

BMPS Application Guideline

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The BMPS Application Guideline is endorsed by the following system integrators and end-users

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<i>Table of Content</i>		<i>Page</i>
1	Introduction	10
2	Power Systems General Information.....	12
2.1	Requirements	12
2.1.1	Device Load Requirements.....	12
2.1.2	Power System Requirements.....	14
2.1.3	Regulatory Requirements	18
3	Power System Architectures	24
3.1	Introduction.....	24
3.2	Power System Architecture Definitions	24
3.2.1	Centralized Power Architecture.....	24
3.2.2	Multi-location Centralized Power Architecture	24
3.2.3	Distributed Power Architecture.....	24
3.3	Centralized Power Architecture.....	26
3.4	Multi-location Centralized Power Architecture	28
3.5	Distributed Power Architectures	28
3.5.1	Intermediate Bus Architecture.....	31
4	Distributed Power Architectures	32
4.1	Characteristics of Distributed Power Architectures.....	32
4.2	Viability of Distributed Power Architectures	32
4.3	Advantages of Distributed Power Architectures.....	33
4.3.1	Better Electrical Performance	33
4.3.2	Allows use of Standard BMPS	33
4.3.3	Automated Assembly Process	33
4.3.4	Better Back panel Utilization	33
4.3.5	Better Connector Utilization	33
4.3.6	Distributed Heat Load	33
4.3.7	Ease of Battery Backup.....	34
4.3.8	Ease of Regulatory Qualifications	34
4.3.9	Enhanced Reliability.....	34
4.3.10	Enhanced Failure Isolation Capability.....	34
4.3.11	Fault Tolerance	34
4.3.12	Flexibility for Upgrades and Features	34
4.3.13	Live Insertion / Hot Plugging	35
4.3.14	Low Cost Entry Systems	35
4.3.15	Lower Total Cost of Ownership.....	35
4.3.16	Reduced Time-to-Market	35
4.3.17	Simpler DC Distribution.....	35
4.3.18	Circuit Design Flexibility	35
4.4	Electrical Design.....	36
4.4.1	Converter Power Sizing	36
4.4.2	Load Partitioning	38
4.4.3	Bus Voltage Selection	39
4.4.4	DC Distribution	40
4.4.5	Fault Protection	49
4.4.6	Input Considerations	50
4.4.7	Stability Considerations.....	51
4.4.8	Inrush Current Limitation.....	54
4.4.9	Controls	54
4.5	Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)	59
4.5.1	Introduction.....	59
4.5.2	EMC Basics.....	59
4.5.3	Standards and Requirements	61
4.5.4	Compliance Strategies	63
4.5.5	BMPS Performance.....	64
4.5.6	System Design Guidelines	64
4.6	Thermal Design	65
4.6.1	Introduction.....	65

4.6.2	Thermal Definitions	65
4.6.3	Conduction Cooling	68
4.6.4	Free Convection Cooling.....	72
4.6.5	Forced Convection Cooling.....	74
4.6.6	Combined Cooling Techniques	77
4.6.7	Design Trade-offs.....	79
4.6.8	Cooling considerations for open-frame BMPS.....	81
4.6.9	Output Power Derating.....	85
4.7	Manufacturing and Packaging.....	86
4.7.1	Introduction.....	86
4.7.2	BMPS Considerations	87
4.7.3	System Manufacturing Considerations	88
4.7.4	System and Equipment Building Practice	89
4.8	Reliability	90
4.8.1	Introduction.....	90
4.8.2	Definitions and Concepts	91
4.8.3	Reliability Prediction and Measurement Techniques	95
4.8.4	Failure Rate, MTBF, and Lifetime	97
4.8.5	Design Practices for Maximum Reliability	99
4.8.6	Procurement Practices for Maximum Reliability	101
4.8.7	Tin whiskers	101
4.8.8	Examples of Power System Reliability Calculations	102
4.9	Cost Analysis.....	103
4.9.1	Introduction.....	104
4.9.2	Reliability Costs.....	104
4.9.3	Reliability and total system cost.....	106
4.9.4	Development Costs	106
4.9.5	Total Cost Analysis.....	108
5	Board Mounted Power Supplies	111
5.1	The User - Supplier Interface	111
5.2	General Considerations.....	111
5.2.1	Datasheet and Technical Specifications	111
5.3	Power Converter Topologies.....	116
5.3.1	Introduction.....	116
5.3.2	Classification of Topologies	117
5.3.3	Description of Common Topologies.....	118
5.3.4	Synchronous Rectification.....	123
5.3.5	Multiphase Conversion.....	125
5.4	Standard Versus Custom Power Supplies	125
5.4.1	Introduction.....	126
5.4.2	Product Definition	126
5.4.3	Packaging Interfaces.....	126
5.4.4	Component Dependencies.....	126
5.4.5	Manufacturing Start-up.....	127
5.4.6	Qualification.....	127
5.4.7	System Integration	127
5.4.8	Supply Chain	128
5.4.9	Flexibility.....	128
5.4.10	Skills Allocation	128
5.4.11	The Standard Advantage	128
5.4.12	Cost Analysis of Custom Solutions and Standard BMPS	129
5.4.13	Smart power IC and discrete solutions	129
5.5	Requirements	132
5.5.1	User Preferred Solutions.....	132
5.5.2	User – Supplier Accepted Requirements.....	132
5.5.3	Restriction of Hazardous Substances and Lead-free Soldering.....	132
5.5.4	BMPS Qualification Methods	133
6	Digital Power	135
6.1	Digital Control and Management.....	135

