

MidOpt talks about StablEDGE and what's around the corner

Neil Martin catches up with the team at Midwest Optical Systems and talks about their innovative StablEDGE filter technology, and future prospects.

Checking in with the MidOpt team in Palatine, Illinois, found them in good form, looking forward to VISION and providing an update on their ranges. I was grabbing some time with Barry Warzak, President, and Vicki Vassallo, Director of Marketing & Business Development.

The company develops and manufactures filters for industrial imaging to ensure the required image quality for monochrome and colour vision systems.

Barry kicked off with their current focus at what will feature at their VISION booth: "We'll be showcasing our StablEDGE filter technology. It's one thing that sets MidOpt apart from all other filter manufacturers.

"Let's face it, space being allotted for industrial vision systems is generally not getting larger. The pressure over time will continue to be to make them increasingly more compact. This is why lenses will continue to be smaller and focal lengths shorter. MidOpt filters are extremely unique to the marketplace, designed to be spectrally and mechanically compatible with short focal length (<12mm) lenses - the majority of lenses that are now being incorporated in vision systems used throughout the world."

MidOpt is promising a colourful live demonstrations which, they say, will dramatically emphasize the difference between MidOpt filters and all other

filters that may be offered by other exhibitors at VISION. Vicki adds: "When people see the live demonstrations, people kind of go wow; it's all pretty dramatic, it's very colourful." And the various mounting configurations that only MidOpt offers allow these designs to be incorporated in a far wider variety of applications than has previously been possible.

The conversation moved onto business and how things were going for MidOpt, and the general market, for the remainder of 2016 and into 2017.

Barry says that the company growth will continue, driven by a number of key developments, designed to improve product quality, availability and lead time. These include robotic assembly, adoption of other advanced fabrication methods currently not employed elsewhere, and greater control of the production planning process along with improved segregation and more detailed identification of production lot characteristics. Other factors contributing to the growth include greater product diversity and an expanded offering of filter types for a growing number of newer applications.

The market for MidOpt business is roughly divided 60% US, 35% Europe and 5% Asia. The company supplies to around 30 countries and in terms of

percentage growth, Europe has seen the greatest rise. Barry puts that down to adopting some new distributor arrangements on the continent and Vicki adds that the focus here is building a strong brand awareness.

As for what markets are proving the most exciting looking forward, Barry explains: "While machine vision remains a large market for MidOpt and robotic applications naturally are a subset of that, new related markets includes drone applications, particularly for agricultural inspection.

"This primarily involves single, dual and triple bandpass filters for NDVI (normalized difference vegetation index) aerial drone surveying, often mounted on MidOpt-supplied S-mount board camera lenses. These allow single sensor imaging using inexpensive consumer-type cameras. MidOpt also offers diffuse reflectance targets for calibrating those cameras. Other filters such as linear polarizers, very broad and spectrally flat neutral density filters and slip mount adapters are also being offered for aerial imaging."

So, don't forget to check out their colourful live demonstrations whilst at VISION - I've got my seat booked.



StablEDGE® FILTER DESIGN

SUPERIOR WAVELENGTH CONTROL AT ANY ANGLE

MidOpt StablEDGE® hybrid filter designs combine absorptive filter glass and interference filter coatings to provide superior out-of-band blocking and >90% peak transmission. Reduce the effects of short shifting while maintaining a stable passband; essential when using short focal length (<12mm) lenses.



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