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75 Years of Innovation at DIT-MCO

DIT-MCO recently celebrated their 75th anniversary. WHN would like to honor the event with a glance back at the fascinating history of the company as well as a look at where they are headed for the next 75 years.

If you've ever wondered what DIT-MCO stands for, you're not alone. The name is actually derived from its humble beginnings in 1948 when founder, George P Heller, seeing the need to supply equipment to the burgeoning drive-in theater market, formed the Drive-In Theater Manufacturing Company (fig. 1). In 1951, the name was changed to DIT-MCO as it began to branch into the production of custom transformers and coils for other electronic manufacturers.

Figure 1. Part of original DIT-MCO product offering.

The forward-thinking Heller saw a plateau in the construction boon of drive-in theaters in 1953 and began to pursue other avenues to expand his business. Seeking opportunities for his Transformer Division, he called on a nearby General Motors facility that was building aviation cables. It was then that he ran into GM engineer, Warren Hannon, who had been tasked by GM to solve problems associated with testing the complicated aviation cables.

Feeling certain he could design a machine that could simultaneously measure the continuity and shorts in a bundle of insulated wires, Hannon approached Heller with the prospect that he would leave General Motors and come to work at DIT-MCO. He offered to design and build a tester to automatically test aircraft cables for shorts and opens in a given engineering specification.

Heller agreed and the original design, launched in 1952, became known as the Model 200 Universal Automatic Wiring Analyzer. The original Model 200 tested 200 circuits at the rate of approximately ten circuits per second. In 1954, DIT-MCO sold the first Model 200 to Goodyear to test electronic assemblies for one of their military electronics divisions (fig. 2). They soon approached other prospective aerospace customers.

Boeing Airplane Company in Wichita, Kansas, was building assemblies for the first U.S. jet bomber, the B-47. In 1954, Hannon convinced them to allow DIT-MCO to install the Model 200 in their plant for a demonstration to check the B-47 cables. Success in that program led to orders for the Model 200 at other Boeing locations.

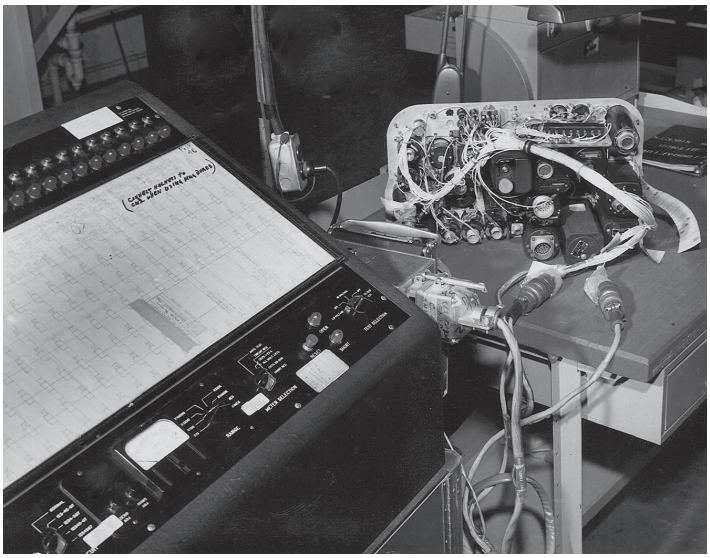

Figure 2. Model 200 testing aircraft cables.