6.1.1	Power Supply Control	135
6.1.2	Power System management	138
7	Energy Savings and Environmental performance	141
7.1	Energy Efficiency Regulations and Government Policies	141
7.1.1	General	141
7.1.2	From Voluntary to mandatory	141
7.1.3	Status and current development	142
7.2	Energy consumption in communication systems	142
7.3	Power System and BMPS	143
8	BMPS Organizations and Associations	145
8.1	DOSA Overview	145
8.2	POLA Overview	145
9	Links	146
9.1	Organizations	146
9.2	BMPS Manufacturers	146
10	References	147
10.1	General	147
10.2	Power System Architecture	147
10.3	Power Converter Technology	147
10.4	High Frequency DC/DC Converters	148
10.5	Discrete Reference Designs	148
10.6	Thermal Management	148
10.7	Reliability	148
10.8	Digital Power	148

<i>Table of figures</i>	<i>Page</i>
Figure 2.1 Circuit operating voltage limits.....	12
Figure 2.2 Dynamic response.....	13
Figure 2.3 Voltage sequencing.....	13
Figure 2.4 Typical ripple and noise.....	14
Figure 2.5 Typical isolation scenario.....	16
Figure 2.6 Impacts of regulatory requirements.....	20
Figure 3.1 Centralized and multi-location centralized power architecture.....	25
Figure 3.2 Example of distributed power architecture.....	25
Figure 3.3 Centralized telecom system.....	27
Figure 3.4 Personal Computer power system.....	27
Figure 3.5 Distributed power architecture in a personal computer.....	28
Figure 3.6 Power per shelf DPA.....	29
Figure 3.7 Power per function DPA.....	29
Figure 3.8 Power per board distributed power architecture.....	30
Figure 3.9 Examples of IBC designs.....	31
Figure 4.1 Implementation of "power per board" distributed power architecture.....	32
Figure 4.2 Converter current margin trade-offs.....	38
Figure 4.3 Bus voltage selection criteria.....	40
Figure 4.4 Voltage distribution guidelines.....	41
Figure 4.5 Dynamic requirements example.....	43
Figure 4.6 Distributed model of DC distribution network.....	43
Figure 4.7 Localized decoupling.....	45
Figure 4.8 Typical board layout.....	47
Figure 4.9 Droop regulation for increased dynamic margin.....	48
Figure 4.10 Converter output noise filtering techniques.....	48
Figure 4.11 Input fusing.....	50
Figure 4.12 Input protection circuits.....	51
Figure 4.13 Input voltage shutdown operation.....	55
Figure 4.14 Decentralized input voltage shutdown.....	56
Figure 4.15 Centralized input voltage shutdown.....	56
Figure 4.16 Direct paralleling of converters.....	58
Figure 4.17 Conducted noise.....	60
Figure 4.18 EN50081-1 and FCC class B domestic requirements.....	62
Figure 4.19 EN50081-2 and FCC class A industrial requirements.....	62
Figure 4.20 Typical EMI filter.....	64
Figure 4.21 Electrical & thermal resistance.....	67
Figure 4.22 Calculation of thermal resistance.....	68
Figure 4.23 Example of thermal conduction.....	69
Figure 4.24 Typical component type BMPS.....	70
Figure 4.25 Conduction cooled BMPS in convection cooled equipment.....	70
Figure 4.26 Thermal model of conduction cooled BMPS.....	71
Figure 4.27 Example of free convection cooled BMPS.....	73
Figure 4.28 Thermal resistance vs. air velocity.....	74
Figure 4.29 Example of forced convection cooled system.....	75
Figure 4.30 Detail of BMPS and heat sink.....	76
Figure 4.31 Thermal model of BMPS with combined cooling techniques.....	77
Figure 4.32 Thermal resistance for BMPS with combined cooling techniques.....	77
Figure 4.33 Average power per board in typical telecom equipment.....	80
Figure 4.34 Basic closed-loop wind tunnel.....	83
Figure 4.35 Typical test setup and airflow sensor location.....	84
Figure 4.36 Component junction temperature as a function of output current.....	85
Figure 4.37 Example of actual junction and case temperatures for a standard SO8 MOSFET.....	85
Figure 4.38 Example of derating chart for an open frame module.....	86
Figure 4.39 Examples of different types of BMPS packaging.....	87
Figure 4.40 Component and building height considerations.....	90
Figure 4.41 Reliability bathtub curve.....	91

