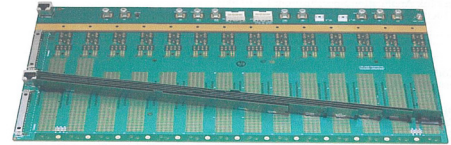


Connector

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Inside a Winner's Circle



There is nothing more vital to the growth of an industry than innovation and it was innovation that prevailed at the Advanced Telecommunications Computing Architecture (ATCA) Summit in Santa Clara CA this October. Z-plane, Inc. won the "Best of Show" award for its significant improvement in the performance of an existing technology. Z-Plane grabbed the prize with its new backplane architecture, which when compared with traditional backplanes, boosts performance by 3-5X, while reducing production costs by 30-50%.

The Z-Plane technology will impact everyone who uses a cell phone or a computer. "The capabilities of computers and cell phones are only beginning to be harnessed," according to Matt Conaway, Business Development Engineer at Die-Tech. Z-Plane will provide evolutionary packaging technology for high-speed telecommunications and computing equipment with data rates which will exceed 100 giga-bits per second. This performance is achieved by using Z-Plane links to carry the high-speed, long trace signals via small PCB boards, plugged directly into the rear side of the backplane. The shorter trace signal lines are left on the backplane, reducing the overall layer count while improving signal integrity," Conaway explains.

The relationship between Z-Plane and Die-Tech began almost 40 years ago at a time when there were many anti-technology social critics and opponents of technological progress. But Richard K. Dennis, founder of Die-Tech, and Tim Lemke, CTO of Z-Plane, did not allow this to deter their efforts -- rather they embraced scientific research and development. In the 70s, Dennis was automating his plant while Lemke and Chuck Byers, an executive at a Fortune 500 company, were focused on the development of new products, markets & business ventures. Together these men produced first-generation electronic components.

In 2008, when Byer and Lemke were ready to produce a prototype of their revolutionary three-dimensional interconnect technology, they turned to Die-Tech to produce the metal stamping. "We needed a partner who could work through the cost implications, prototype, and tool six connection points at no greater cost than to produce one connection point. The uniqueness of the Z-Plane solution -- not seen anywhere else in the industry," explains Byer, "is preventing one connection from being repeated six times."

Conaway comments on the velocity with which Z-Plane started their company, got the product through development and have proven in testing that they can exceed a new telecom industry goal for transfer rates. "Byer and Lemke took their concept from the drawing board to production in less than one year. That's almost unheard of in our industry." Byer credits Die-Tech with short lead times for the production of the prototypes which he says enabled them to build assemblies, prove their concept and get the Z-Plane in the hands of their customers and prospects in record time.

The *Best of Show Award* represents the industry recognition of their technology and it's just the beginning. Z-Plane founders plan to expand their technology & offer creative systems solutions for ATCA and other architectures. "We came to Die-Tech," admits Byer, "because of the high regard we have for their founder. We remain with them because they are willing to work through the details with us. It all comes down to who executes best, taking an idea and building the team to make the dream happen."