



Eric Schmidt, Vice President of Sales ●●●

Q&A

Global high-power amplifier expert

Regarded as an industry leader across the board, Comtech Xicom provides rugged, highly efficient and reliable Travelling Wave Tube Amplifiers (TWTAs), Klystron Power Amplifiers (KPA), Solid State Power Amplifiers (SSPAs), and Block Upconverters (BUCs) for commercial and military broadcast and broadband applications around the world. Vice President of Sales, Eric Schmidt, discusses some of their latest innovations and market strategies and plans for the APAC region.

Question: In May 2019, you announced new high power, high efficiency, and low leakage X-band SSPAs and BUCs. How do these new products compare to your previous iterations, and how has the new range been performing?

Eric Schmidt: Comtech Xicom has been a leader in rugged GaN BUCs for many years. We have an in-house chip and wire facility where we custom design devices and circuits to match the requirements of our customers. With this design capability we can offer the highest power products in the smallest packages. The big change in our BUCs this year is the addition of a pre-distortion lineariser to all of the BUC

product line, which has enabled us to further increase the linear power across the board without increasing the size and weight. We have been using linearizers in TWTAs for decades and have applied this technology to our SSPAs and BUCs.

With X-band, customers are beginning to explore multi-carrier operation, demanding low leakage packages. Xicom has been a leader in leakage suppression based on work we have done with high power X-band TWTAs. We have carried this knowledge over to the BUC and SSPA product area.

Xicom products are the lowest size, weight and power consumption in the industry. We're seeing a lot of take-up at X-band from military markets. Ku and Ka-band are mainly growing commercially.

Question: Xicom recently gained its ISO-9001:2015 certification, what does that mean for the company?

Eric Schmidt: In 2018, Xicom became certified to ISO-9001:2015. The 2015 version of the standard requires that risk analysis and mitigation be practiced regularly and with focus not only on products, but all pertinent processes such as supply chain, test, and customer support. Additionally, the latest version focuses on not only customer satisfaction, but also other interested parties such as regulatory organizations, suppliers, and employees. These new requirements greatly enhance product quality and improve business operating systems across all functions and operations. We



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have seen increases in product reliability and improved communication/coordination as a result of the processes that have been put into place.

Question: What are your plans for APAC?

Eric Schmidt: We do especially well in APAC. We have good business with the big players like China, India and Japan. In other APAC countries, there's more variable growth. Korea, Australia and Indonesia may deliver great results one year, then go slower for a while. We have service and support capabilities in many countries including China, India, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore and New Zealand. One growth area for us has been defence spending. I think the region is being challenged with increased tension, and many nations

are taking it upon themselves to invest in self-defence.

On the commercial side, we always do well at Ku-band, Ka-band and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) transmission services are on the rise. We have a broad spectrum of airborne qualified product that are attracting attention throughout the region. Recently we've had a Q-band order in India for a research project, so we're seeing higher power, higher frequencies, and more business across the board.

Question: How is satellite technology supporting emerging markets in Asia and beyond to close the digital divide?

Eric Schmidt: Comtech Xicom has always been high frequency and high power, but as we've introduced the new

low power, high efficiency BUCs we spoke about earlier, that opens up the market for high capacity smaller terminals for future LEO, MEO and GEO markets.

Question: Do you have any opinions about vertical business models versus horizontal ones?

Eric Schmidt: Comtech Xicom strives to be the global high-power amplifier expert. We are not pursuing vertical integration, which leads to competition with customers and locks manufacturers to their in-house supplier. We like to buy from the best in class suppliers, and on the customer end, we like to serve as many customers as we can on a level playing-field, offering the best technology and service possible.



250W V-band liquid cooled. Photo courtesy of Comtech Xicom ●●●