Figure 4.42 Plot of reliability function $R(t)$	92
Figure 4.43 Conversion factors between failure rate units	93
Figure 4.44 $R(t)$ as a function of operating time	94
Figure 4.45 Effect of ambient temperature on BMPS failure rate	100
Figure 4.46 Comparison of power architectures	103
Figure 5.1 Interrelationship between BMPS selection criteria	112
Figure 5.2 Classification of converter topologies	117
Figure 5.3 Non-isolated buck converter	119
Figure 5.4 Non-isolated buck converter waveforms	119
Figure 5.5 Flyback converter	120
Figure 5.6 Forward converter.....	121
Figure 5.7 Push-pull converter.....	121
Figure 5.8 Half-bridge converter	122
Figure 5.9 Full bridge converter	122
Figure 5.10 Benefit of synchronous rectification	124
Figure 5.11 Examples of synchronous rectification	124
Figure 5.12 Multiphase conversion circuit	125
Figure 5.13 The discrete component alternative	130
Figure 6.1 Block diagrams of analog and digital control systems.....	136
Figure 6.2 Higher efficiency by optimizing dead time in BMPS with synchronous rectification.....	137
Figure 6.3 Non-linear, or adaptive, control optimize stability and dynamic response	137
Figure 6.4 Digital power management system with BMPS, controller and communication bus	138
Figure 6.5 Sequencing order for start-up and shut-down of multiple BMPS	139
Figure 6.6 Digital power management for voltage margining of BMPS output (corner testing)	139
Figure 7.1 BMPS efficiency evolution	143

Table of tables

Page

Table 4.1 Typical dynamic impedance values	44
Table 4.2 Typical IC decoupling.....	46
Table 4.3 Equivalent ration of C, R and L	46
Table 4.4 Diagnostic implications of power architecture selection	59
Table 4.5 Temperature definitions	66
Table 4.6 Thermal resistance parameters	67
Table 4.7 Power parameters.....	67
Table 4.8 Thermal resistivity in materials	68
Table 4.9 Trade-offs with different cooling techniques	79
Table 4.10 Assembly IFR calculation.....	93
Table 4.11 IFR to MTTF conversion	94
Table 4.12 Typical reliability performance characteristics	98
Table 4.13 Typical product lifetimes	99
Table 4.14 Replacement rate vs. BMPS failure rate.....	102
Table 4.15 Typical reliability for BMPS	105
Table 4.16 Development cost estimate – Centralized Power Supply.....	107
Table 4.17 Development cost estimate – Distributed Power architecture	108
Table 4.18 Power development cost per system.....	108
Table 4.19 Elements of total power system cost	109
Table 4.20 Power system cost for 1000 W, four output example	110
Table 5.1 Comparison of common converter topologies	122

1 Introduction

Time to market is shorter, with ever increasing pressure on the power system designer to deliver cost effective power systems that are reliable, easy to manufacture, and pass regulatory qualification on the first attempt. It's rarely acceptable to wait several months or even years for the development of customized power system solutions. System integrators and equipment manufacturers demand denser, more reliable power systems that are truly designed for manufacturing, but with a reduced development schedule and budget. The above can be a difficult challenge. This overview of modern power system design and the technologies and components available to support it, is an endeavor to assist the designer with the above challenge.

