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Strategies for Low Risk Sourcing of
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PG 4	Taking an Independent Path: Strategies for Low Risk Sourcing of Components in a Constrained Market
PG 12	Platinum Tools® to Give Away Test Kits During 2020 ISC West
PG 14	VMP Showcases 19-Inch Equipment Rack Enclosure During 2020 ISC West
PG 16	Ad Index

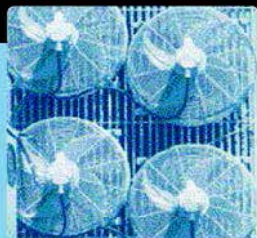


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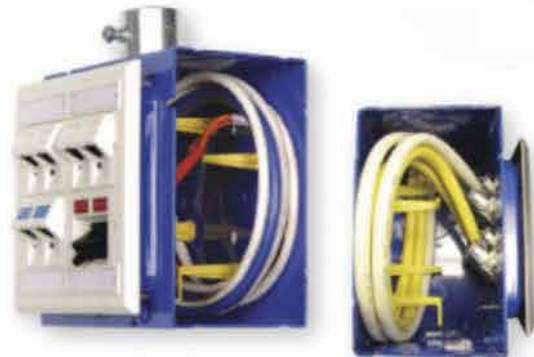
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Taking an Independent Path: Strategies for Low Risk Sourcing of Components in a Constrained Market

LED lighting industry looks to independent distributors to address chronic shortages in the availability of electronic components

Direct sourcing of electronic components for the LED lighting industry used to be pretty simple. An OEM would order direct from the manufacturer or through authorized distributors to obtain any required components. There was usually no need to look any further.

Today, the challenges of a highly stressed supply chain are forcing many LED OEMs to rethink the way they source components. With parts such as multi-layer ceramic capacitors (MLCCs) and other low-cost components in chronic shortage with extended lead times for delivery, manufacturers must be able to get these parts on-time at the lowest possible cost without assuming additional risk.

As a result, many are turning to independent or hybrid distributors for long lead-time parts. The primary caveat: the components must meet the specifications thereby avoiding compromising the integrity of the end product. In other words, LED lighting manufacturers want components that can be traced back to the original manufacturer.

For many companies, sourcing parts from the independent channel requires a significant shift in mindset. It also requires a comprehensive strategy for identifying and working with reliable independent stocking distributors to ensure they get components they need, when they need them.

“For LED manufacturers there has been harmony in the supply chain for most of the past decade, so the need to identify alternative suppliers has not been as pressing as it is now,” says Mike Thomas, vice president and global general manager at Classic Components, an independent distributor based in Torrance, CA. “That means many companies have not invested a lot of time or attention strategizing about how to use independent distribution channels effectively.





WE HAVE THE ROPE TO GET THE JOB DONE.



The process begins, he says, with understanding how to distinguish one independent distributor from another. This often comes down to a mixture of experience, reputation and the extent of the supplier's global supply network. Therefore, it is critical to understand the quality management systems of your independent partners.

Know Your Source

According to Thomas, the mantra in his industry to eliminate risk is "know your source." To accomplish this, leading independent distributors invest millions to manage global supply networks, rate/prioritize suppliers, establish preferred supplier relationships and acquire the latest inspection equipment and utilize effective Quality Management Systems (QMS).

"Over time, companies like ours have developed a very complex method of identifying and eliminating risk," says Thomas. "That includes knowing how to inspect and test components that come in to our facility, but also goes well beyond that."

It also means analyzing and inspecting sources with an investigative diligence. What path did the parts take to get there? Who is the manufacturer and how is that relevant? Where was it made? How was it shipped and packaged? Is demand of a component strong enough to make its availability viable? Only thorough examination and assessment of all these factors, in conjunction with traceability, can the risk be truly mitigated.

"When we purchase components like MLCCs, for example, we are purchasing from a direct source," explains Thomas. "That could be a regional or foreign distributor, an OEM partner or direct from the factory."

To verify the chain of custody, traceability documentation can be provided that identifies the name and location of all the supply chain intermediaries from the part manufacturer to the direct source of the product. If this traceability is unavailable, a risk mitigation plan is required. Finally, visual inspection, testing and physical analysis are performed on all incoming products.



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Purchasing Power

The truth is that many of the shortages were predicted some time ago. As a result, leading independent stocking distributors like Classic Components have spent the past few years engaged in a long-term strategy of identifying, and investing in, directly sourced critical electronic components.

