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Hermann Reiter
Senior Director, Global Strategic Business Development & Supplier Management, at Digi-Key Electronics in Munich (Germany)

The Latest on the Chain for Commercial Prototyping

When comparing prototype and production design for automotive and commercial products there are many differences. Most products do not go into production the way they were designed. OEMs, Tier-1 and Tier-2 take the prototype, often done by the design team, and reengineer the overall system to be function orientated. They fit the design to their overall layout, platform and chosen technologies. Therefore, we see lots of “fast and dirty” prototyping, even for automotive specifications. I would say that the chain of who is designing, or the partners involved in getting the final product completed, is getting more complex with so many layers of changes and opinions involved. In addition, there are more and more participants in the chain with smaller tasks.

The main reason that NDAs protect the final brand from too much information in the chain is that sometimes you only get the full picture when the allocation or product shortage occurs. Overall, we see more commercial products are used for design – not due to price or availability but rather the products are commercial products with a much shorter

lifecycle. Particularly in the infotainment and interior design spaces, we see more and more commercial specification to be approved for time to market reasons. It should not be a surprise that self-driving vehicles and automated driving will convert the vehicle into a new living and office space – as a result, creative features, ideas and designs will emerge.

At Digi-Key Electronics, it is our responsibility to ensure that our offerings are compliant and original from suppliers. We are CAAP certified, as well as ISO 9001:2015 certified for quality management. The biggest challenge with counterfeit products is that 40 % of counterfeit happens with end-of-life products since there is a market need, and price often does not matter at that point. Digi-Key addresses this by using Digi-Reels and date and lot code tracking, even on cut tape and small order quantities. We have more than 750,000 parts listed with AECQ qualification currently, with many more to come. Our aim is to protect the supply chain and to provide products, starting from just one piece, that are traceable, trackable, fast, and accurate for all our customers.