

Sub-standard parts always lose the game

George Karalias, Director of Marketing & Communications at Rochester Electronics, www.rocelec.com



As the National Hockey League's (NHL's) 2013 post-season comes to an end with the Chicago Blackhawks defeating the Boston Bruins, we see many comparisons between hockey's illustrious quest for Lord Stanley's Cup and the acquisition of end-of-life (EOL)/obsolete devices.

Originally commissioned in 1892 as the Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup, Lord Stanley's Cup is the oldest of all the North American professional trophies. Most sports experts agree that the NHL's Stanley Cup is the hardest professional trophy to acquire. Every year, 16 teams enter into the Stanley Cup Playoffs, more than the playoff contentions of any other professional sport. This means a team must win 16 games before hoisting the coveted Cup over their heads in celebration, and they could play up to 28 games if each round (there are four rounds) goes to a seventh game.

The same level of difficulty, and perhaps the mental strain, could be said for acquiring EOL or obsolete semiconductor devices. These devices are often the hardest, most difficult components to obtain for purchasing professionals.

Much like a hockey team, an electronic system is the sum of its parts, and that's never as true as when one of those parts needs to be replaced but can't be found. Faced with an obsolete or hard-to-find component, the end-user can invest in all new equipment; embark on a lengthy (costly and time-consuming) re-design; or resort to buying from an unauthorized source on the gray market and risk obtaining counterfeit or faulty parts. If defective parts make it into the field, end users experience equipment failures and ultimately lose the game. For mission-critical applications such as military, medical, and aerospace, faulty equipment can even result in loss of life. Luckily, there is another solution.

One of the most important things an OEM can do to ensure component availability over the life of a design is to put an end-of-life strategy in place at the time a component is designed in, or at the very latest, when an EOL announcement is

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made. Many semiconductor manufacturers work with authorized suppliers that continue to stock, sell, and even manufacture the original device. Exploring the options offered by those suppliers before an obsolescent semiconductor is needed for production, maintenance or repair saves time, money and aggravation. A directory of original manufacturer authorized distributors for semiconductors can be found at <http://www.authorizeddirectory.com/> [1]

In hockey, there are no shortcuts to gaining ultimate glory and hoisting the holy grail of trophies. Luckily, OEMs can turn to <http://www.authorizeddirectory.com/> [1] for a shortcut on finding the most difficult to acquire components.

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[1] <http://www.authorizeddirectory.com/>