

## Manufacturing transition allows customer to meet shift in market demand

### The Opportunity

In 2006, SuperSonic Imagine (SSI), an innovative, French-based medical imaging company, was seeking a partner to support them with the development and manufacture of the revolutionary ultrasound system: the Aixplorer<sup>®</sup>. SSI's partner would need to have a proven track record in supporting prototyping and manufacturing for highly complex medical devices, the ability to provide configure-to-order and direct order fulfillment to their end customers and ISO 13485 certified manufacturing facilities.

SSI engaged with Plexus in 2007 with a European manufacturing solution to meet their end market demands. However, in 2013, the need for change arose when the product market began to shift to the Asia Pacific region.

Plexus quickly identified an alternative solution to move production to a Plexus site in Malaysia. However, providing a new Plexus location was just the first of many steps in the transition process. Converting the manufacturing line from Europe to Asia would require first article builds at the Printed Circuit Board and Higher Level Assembly level, qualification of a new supply chain, major test process changes, personnel training and logistics management. New IT infrastructure had to be set up, excess inventory needed to be transferred and five years of knowledge from the Kelso team had to be conveyed to the team at the new location. During the transition, the need for several product design enhancements also surfaced.

All of the pieces of the transition had to be executed as smoothly as possible to meet SSI's deadline and ensure that the customer would move into the new market without issue.



### Product Profile

Aixplorer<sup>®</sup> is based on a flexible software structure allowing an image acquisition rate of 200,000 images per second and is the only ultrasound system on the market that uses breakthrough MultiWave™ Technology, ensuring impeccable image quality and providing revolutionary ShearWave™ Elastography. The Aixplorer<sup>®</sup> is a complete ultrasound system which is CE mark approved since 2008, has FDA clearance since 2009, and has several clinical applications: breast (and 3D breast), thyroid, abdomen, liver, musculo-skeletal, prostate and gynecological (excluding obstetrics).

“Seemingly against all odds, Plexus has produced and shipped 38 units in the first calendar quarter of 2014, thus ensuring the achievement of our business plan.”

*Brad Garret, Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Fulfillment Officer, SSI*

## The Plexus Solution

From February 2007 to 2013, Plexus had worked closely with Super Sonic Imagine (SSI) on the development and manufacturing of the Aixplorer® in its facility in Kelso, Scotland. This included providing support with prototyping, live scan testing, electronic and high level systems assembly and direct order fulfillment.

Understanding the customer’s roadmap and desire to move the product to a lower cost manufacturing region, which was also close to their new end markets, Plexus proposed transitioning the manufacture of the Aixplorer® to its Riverside facility in Penang, Malaysia. The transition would include not only the transfer of full product assembly including services and spare, but also the development of in-circuit testing in Penang and the localization of custom engineered components (CECs).

In order to achieve this, Plexus appointed an experienced Transition Manager who developed an integrated project management plan and managed the transfer of both assets and the knowledge base from Scotland to Malaysia. As part of this process, the build team in Penang spent several weeks in Kelso to be brought up to speed as quickly as possible.

To ensure that SSI continued to have one single point of contact within Plexus, the Customer Manager in Europe continued to work with SSI while in Kelso, during and following the transition. This provided SSI with a contact operating in the same time zone throughout the entire process.

The result was that over a period of nine months, all Plexus Penang staff was trained and the volume production was effectively transitioned into Malaysia on schedule. This met all of the customer’s requirements and strengthened the overall relationship between Plexus and SSI.



## Benefits of Working with Plexus

- + Ability to leverage advanced manufacturing capabilities to support complex medical devices
- + Availability of global supply chain resources to quickly source required materials
- + Strategically-located facilities to accommodate shifting market demands
- + Dedicated teams with specific experience in ensuring smooth transition



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