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Agere Moves RF to Plastic  
By Suzanne Deffree -- 3/22/2004  
Electronic News

Agere Systems today announced five high-performance RF overmolded plastic packaged transistor products that it claims score a 25 percent cost reduction when compared to ceramic packaging in wireless base station amplifier equipment.

"What's driving us to do this is our complete understanding of the kind of price pressures our customers are under," said Carlos Garcia, a VP with Agere. "We'll continue to move forward with moving our entire portfolio to plastic packages."

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The plastic-encased transistors are used in wireless base station amplifiers, which rank among the most expensive components in a wireless base station, Agere said. The move toward plastic and away from more expensive ceramic is not a new one, nor is Agere alone in its charge. Motorola, for one, has been working to make plastic more common for years.

"With all those years of experience, [Motorola's] only recently announced some moves to plastic," Garcia said. "We're pretty proud of ourselves, being here for only a year and half or so, making our first move to plastic pretty quickly."

The Agere chips being offered with overmolded plastic packaging are AGRA10, AGR09030, AGR09045, AGR09060 and AGRB10. The first four can be used across frequencies ranging up to 1GHz, Agere said, noting that the AGRB10 can be used in frequencies spanning 1GHz to 2.7GHz. These five LDMOS devices range in power from 10 watts to 60 watts.

The lead-free products are also capable of continuous operation at a 200 degrees Celsius junction temperature.

The transistors are sampling now and available in production quantities by May of this year, priced from \$8.50 to \$32 in quantities of 10,000.

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