

VIEW FROM THE TOP

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Q: There's a distinct shortage of RF engineers, particularly among engineering school graduates. Has that improved somewhat, or do you see a need for companies like yours to promote careers in microwave engineering via campus promotions, summer internships, contests/competitions, or some other method?

A: There is a definite industry-wide need to promote careers in microwave engineering. However, in dB Control's case, we cannot rely on that to happen. We are an engineering-driven company – next-generation talent ensures our future success. So dB Control develops excellent and well-respected engineers through internal training and on-the-job experience. In fact, many of our senior-ranking engineers have been with us since they graduated from college. Our recruiting and internship program teams up experienced engineers with young, enthusiastic engineering candidates who ultimately become valued resources at dB Control.

Q: For those of you primarily in the military market, what do you expect of next year's military budget (as yet undetermined)? For those in the commercial side of the business, are you encouraged by any particular emerging application or technologies?

A: While any impending defense budget cuts are always top of mind, we're fortunate to have many military customers rely on us as a sole-source provider of TWT Amplifiers (TWTAs), microwave power modules (MPMs) and power supplies. Regardless of budget fluctuations, the defense sector will always support technology such as UAVs that keep military personnel out of the line of fire, and dB Control provides the underlying technology in several UAV platforms. The military will also need amplifier products that provide a wider bandwidth, higher power and are smaller in size and we remain committed to meeting those needs.

Q: After the 2008 economic meltdown, our industry showed great resilience (in general) these past two years. Unfortunately, the global economy remains in turmoil. Have we learned from those tough times, or do you fear another big dip for our industry?

A: Our industry will continue to show great resilience, even in a recovering economy. Many say that defense budget cuts are inevitable in the coming years. However, there will always be a need for reliable

products for defense applications. A company like dB Control will remain successful as long as there is an unwavering commitment to quality, reliability and customer support. While this philosophy doesn't ensure a company will be "recession-free," it does lessen the potential negative impact.

Q: What new product or technological developments have most excited you and your employees?

A: Improving overall amplifier performance and enabling frequency agility is imperative for future radar, EW, ECM, airborne datalinks and other applications. We always educate our employees about the applications our products ultimately support, as this ensures they understand the critical nature of our work. For example, dB Control recently introduced several wide-bandwidth, high-power amplifiers – including two TWT Amplifiers and a microwave power module that doubles output power over a wider frequency band, compared to similar products. The wider bandwidth and higher power levels enable military personnel to detect more threats and accomplish this mission from farther away. As our production-based experience on these products grows, dB Control's baseline product portfolio expands and our response time to meet customer needs condenses.

Q: Which markets or technologies do you feel will propel the industry in the coming years?

A: Continued advancements in UAVs will drive the industry for years to come. As UAVs get more sophisticated, so will the need for more sophisticated synthetic aperture radar technology. The more accurate the SAR system, the higher the power required of the amplifier. Additionally, we see a trend emerging from gain linearization with our amplifiers. Customers will want the gain to be linearized in order to get more power in the linear range from their TWT Amplifiers. Standoff jammers are also gaining momentum in the marketplace.

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