

Norcott EMS invests in productivity

Specialist electronic assembler Norcott EMS has invested in an Automated Optical Inspection (AOI) system as a key part of its commitment to maintaining excellent standards even during busy times for its manufacturing facility in Warrington, Cheshire.

Norcott decided to invest in the technology due to increases in customer demand and the complexity of products it assembles on their behalf. Furthermore, as its customers often have to meet tight production schedules, maintaining simultaneously high levels of build quality and throughput is of paramount importance.

The investment also has another significant benefit, as it allows the company to make better use of another valued asset: its inspection staff. Having the AOI system to scan for common faults means they can use their expertise to spot more subtle defects, and take a pro-active approach to refining the assembly process.

Dave Forster, the company's quality assurance manager, comments: "As Norcott grows, we are finding customers regularly calling on us to assemble high technology products consisting of more than 1,400 components per board. Consequently, the task of checking component presence, alignment and polarity was becoming steadily more onerous."

It was this, along with the company's need to free up time for its IPC-A-610 trained inspection team to concentrate on overall build quality and higher level issues, that led to Norcott investigating suitable AOI systems. Dave continues: "It made sense for us to bring in an automated system to perform detailed presence and absence checks. Quite simply, allowing our inspectors to focus on subtle process indicators is a better and ultimately more profitable use of their time."

After extensive research, Norcott settled on Yestek's ScanSpection system as 'best in class. The system is a high quality scanner-based solution which uses two basic algorithm groups to inspect components and solder joint quality.

Dave adds: "We looked at a number of systems during the research process and Yestek's offered the best flexibility and functionality for low to medium volume production. Furthermore, the efficiencies it is set to make in our manufacturing process means it promises to offer excellent return on investment."

Norcott managing director, Pete Lomas, concludes: "In today's highly competitive marketplace it is vital that our customers can rely on our ability to supply quality product against the most demanding build schedules. At Norcott we are responsive to our customers' needs and have a continuous investment programme that encompasses training, systems and equipment. This ensures we can continue to offer them a world class service."

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