

Why is small beautiful in Custom Interconnect's case? Because investments in new premises and equipment are enabling the flexible and skilled workforce to enjoy the payback, with everyone focused on the customers' needs

# Small, but perfectly connected

Custom Interconnect Ltd (CIL) was formed in 1986 in Whitchurch, just seven miles from this plant. In 2005, it moved from three sites in to one. In that process "not one single customer was let down," says managing director John Boston.

The changes have continued. Now CIL is introducing its own products, but a constant is that business "is all about speed of response to what the customer wants", states Boston. "We are working hard and going after products of a more complex nature." The number of customers and projects is growing fast: two to four new customers a month.

There has been investment in new equipment – 95% replaced in the last five years – for build and test. In the clean room, technician Guy Goldsworth comments: "Working here is really good. I am interested in technology. I like the fact that we are cutting edge. We keep buying new machines and I get trained up. With each new machine, I say, 'this is my favourite!'"

Clean room operator Sonia Osborne has worked here for 10 years. "The new machines



Flint. When a reel is taken from the rack next to the line, it is scanned and another delivered the next day.

All the operators are very flexible and work a variety of shifts. And on the shopfloor, there is a paperless office system: admin forms, manuals, management documents and order details are all contained on PCs. Simple!

New products are important, as technical director Nick Edwards explains: "We wanted to develop our own products." The company chose to focus on LEDs, which come packaged or unpackaged, and CIL has the process and

product knowledge already to handle both. It started a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Southampton University, working on new LED technologies. Just launched in June 2006 is 'precisExcite', a fluorescence excitation system for fluorescent microscopy.

When investment, flexibility and simplicity on the shopfloor are combined with customer focus, it isn't difficult to connect up why CIL is the Best Small Company this year. **BFA**

make everything so much easier. There is always something new to learn. Change is very hard for some people, but we are all involved. We're all told; we all had input. They listen to what you

have got to say and we are not kept in the dark."

The factory is very clean and tidy. "We are in the business of image," says Boston. And although that is partly tongue in cheek, it is serious, too. Customers can now see exactly what CIL does and how it goes about its business.

The surface-mount area uses all new technology. Products are "much more complex now, from two hundred components to five hundred; from five hundred pins to seven thousand!" Boston adds. To manage stock here, 'Pareto' is used, the component supply system from

## Site Details

Location:	Andover
Employees:	63
Products:	Electronic assemblies for the professional/industrial market
Turnover:	£4.5m
Highlights:	Use of new technologies, new products, flexible workforce, customer focus, managing change