

FDI reaches for low-end market

With the first shipments this week of the 2710 spectrum analyzer, Frequency Domain Instruments Division now serves the full range of the spectrum analyzer market.

For years, Tek has been the market leader in portable spectrum analyzers, and number two overall behind Hewlett-Packard. But FDI started expanding its horizon a year ago with the introduction of the 2750 Series high performance laboratory (benchtop) spectrum analyzers.

Now they've entered the low cost market with the 2710. It sells for \$8250 compared to the Tektronix benchtops and other portables priced over \$20,000.

When the 2710 was announced last fall, H-P also introduced a low cost spectrum analyzer. "The 2710 has better radio frequency performance than the H-P unit,"

said Jerry Harris (2710) marketing manager). "And since ours is priced about \$1250 less than H-P's, we think ours is a better value."

Cost was the driving force behind the 2710. "The only way we could compete in the low-cost end of the market was to get the cost down," Jerry said. A key factor in cost reduction was the use of surface mount technology for attaching components to circuit boards. SMT reduces product size, weight and power consumption. FDI had previous success with SMT in the 2750 Series, but the 2710 is the first Tek instrument that is nearly all surface mount. SMT not only costs less, but it also improves instrument reliability through reduced component handling. "We can sell products at a lower price if we don't have to worry about warranty expenses eating up profits," Jerry explained.

But low cost doesn't mean low performance. The 2710 has many features not usually found in low-cost spectrum analyzers, such as high frequency accuracy and fast digital storage.

Jerry says the 2710 will serve a variety of uses in the broadcast and telecommunications industries. Cable TV operators, for example, are required to keep power output of the various channels about equal. A spectrum analyzer is the ideal instrument for that job as it can display the whole range (spectrum) of signals at the same time. It can also be used to detect stray signals and compare levels of audio and video sub-carriers for broadcasters.

Another use, says Jerry, could be in satellite communications where spectrum analyzers monitor down-link signals for amplitude, carrier to noise, and frequency verification. □



OUT THE DOOR: This group has sustained a "monumental effort" for several weeks to get 2710 low cost spectrum analyzers moving out to customers.



BILL BENEDICT: His "baby" (the 2710) will open new markets.