By doing this, independent distributors protect the supply, but are also able to lock in lower prices by making purchases before the inevitable changes driven by reduced supply and increased demand.

To protect high-volume orders, a distributor can lock in prices and delivery dates for many months at a time. This ensures that the inventory will be there when the customer needs it and not sold to someone else.

In some cases, they can even make speculative purchases for a customer and/or provide financing to purchase inventory when a qualified client has capital constraints.

Global Networks

Another direct source for high demand parts comes from tapping into a large global network. Because of the worldwide demand for components, independent distributors have expanded globally and placed sourcing experts in key supply markets.

For example, in addition to its 60,000 square foot facility in Torrance, California, Classic Components has established 12 regional offices in strategic locations throughout the world to support its global distribution business. The company boasts nearly 200 employees, who specialize in various aspects of the business, including supply chain, quality, technology and logistics.

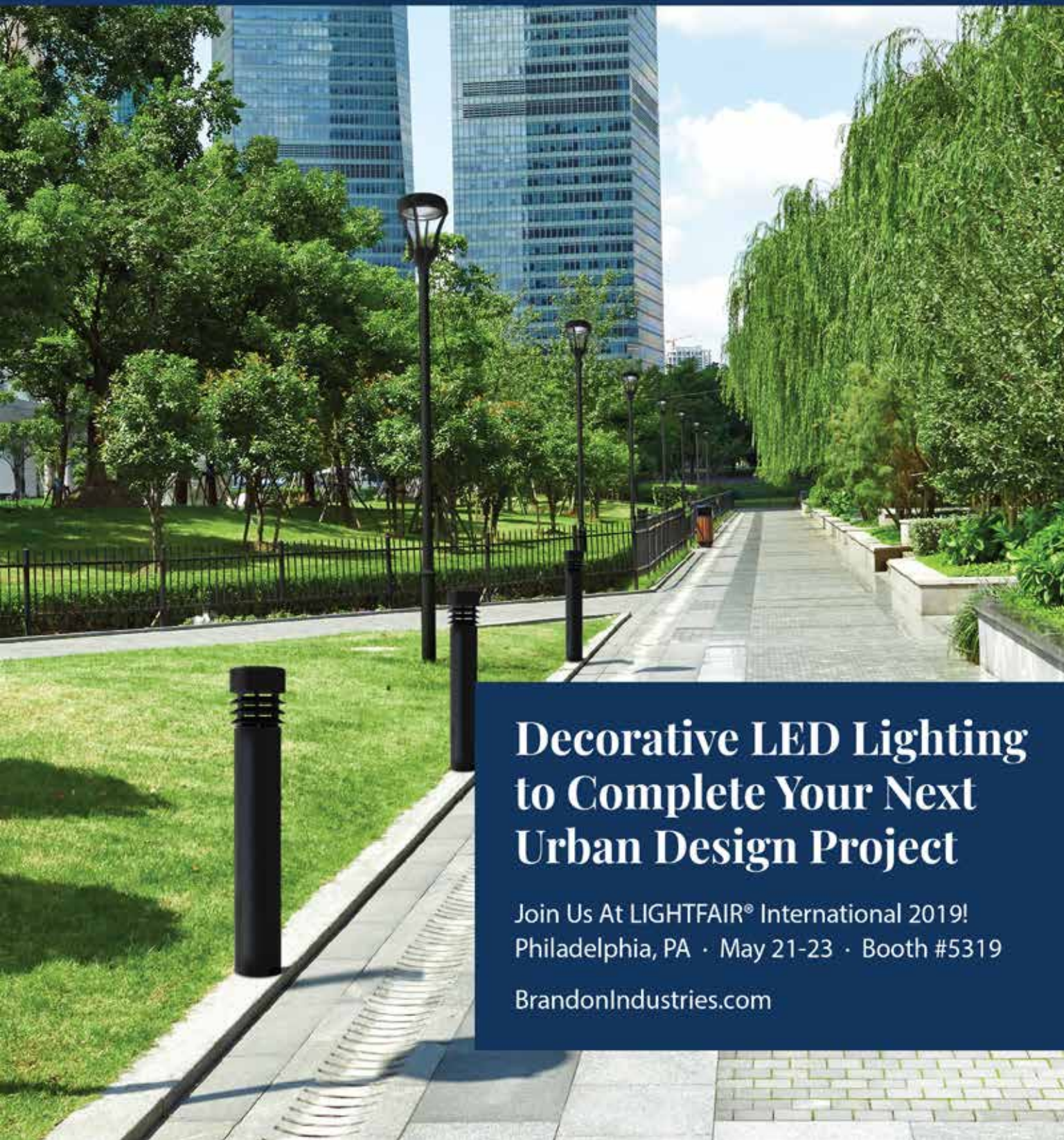
The buyers can develop an intimate knowledge of regional supply chains with the expertise to find and manage quality component suppliers. These experts then leverage these relationships to bring the best price and delivery to their customers.

