

Driven by Innovation: Vision Engineering Celebrates 45 Years in America



A legacy of innovation in the U.S.A.: Jen pictured with the original Mantis circa 1994 (right), and her daughter Sarah assembling today's 3rd generation Mantis (left).

New Milford, CT — February 6, 2026 — Vision Engineering, a global leader in ergonomic optical inspection and non-contact measurement technologies, is proud to celebrate 45 years of continuous business operations in the United States, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to American manufacturing, innovation, and customer support.

Founded in 1958 in Surrey, United Kingdom, Vision Engineering Ltd. initially supplied advanced quality control equipment to the defense, aerospace, and rapidly expanding electronics industries. Between 1960 and 1970, the company's products were exported to the United States, supporting the strong growth of American electronics and defense manufacturing.

As demand for Vision Engineering solutions increased, founder Rob Freeman established a joint venture in 1973 with Kulicke & Soffa U.S.A., operating as Vision Systems Inc., to support OEM integration and distribution. Based in Ivyland, Pennsylvania, this partnership marked the company's first formal presence in the U.S. market. In 1974, Vision Systems Inc. became wholly owned by Vision Engineering Ltd. and relocated to New York.

In 1981, Vision Engineering Inc. was officially founded, and in 1982 the company established its long-term North American headquarters in New Milford, Connecticut, where it remains today. Initially, the site housed sales, service, technical support, and a small machine shop, set up by Rob Freeman and Robin Gable, who began his career as an apprentice in the optical shop at Vision Engineering's UK headquarters.

A defining moment in the company's history came in 1994 with the launch of Mantis®, the world's first eyepiece-less stereo microscope. Designed to improve comfort, accuracy, and productivity, Mantis rapidly gained global adoption for assembly and quality control applications, particularly in electronics, telecommunications, and medical device manufacturing. As demand grew, the New Milford facility became the dedicated manufacturing site for Mantis and Mantis is still built there today.

Over the years, the company's product portfolio has grown to include a wide range of optical and digital stereo microscopes, 4K digital inspection systems, and non-contact video measuring

systems, each designed to enhance precision, reduce operator fatigue, and improve workflow efficiency. Innovations such as patented Dynascope® technology, advanced 3D optics, integrated digital imaging, and high-resolution metrology solutions have helped customers improve quality, consistency, and throughput. Today, Vision Engineering's U.S. operations support customers throughout North and Central America, delivering application expertise, service, and technical support to industries including electronics, aerospace, medical device manufacturing, and precision engineering.

"This milestone is ultimately about people," said Bernie Sherwill, Vice President & General Manager, North America. "It's about the engineers, technicians, assemblers, service teams, and support staff who show up every day with skill, pride, and care for what they build, and about the customers who trust us to be part of their process. The relationships we've formed over 45 years are the true foundation of this company, and they remain our greatest strength."

"As we celebrate 45 years in the United States, our focus remains firmly on the future," said Richard Nagel, VP of Sales and Marketing at Vision Engineering. "Our success is driven by a forward-looking approach, developing innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of modern production environments while supporting the people who rely on them every day."

To mark this milestone, Vision Engineering will be launching a series of commemorative initiatives throughout the year, including customer spotlights, historical retrospectives, special promotions, and educational events highlighting the company's long-standing commitment to American manufacturing.

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About Vision Engineering Limited

Vision Engineering Ltd is a 68-year-old global leading-edge manufacturer of patented ergonomic stereo microscopes, digital microscopes, 3D digital technologies, non-contact measuring systems and ergonomic aids to manufacturing/assembly.

32 years ago, Vision Engineering introduced the world's first 'eyepiece-less' stereo microscope, the Mantis. It was an ergonomic revolution that went on to win numerous design and innovation awards and has been followed by a succession of groundbreaking technologies in the digital/optical space. Company headquarters are based in the UK, with manufacturing and assembly facilities in the UK and US. Regional offices are located throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

Enclosed: image of assemblers with original Mantis and the current Mantis 3rd generation.

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