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ESI Announces New Material Handling Solution for Flex PCB Processing

RollMaster™ Roll-to-Roll Material Handling System Helps Flex PCB Manufacturers Drive Higher Processing Throughput for a Wider Range of Materials

PORTLAND, Ore., Jan. 26, 2016 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Electro Scientific Industries (Nasdaq:ESIO), an innovator in laser-based manufacturing solutions for the micro-machining industry, today announced immediate availability of the RollMaster™ roll-to-roll material handling system for automating flex printed circuit manufacturing. Developed by Northfield Automation, an industry leader in roll-to-roll automation and thin material handling systems, the RollMaster™ handler helps FPC (flexible printed circuit) manufacturers address the combined challenges of HVM (high-volume manufacturing) and the unique handling requirements associated with thin and sensitive materials.

"We're excited to offer this new automation option to our flex circuit processing customers," said Patrick Riechel, ESI Flex Product Manager. "In order for flex processing customers to optimize their production throughput, it's necessary to have the right laser processing platform paired with the right production-oriented automation. Since RollMaster™ is designed specifically for use on the 5335 platform, our customers get that combination in a true turn-key HVM solution."

"Northfield is focused on helping FPC manufacturers maximize their throughput," stated Mark Wegner, President and CEO of Northfield Automation Systems. "Pairing RollMaster™ with ESI's 5335 systems gives FPC manufacturers a strong solution as they continue their drive for higher yields and higher production throughput."

The design of RollMaster™—which can be paired with all legacy FPC laser processing systems built by ESI since 2005—enables flex PCB manufacturers to process a wide range of materials while maintaining high throughput. Unlike systems utilizing single-purpose designs, which rely on gravity tension to position rolled flex material for processing, the patent-pending Dynamic Tensioning™ technology used in the RollMaster™ handlers continuously adjusts for the changes in bi-directional tension placed on flex material as the result of acceleration and deceleration of the material during processing. This makes RollMaster™ the right high-throughput solution for processors utilizing a variety of web widths and different materials, especially those prone to wrinkling or stretching.

RollMaster™ facilitates the processing of flex material at a higher level of quality at faster throughput speeds and minimizes operator intervention. This allows FPC manufacturers to optimize production and increase their uptime; enabling them to extend their processing services into a broader set of market opportunities involving the processing of new materials. Customers can purchase RollMaster™ packaged with their 5335 platform of choice, directly from ESI.

About ESI

ESI's integrated solutions allow industrial designers and process engineers to control the power of laser light to transform materials in ways that differentiate consumer electronics, wearable devices, semiconductor circuits and high-precision components to gain market advantage. ESI's laser-based manufacturing solutions feature the micro-machining industry's highest level of precision and throughput, and focus on delivering the lowest total cost of ownership. ESI is headquartered in Portland, Ore., with global operations from the Pacific Northwest to the Pacific Rim. More information is available at www.esi.com.

About Northfield Automation

Northfield Automation Systems, Inc. (NAS) designs, engineers and fabricates automation machinery that allows OEMs and high-volume manufacturers, to increase yield and throughput. They are an industry leader in roll-to-roll automation and thin material handling, with expertise in factory automation for all manufacturing of web, panel and piece parts. NAS's automation expertise allows them to deliver a range of custom process automation systems for highly accurate handling of sensitive materials used in unique or delicate production processes. Northfield is headquartered in Northfield MN. More information is available at www.northfieldautomation.com

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Media Contacts:

McKenzie Worldwide

Rob Goodman

503-380-2441

rob@mckenzieworldwide.com

ESI

Brian Smith

503-672-5760

smithb@esi.com

Northfield Automation Systems

Kris Henry

507-645-5501 Ext. 685

khenry@northfieldautomation.com

 Primary Logo

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