"By using regional quality centers and logistic hubs, we have the flexibility to purchase components from any country, in any currency, and then ship them to anywhere they are needed," explains Thomas.



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He gives the example of a customer in Mexico that wants components from Taiwan, due to availability. If the Taiwanese supplier will only sell to local companies, Classic Components can purchase the components from its satellite office located there. Later the stock can be transferred or sold to another branch office before it is ultimately delivered to the customer in Mexico.

Classic's global logistics can also help to manage or avoid tariffs by shipping to and from our international hubs in Hong Kong and the UK.

Rigorous Vetting

Another way to ensure the reliability of the independent distributor is to ensure they are thoroughly vetted. Established companies are used to complying with frequent requests for audits. In fact, some of the robustness of the quality systems implemented by independent distributors can be attributed to this activity.

Continuing Shortages

With significant shortages in many high usage electronic products needed in the LED lighting industry expected to continue for at least the next 2-3 years, the independent distributors' seat at the electronic components sourcing table has never been more relevant.

Through investment in developing deep global networks, inspection, authentication, inspection and quality systems, independent stocking distributors stand ready to provide LED lighting OEMs a robust option to navigate the white waters of international supply nimbly, effectively, and without the risk.

For more information, contact Classic Components Corp. 23605 Telo Avenue, Torrance, CA 90505; www.classic-ic.com; 310.539.5500; info@classic-ic.com.

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Platinum Tools® (www.platinumtools.com), the leader in solutions for the preparation, installation, hand termination and testing of wire and cable, is proud to announce that it will give away three new ezEX-RJ45® Mini Termination & Test Kits (p/n 90147) during ISC West 2020, held in Las Vegas, Nev. from March 18-20 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, booth #3037. Potential winners only need to come by the Platinum Tools booth during the show and get their badge scanned in order to gain entry to the giveaway.

A \$225 value, the winner of Residential Systems "Best of Show" CEDIA 2016 award and the 2017 BICSI Winter Conference Winner for Connectors and Connectorization, the ezEX-RJ45® Termination System with the new EXO Crimp Frame® is the most advanced pass-through style RJ45 connector on the market.

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Video Mount Products (videomount.com), a leading provider of mounting solutions for the commercial, security, residential, and pro audio/video markets, is proud to announce it will showcase its popular and durable 27 rack space EREN-27E1K 19-inch Equipment Rack Enclosure during ISC West 2020, held in Las Vegas, Nev. from March 18-20 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, booth #1046.

"The EREN Series has been designed for use with a multitude of security, audio, and video, and communication components," explained Keith Fulmer, president of VMP. "Fully assembled and welded, these units simplify on-site installation. With a tempered glass front door for great equipment visibility, a double swing rear door for easy access to the back of your equipment and removable side panels, the EREN-27E1K cabinet makes installing and servicing your equipment simple. Finally, with a 1,300 lb. load capacity, the EREN-27E1K is a workhorse you can rely on."

The cost-effective and portable EREN family of 19-inch equipment rack enclosures has been designed for installations where protected components are a necessity. The EREN Series, which comes complete with integrated pre-installed cooling fans and lockable, removable locking side panels allows for the organization of multiple electronic components, while at the same time protecting them from thermal issues, as well as damage or theft.

Additional EREN-27E1K specifications include:

- Overall Dimensions - 54.8in.H x 23.6in. W x 39.4in. D
- Usable Depth – 33in.
- Rails threaded with standard 10-32 threading
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- Adjustable front and rear rails
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About Video Mount Products

Video Mount Products (VMP) is a leading provider of mounting solutions for the A/V, communication and security industries since 1994. VMP products consistently offer the latest designs in safety and flexibility, all at an outstanding value. VMP's product offering continues to grow by adding mounting systems to address growing segments across many markets.

