

Molex Hits Home Run Acquires AirBorn

Congratulations to Molex for the acquisition of AirBorn. The deal closed on December 4, 2024. The acquisition price was not disclosed but we assume it was substantial because AirBorn participates in the highly profitable mil/aero and industrial market segments.

Over the years, Bishop & Associates has been contacted by many connector companies and investment firms seeking introductions to AirBorn management. The answer was always the same, "we are not for sale." On those occasions, we were reminded that AirBorn was contacted frequently by companies seeking to acquire them.

We mention this to illustrate that Molex was able to achieve something that many others could not.

AirBorn is an excellent company and much sought after as an acquisition prize.

About AirBorn

Bishop & Associates' estimates AirBorn's 2023 connector and cable assembly sales at \$241.7 million. Assuming AirBorn achieved 2024 industry average growth of 5%, their 2024 full year sales would be approximately \$253.8 million.

Regionally AirBorn has approximately 85% of sales in North America, 8% in Europe and 7% in Asia.

The market sector breakdown is roughly 40% mil/aero, 20% industrial, 15% transportation, and 10% medical. All sectors where reliability is key!

Product category breakdown is 40% PCB, 35% rectangular, and 10% circular, with the balance being in heavy duty and other categories.

AirBorn Key Benchmarks

1958 – AirBorn founded and incorporated in Texas.

1963 – Michael Cuff joins AirBorn as a parts inspector, later becomes CTO and member of board.

1967 – W Series backplane/PCB product launched.

1969/1970s – Space race fuels growth, with AirBorn connectors on Apollo 11, Voyager I and Voyager II.

1974 – Evelyn Key hired. Goes on to become president and CEO.

1974 – Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) begins.

1985 – R Series launched.

1986 – Cindy Lewis joins AirBorn. Becomes CEO until 2022. AirBorn achieves rapid growth under Ms. Lewis.

1986 – M Series and R Series become qualified for MIL-C-83513 and MIL-C-55302 respectively.

1995 – Addison, Winnsboro and Georgetown plants become ISO 9001 certified.

1999 – AirBorn opens first international office in the United Kingdom.

2001 - RC Stacking connector launches.

2002 – N Series Nano D launches.

2002 – Caron Enterprises is acquired.

2003 – AirBorn becomes 100% employee-owned company and launches RZ Interposer line.

2007- Strata Flex and Central Minnesota Tool acquired.

2011 – AESCO Enterprises acquired, AirBorn forms new division, AirBorn Electronics.

2012 – VerSI Highspeed/Signal Integrity line is launched, as is Highspeed Micro-D line.

2022 – Michael Cole, previous COO becomes President and CEO.

2023 – AirBorn enters into agreement with ODU-USA to manufacture and qualify to a joint product specification a defense and aerospace-grade circular connector series.

2024 – AirBorn Power Blade VPX power system and the SInergy series receives Platinum designation award from the 2024 Military + Aerospace Electronics Innovators Awards.

“Molex is excited to complete this important acquisition, which enables us to expand into the aerospace and defense market while extending our capabilities across space exploration and other key sectors,” said Joe Nelligan, CEO, Molex. “As we begin to integrate AirBorn’s people, products and processes within Molex, we will focus on supporting the needs of our customers, distributors and partners through collaboration and strategic investment in innovation and technology, shaping the future of the aerospace and defense category.”

AirBorn’s portfolio of military-grade connectors, cables and electronic assemblies will form the foundation of Molex’s new Aerospace and Defense Division. AirBorn’s CEO, Michael Cole, will lead this new Division while working closely with Molex’s integration team and global leadership team to align priorities, empower employees and create recurring customer value.

“The combination of Molex’s organizational scale and financial stability with AirBorn’s purpose-built products and unmatched customer experiences will enable us to solve the most complex rugged

connectivity challenges,” said Michael Cole. “Together we can reinforce our role as trusted advisors serving the unique requirements of aerospace and defense customers and accelerate investments in the business that will drive growth and competitive advantage.

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