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An Industry Facing the Change of Focus from Mechanical Parts to Software Components

Embedded SW has become visible

Until recently software (SW) was embedded in, and considered an integral portion of, a subsystem. The SW was not regarded a piece that built the vehicle - it had no part number and it was not purchased separately.

Vehicle manufacturers are now facing a rapidly increasing SW content in their products. They must offer increased functionality at a reduced cost.

Vehicle manufacturers not only had to admit the presence of SW in vehicles (by assigning part numbers), they also have to go further and handle it much in the same way as they traditionally do with mechanical parts and components.

Focus on strategic SW components

To manage the increased SW content and to keep control of the development time and costs, the vehicle manufacturers and their subsystem suppliers have to decide what is of strategic interest and where it is necessary to maintain own competence. As a conclusion, neither the vehicle manufacturers nor their subsystem suppliers should have an interest in making all their SW in-house.

Business critical SW components create a lead that result in added customer values or manufacturer/supplier earnings.

Non-strategic SW components are those that do not affect end user functionality and product properties, i.e. do not make the product unique.

Either type can be supplied on the analogy of a mechanical part.

Mecel – a SW house for Automotive grade SW

We foresee an increasing specialisation, where a few companies specialise in some areas each. It can be compared with the situation among suppliers of mechanical systems. The gain is in doing the same thing to many customers.

However, not any SW house might be appropriate for this task. All businesses require that the actors understand both the explicit and implicit requirements. The not-so-mature vehicle industry tends to leave a lot to the implicit side.

The reason automotive is so special is mass production, a long period of life and the tremendous exposure to varying environments which can not always be foreseen.

Robustness is essential and has to be built in. Mecel knows how to do it.

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