VMP has become the mounting systems company of choice for professionals and their customers everywhere. All products have been engineered for and installed with confidence in thousands of residences, businesses, hotels, restaurants, schools, hospitals, houses of worship and security applications throughout the world. VMP prides itself on providing the best products in the industry and by supporting those products with knowledgeable professionals who understand that "support" is the core of our business.

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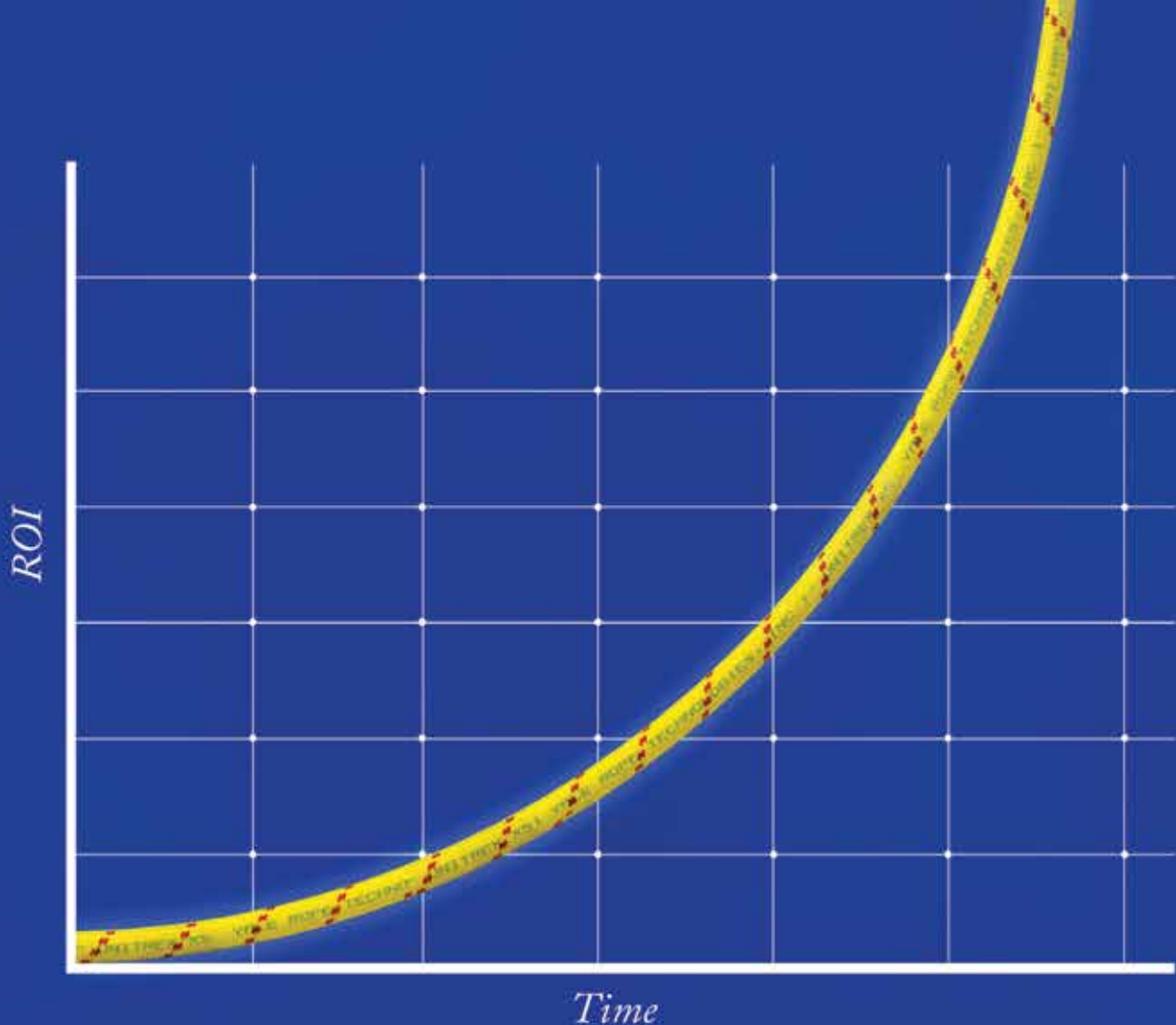
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