

## Phoenix from the Flames

Six years after a devastating fire nearly destroyed the company, Pulse Electronics celebrates its best year on record

**St. Neots, United Kingdom – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009** – Christmas tends to be a time of reflection for all - but few more so than for Pulse Electronics, the UK-based and privately-owned designer and manufacturer of power supplies and systems. 2009 marks Pulse's best year on record for sales; a remarkable achievement considering the current economic climate and that, six years ago, the company was almost destroyed by fire.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 a charging Nickel Metal Hydride battery pack went into thermal runaway and triggered a fire which, despite the efforts of 70 firemen, destroyed Pulse's premises.

Thankfully no one was injured and the company's policy of backing up electronic data in a fire safe certainly paid off. However, the fire rendered the building uninhabitable, completely destroyed the engineering and production departments, and resulted in the loss of virtually all stock.

Chris Austin recalls: "The fire could not have happened at a worse time, as six major manufacturing projects were about to commence round about that time." Thanks to a fantastic team spirit, additional investment from parent company Ipeco and the flexibility of (and support from) customers, Pulse Electronics recovered quickly from the catastrophe.

Operating from temporary accommodation, within four weeks Engineering Design was fully functional and limited production available. In March 2004, the company moved into new premises and a full production line was running by early May. By September, Pulse Electronics was back on track to meet its 2004 targets; despite a lack of full production capability for the best part of four months.

Since 2004, Pulse Electronics has enjoyed a year-on-year growth of approximately 10%. There remains a steady demand for Pulse Electronics' modular power supplies, within the defence and aerospace sectors (and, increasingly, traditional embedded systems). Also, it is worth noting that one of the contracts due to commence in December 2003 was for PSUs needed for a customer's global positioning anti-jamming system. This remains an active contract and to date more than 6,000 units have been shipped.

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Austin adds: “At the time the fire was devastating. We saw no future. We did recover though and, looking back, the fire actually made Pulse Electronics stronger. It forged a team spirit that enables us to face virtually anything – and has earned us great respect within the industry.”

In conclusion, Austin says that Pulse Electronics learned some very important lessons from the fire of 2003. “Whilst all company directors and managers no doubt concentrate on day-to-day business, staffing issues or just generally coping during the downturn, it is essential to take time out to consider how you’ll cope if the unthinkable happens. Insurance policies, fire extinguishers and systems, and safety checks are all good and well, but what contingency plans do you have in place if something does happen? How quickly could you resume business?”

### MAIN ENDS



#### **About Pulse Electronics**

Established in 1975, Pulse Electronics specialises in the design, development and manufacture of high-efficiency power systems for aerospace, defence, industrial, telecommunications and other demanding embedded applications. The company is also servicing upper professional and scientific power supply markets.

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The company is based in St Neots, in the United Kingdom, and its engineering capabilities include: electronic and mechanical design; PCB layout, production and test; system integration; and through-life product support. In addition, Pulse Electronics invests heavily in design and modelling tools, including those used for thermal and vibration modelling, and has in-house facilities for environmental evaluation and qualification, including preliminary EMC examinations.

Pulse Electronics' manufacturing department is configured to handle small to medium volume, high quality production runs. Furthermore, the company's continual investment in the latest SMT automated assembly and inspection equipment serves to optimise the manufacturing process to deliver consistent product.

The company's Quality Control system provides full lifecycle traceability of product from initial concept, through design, development, manufacture, service and repair - and is suitable for the majority of aerospace, defence and telecommunications market applications. Pulse Electronics is registered to ISO BS EN 9001: 2000 and enjoys preferred supplier status with a number of key industry leaders.

*Pulse Electronics is part of the substantial Ipeco Holdings Ltd group of specialized engineering companies. Ipeco's other core activities include: the manufacture of flight deck specialist crew seating and cabin interior equipment for the aerospace market; and the manufacture of machined components for the defence electronics and engineering industries.*

For further information on Pulse Electronics please visit [www.pulse-electronics.co.uk](http://www.pulse-electronics.co.uk), and for further information on Ipeco Holdings please visit [www.ipeco.co.uk](http://www.ipeco.co.uk)

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