Since mid 1980's the development of miniaturized switching power supplies has brought on the practical implementation of decentralized or distributed power systems utilizing standardized Board Mounted Power Supplies (BMPS) i.e. Distributed Power Architectures (DPA). BMPS in this context means on-board DC/DC converters and DC/DC regulators, sometimes referred to as DC/DC power modules or simply power modules or converters. DC/DC regulators are commonly known as point-of-load (POL) regulators.

However, the selection of such standardized BMPS is not always easy due to the wide range of products now available and the sometime confusing performance claims made. Some suppliers emphasize power density, others switching frequency or converter topology, still others efficiency.

Which is most important? How does the reliability of decentralized or distributed power architectures compare with centralized systems? What factors determine reliability? How are small BMPS packaged within a system? What provisions are required for cooling? Why can't the maximum rated power of some converters be realized in practical systems? What are the real costs associated with power converter failures? Even though the newly available technologies and products offer exciting benefits, the list of questions such as those above seems to keep growing. The purpose here is to answer these questions and others, and provide a practical source of information for the power system designer - information that is based upon experience with actual systems and applications rather than just textbook formulas. It is our hope that the information contained here will be helpful in selecting a power system architecture that meets the needs of the product, selecting the appropriate BMPS or components with which to implement the system, and in applying the selected BMPS and components correctly. The result should be a design that meets the product needs, requires minimal design and qualification time, and has an acceptable manufacturing cost.

This Guideline is aimed at facilitating the communication between suppliers of BMPS and their customers, which are system integrators and EMS providers. The guideline provides easy access to the key items of information for:

- System integrators when they are designing printed wiring board assemblies with BMPS
- EMS providers when they are assembling printed wiring boards with BMPS
- Power supply manufacturers when they are designing and manufacturing BMPS

The guideline will first give an overview of power system requirements, starting at the circuit level and extending into system controls and packaging and regulatory requirements. Next, power system architectures in a generalized way are addressed before focusing in on decentralized or distributed power architectures. Tradeoffs between custom and standard power converters from a design and system management point of view will be discussed followed by an overview of commonly used converter topologies and their characteristics. It then looks in more detail at the design and implementation of decentralized power systems including electrical design, thermal design, and other product considerations. Reliability is ever more important in today's power systems, and a section is devoted to several aspects of power system reliability, including prediction, design practices, and how reliability is affected by power architecture and hardware choices. The 'bottom line' for most system manufacturers is cost. A separate chapter is devoted to cost analysis techniques useful for decentralized power system design, considering a product's 'life cycle cost', which consists not only of price, manufacturing and

installment costs, but also very important indirect costs such as time-to-market, spare parts, service action and operational expenditures. Furthermore, it's shown how reliability information can be accounted for when doing cost analysis. There is also a section that attempts to clear the clouds and uncertainties regarding the design for conducted emissions compatibility, which is one of the more important design challenges. A section describing selection criteria for BMPS follows this which includes general considerations, a summary review of converter topologies and a comparison between standard and custom designed BMPS as well as discrete solutions.

Ending the guideline are two sections covering the new digital power technology and the important issue about energy and environmental performance.

Finally a list of recent practical references is included for those readers wishing to expand upon the content supplied in this guideline.

The HDP User Group's BMPS Application Guidelines are primarily based upon Ericsson Power Modules POWERBOOK, 4th revised edition with its first edition issued 1993, complemented with new valuable additions from both system integrators and EMS providers as well as other power supply manufacturers.

The final content has been gathered and reviewed by the BMPS Reference Group formed out of members from EPSMA, PSMA and HDP User Group.