely on such electronic devices can be a life or death situation.

Collaboration called for

Director of YB Tracking, Nick Farrell, said: "It's important for us to have a supplier we can actually talk to, visit if necessary, in order to make amendments to our products as they evolve."

Esprit's describes its approach to customer service as one of collaborative engagement with customers, working seamlessly to ensure each business can focus on its core competencies.

Nick Farrell continued: "We have used both British and overseas suppliers in the past, and we prefer by far to use British ones. Although the unit cost may be marginally more expensive, if you look at the savings in communication time, shipping costs, and improved quality, it's far cheaper to buy British."

www.aeiuk.com