

European investment pays dividends for YESTECH's AOI installation success and business growth

Automated optical inspection (AOI) can rapidly improve electronics manufacturers' faultfinding rate and process quality. While advances in AOI technology have steadily increased this potential for improvement, support from the AOI supplier is essential to realise it with minimum disruption and cost to the user. By recognising this need, and investing significantly to satisfy it, YESTECH Europe has experienced rapid growth across the region, while their customers have enjoyed an early return from their AOI investment.

As many electronics manufacturers have discovered, adding automated optical inspection (AOI) to an assembly line can bring tremendous benefits, both for immediate faultfinding and for longer term process improvement. Advances in AOI technology have increased the potential of these benefits; exploiting this, however, depends on how well the new technology is integrated into the user's existing manufacturing processes. Suppliers must provide expert guidance to their customers as they define their inspection needs, specify the most appropriate AOI hardware, assimilate it into their assembly process, and ensure that their operators are trained and motivated to utilise all the benefits that AOI can deliver.

YESTECH Europe, the European arm of Nordson YESTECH, has always recognised this, and has been investing significantly to make this level of support a reality across the region. As a result the company has been experiencing excellent growth for their advanced technology AOI products as business conditions have been improving. In January, their reported sales since December included 7 major in-line installations as well as smaller bench-top system orders. Another recent order comprised setting up AOI on twelve production lines for one company in Romania. These large-scale installations are going into the Tier 1 electronics manufacturing companies which now operate on a global scale from Eastern Europe and the Baltic States.

YESTECH's strength becomes evident right from the initial selection process. As part of the Nordson group, they enjoy a close relationship with fellow member Nordson Dage. Together, the companies offer an unsurpassed range of optical and x-ray inspection equipment. Their investment into the region is easily apparent as well. YESTECH Europe's headquarters are in the South of England, from where it can offer sales, logistics, and on-site services such as training and technical support throughout the UK as well as into mainland Europe. This is complemented by Nordson Stuttgart's technical support facility and a network of local offices and representatives distributed throughout Europe. The network includes the Baltic States, and extensive coverage of Eastern Europe.

Users are increasingly looking for a 'right from the start' approach to technical support. Organisers of February's Southern Manufacturing exhibition reflected this by inviting visitors to 'Bring along your plans and drawings for an instant response'. YESTECH Europe responded to the challenge as they always have, with expert advice and opinions, rather than just sales information, consistently available throughout the exhibition. YESTECH also disseminate their technology through papers and presentations at events such as the IPC Conference on Quality, Reliability & Acceptability for Electronics Manufacturing in Budapest. This view of support's vital role is integral to the entire Nordson YESTECH group's culture; a fact which has won third-party recognition in the shape of the 2010 Circuits Assembly Service Excellence Award. 2010 is the fifth consecutive year in which the award has come to Nordson YESTECH.

Ultimately, YESTECH's success has come from their AOI product innovation and development combined with their 'whole life' support. Products range in size from compact bench-top systems to their latest high resolution in-line FX machines. The whole range offers high-speed PCB inspection with exceptional defect coverage, handling both solder joints and correct part assembly. Developments in hardware include Advanced Fusion Lighting™ and, now, 5 megapixel camera resolution. These are complemented by software and image processing technology including colour inspection, normalised correlation, rule-based algorithms and a user interface that allows a complete inspection program including solder inspection to be set up in typically less than 30 minutes.

'Over the last year trading conditions across Europe have remained excellent' commented Andy Bonner, Nordson YESTECH's European Manager, 'with particularly strong growth in more recent months. As a result, the return on our investment into the region has been highly gratifying. The volume of enquiries as well as shipments is healthy and growing. We have noticed that these vary across the European area, with benchtop systems enjoying great popularity in the UK and Spain while the larger in-line machines are selling well into Eastern Europe. We are also particularly pleased to see repeat business, where customers who have seen the benefits of a single AOI machine move on to roll out AOI across their entire production facility.'