

## Electronics manufacturing: Five reasons for partnering with quality test providers

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October 2008



Product quality is integral to brand equity as globalization in various markets advances. Yet the push to outsource manufacturing processes makes quality assurance even more challenging. Factors like tainted food additives and poor-quality components raise the likelihood of product recalls that cause subsequent damage to the brands.

**CIMTEK** has carved out a viable niche for itself in quality life-cycle management, providing both software and outsourced quality test services to a number of verticals, including electronics, medical device, and automotive.

“Anyone who has done business in the automotive industry is aware that one failure can cost a significant amount of money,” says Kevin Stokes, general manager for the Jasper, Ind.-based manufacturing facility of **Kimball Electronics**. Kimball offers a broad spectrum of components to the automotive, medical, and industrial/public safety markets.

According to Stokes, Kimball had done its own quality test services, but was struggling to keep up. “We surveyed a dozen test providers, did work with six or seven, and finally selected **CIMTEK**,” he explains. “We think they offer the best value, and they helped us pull testing into line where it wasn’t delaying release of products. Partnering with **CIMTEK** also gave us much better visibility into the true costs of quality test development—something we didn’t understand when we were doing it in-house.”

In addition to its Magellon quality test software, **CIMTEK** offers quality services outsourcing, including recent expansion into China where it provides OEMs with greater quality assurance of components manufactured there.

“**CIMTEK** has an interesting approach to quality, going after a market where quality is becoming much more critical to brand differentiation,” says Simon Jacobson, a senior analyst with Boston-based **AMR Research**. “It’s a [services] market that will continuously ripen.”

**Five reasons: Product testing benefits at a glance**

**CIMTEK** offers five reasons why electronics manufacturers should consider partnering with quality test service providers:

1. Ramp-to-volume is consistently delayed because test development isn't continuously upgraded as designs change.
2. Product release is delayed because critical components that proved faulty in the field remain on the bill of material.
3. Test strategies target SKUs or model numbers rather than being strategically aligned with the design team's overall product line road map.
4. Design team attention is continuously diverted away from innovation to handle problems arising during product launch.
5. Warranty costs run higher than the industry average of 1 percent to 5 percent.