



**Bel Stewart Connector**  
11118 Susquehanna Trail South  
Glen Rock, PA 17327  
Phone: (717) 235-7512  
Fax: (717) 235-7954

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Product Change Alert: Passive RJ45 Jacks and ICM Product-lines

Bel Stewart Connector Customers and Sales Force,

Bel Stewart continues striving to provide the highest quality products at competitive prices. We, along with the rest of the manufacturers in the electronic component industry, have continued to see our manufacturing costs increase over the last several years due to increasing costs of both direct labor and raw materials. We have worked diligently to minimize the effects of these cost increases on our customers through efficiency improvements in our manufacturing processes, including increased automation, more efficient use of raw materials, and reduced profit margins. However, in the current environment, all of these efforts have not been enough to keep these cost increases from impacting our business.

We have undertaken an evaluation of the use of alternative materials in continuing efforts to combat these industry factors and mitigate future cost increases, while still providing products that meet all of our existing stringent product performance specification. The first area we investigated was an alternate to the use of gold in our contact plating. Gold is our main plating material and as can be seen from the chart below, has seen a very dramatic rise in price over the last 10 years and this trend shows no signs abating in the future.



An already accepted industry standard equivalent to gold, which has been around for many years and one which is used in multiple connector applications today, is palladium nickel (PdNi). Palladium is a precious metal and has also seen increased prices over the last 10 years; however, it is not to the level experienced with gold. The industry standard equivalent to 50  $\mu$ m gold plating is a combination 30  $\mu$ m of PdNi under a 5  $\mu$ m gold flash. Because the specification

includes a gold flash top layer, there will be no visible change in the appearance of the contacts or the connector to the end user. The change to PdNi does not affect the RoHS or REACH compliance of the products.

We have built selected samples from our traditional RJ45 connectors using PdNi plated contacts and subjected them to the testing outlined in our product specifications per the table below. All parts tested have passed the requirements as outlined in the associated test report per the table below. Upon request, any of the product specifications and the test report results can be sent for reference. Based upon these positive results we are going to add 30 µin PdNi with a 5 µin gold flash as an approved contact plating specification option in the mating area of our RJ45 connectors and ICMs, along with the currently approved 50 µin gold option, on shipments after April, 30, 2012. This means going forward when an order is placed for the parts of the identified series below, if that orders ships after April 30, 2012 – it would be plated with either 50 µin of gold or 30µin of PdNi under a 5 µin gold flash. We feel that this effort will help to minimize the effects our customers will see as a result of the ongoing increases in gold prices.

RJ45 Connector Series	Product Specification	Test Report
x8xx-xxxx-xx ICM	WORK-QUAL-CU	Qual Test Report for 08xx-xxxx-xx PdNi
Gxx-xxxx-xxx ICM	WORK-QUAL-CU	Qual Test Report for 08xx-xxxx-xx PdNi
SI-xxxxx-xx ICM	WORK-QUAL-CU	Qual Test Report for 08xx-xxxx-xx PdNi
SS-60000-xxx connectors	PR026-01	Qual Test Report for SS-60000-xxx PdNi
SS-xxxxx-xxx connectors <sup>(1)</sup>	PR022-02	Qual Test Report for SS-xxxxx-xxx PdNi

(1) Series excluded from this PCN are: SS-60300, SS-61, SS-62 SS-65, SS-71 vertical, SS-80 & SS-82

Please contact your local sales representative if you would like to receive samples of these connectors. If you have any issues with these changes, contact your local Bel Stewart Sales representative by March 1, 2012, otherwise we will consider this change acceptable and move forward with the implementation of this additional plating option.

Thank you,

John Hess, Jeff Biss, Jeff Kring and Derek Imschweiler  
RJ45 Connector Product Managers

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