

The Colour Of Technology In Electronics Manufacturing

*Interview with Andrea Pink,
Pink Group*

Friedrich Pink founded the company Pink in 1986 and, with 10 employees, began manufacturing vacuum technology products. Today the Pink Group counts 260 employees and consists of three companies, focusing on vacuum technology products, drying systems, and most recently, with the acquisition of Plasma-finish, low pressure plasma systems for surface treatment. To find out more, OnBoard Technology spoke with Andrea Pink, one of the three managing directors at Pink.

How does low pressure plasma surface treatment technology fit in with the technologies that Pink developed in house and utilised in their vacuum and drying systems?

Low pressure plasma surface treatment technology is a very good addition for our product line because there are also a lot of common applications for low pressure plasma technology and vacuum

technology. Some of our vacuum or drying system customers also use plasma technology: as a cleaning step before or after a paste soldering process or after a drying cycle. Now we can offer them both solutions. And a low pressure plasma system needs vacuum chambers, made by Pink, of course.

One year after the acquisition of Plasma-finish, how has the integration of the new company proceeded and are you seeing the synergies you expected?

The integration was a very smooth and positive process and is already completed. And yes,

we already see the synergies we expected. We

can use the same distribution network for example because very often we have the same customers, simply different applications. So

in many cases we can work with the same sales offices worldwide.

Is it still worth investing in Europe for a supplier to the global electronics manufacturing market like Pink?

Our core competence is manufacturing customised vacuum systems in high quality. This requires a very close cooperation with our customers, like Danfoss Silicon Power. Their feedback is needed to develop new features for our vacuum inline soldering systems. So it is important to have the complete production process under control and in house. This allows us to react as flexibly as possible. So yes, it is still worth investing in Germany.

How do you see the European electronics manufacturing industry evolving in the coming years?

Well, from our point of view some of the volume electronics manufacturing business is moving to Asia. But research and development as well as small scale production is still based in Europe. And most of the high power module manufacturers are located in Germany. So we do believe that the European electronics manufacturing industry has a strong and growing base in Europe.

What are the vertical market segments that are sustaining the European electronics manufacturing industry today?

As a supplier to that industry we would say it is the high power





Figure 1 – Roll-to-roll plasma system from Pink



Figure 2 – Vadu 300 vacuum soldering system

module manufacturing industry but also the semiconductor industry such as sensor technologies, optics and nanotechnology for example.

vacuum soldering is the high power module industry. This is the product line we developed the Vadu system for because we are able to offer them void- and lead-free soldering. But also SMD

components and sensors require void free solder connections to guarantee long life cycles of the components. So they also need a vacuum-supported soldering process.

What are the current market and technology trends in your specific field of activity? In particular, what types of products are produced using vacuum soldering?

There is a lot going on in the semiconductor industry developing new technology trends at the moment. But a strong product field where we are active with

Low-pressure plasma technology in PCB manufacturing

In printed circuit board manufacturing, low-pressure plasma systems are used both to clean PCBs for improved contact properties and as an alternative etching technique. Low-pressure plasma is ideal for etching very small holes and blind holes, and for desmearing or back-etching of mechanically drilled circuit boards. Thanks to the outstanding crack penetration of the plasma process, holes of less than 0.3 mm can be back-etched.

