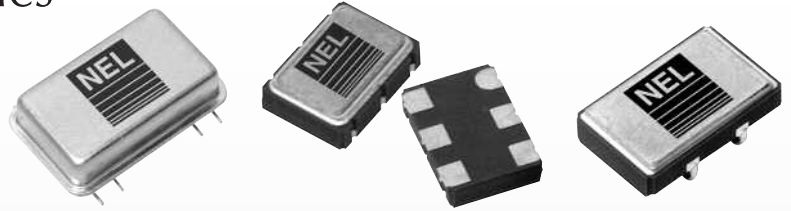


NEL Frequency Controls, When Reliability Is Critical

Case Study: Agilent Technologies



Type of Company:

Manufacturer of test, measurement and monitoring devices, semiconductor products, chemical analysis tools

Location:

Santa Clara, CA

Concerns:

Product Reliability
Responsiveness
Sample Turnaround

“When Agilent produces a computer chip, how to use it is not always immediately obvious to a customer or a potential customer,” explains Vish Kulkarni, an Applications Engineer at Agilent Technologies. “To help people get a better understanding of the ways these products can be used, my team sets up an evaluation board. The purpose of this type of board is to show customers an example of how they can use the chip with other components in a particular application. It helps them get an idea of how they can use Agilent’s product, and will help them decide to purchase it. The applications my group works in are high-speed applications like Ethernet, fiber channel, and SDH/Sonet systems.”

Agilent Technologies was originally a part of Hewlett Packard and spun off from the company in 1999. Today, they offer products in areas from optical and wireless communications to disease research. These products include more than 20,000 test, measurement and monitoring devices, semiconductor products and chemical analysis tools.

Reliability is Critical

“Because my group is building examples for high-speed applications, one of the parts that is necessary for these boards is an oscillator,” states Kulkarni. Oscillators eliminate timing errors in a circuit. A reliable oscillator is especially important in high-speed applications because there are more opportunities for error. “Problems we might have with the chips include noise stability and phase stability. The important thing about an oscillator is that it is reliable and that it meets the specs for the project. When we need an oscillator for one of the evaluation boards, we go to NEL Frequency Controls.

“I started with Agilent two years ago. We began using NEL Frequency Controls’ oscillators about that same time,” recalls Kulkarni. “Because we were a new group then, we needed help in deciding which suppliers to use. A lot of other people from around the company suggested that we go to NEL Frequency Controls for our oscillators. Right now, I really appreciate their suggestions, because our relationship with NEL has been very good.

NEL is Responsive

“NEL makes it easier to do my job. They are very easy to deal with and are more responsive to my requests than some of the other suppliers I have. They are willing to go out of their way to help me,” explains Kulkarni. “Usually, I expect that they will get a product to me in a couple of weeks. But there have been times that the project has been rushed, and I’ve needed an oscillator in a few days. Thankfully, they keep stock on hand, so they have been able to get the product to me when I need it. Also, their technical staff has been open to discussing any specific requests I have had for oscillators. The people at NEL are also very friendly, I enjoy working with them.

“NEL has a good product. Their oscillators are reliable, and they meet the specifications I have. After our customers see the example boards my team puts together, they often ask me for recommendations on whose products to use in their applications. If they ask about an oscillator, I always give them NEL’s name.”