

## Advanced System-in-Package Technology

in the Apple AirPods Pro

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Laboratory Analysis by Youssef EL GMILI  
March 2020 – SAMPLE

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# Executive Summary

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This full reverse costing study has been conducted to provide insight on technology data, manufacturing cost and selling price of the **AirPods Pro SiP Audio System**. The full system includes two SiP modules and 2 MEMS modules.

System-in-Package (SiP) market attained a huge revenue of \$13.4 billion in 2019 and is expected to achieve approximately \$18.8 billion in 2025. The market is mainly driven by increased need for advanced architectures in electronic devices mostly in mobile and consumer products. Advanced technology asks for higher levels of die and functionality integration in a single package at lower cost. Since 2015, Apple has integrated several generations of SiP in its Smartwatch. This year, for the first time, the company has chosen the same type of solution for its earbuds. This came in two different SiP, one for the Bluetooth connectivity and one for the audio codec.

Apple's AirPods adopt SiP for the first time in the latest AirPods Pro. The SiP influences device compactness and size reduction of the wireless headsets. The AirPods Pro designed and manufactured by Apple comprises of several SiPs assembled together: Two Inertial Measurement units (IMU), one Bluetooth Module and one Audio Codec Module. The IMUs are standard LGA SiPs from STMicroelectronics.

The Bluetooth Module called H1-Module is packaged using double side Molding technology in order to integrate a memory under the System-on-Chip (SoC). This structure enables wireless connection, drives voice enabled Siri and enforces real time noise cancellation. The Audio Codec integrated up to 8 dies and 80 passives components with a density of 0.96 components per mm<sup>2</sup>.

The module has a special shape that is designed to be mechanically constraint in the earbuds to maximize the lost area in the system. Both SiP are designed in order to have better power management, higher performances with a high cost effectiveness.

The report includes all the packaging details from the substrate to the dies from both SiP modules. The report focuses on the packaging processes of the two SiP modules and the final assembly. High Resolution Images of the Package Cross Section at different positions and angles enables a full package and assembly process analysis. It also includes a full description of the process and the manufacturing cost of the dies and the packaging. Finally, a physical comparison of the two SiP Modules is included.

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The reverse costing analysis is conducted in 3 phases:

#### Teardown analysis

- Package is analyzed and measured,
- The dies are extracted in order to get overall data: dimensions, main blocks, pad number and pin out, die marking,
- Setup of the manufacturing process.

#### Costing analysis

- Setup of the manufacturing environment,
- Cost simulation of the process steps.

#### Selling price analysis

- Supply chain analysis,
- Analysis of the selling price.

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# Apple AirPods Pro Earbuds

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- System In Package Market
- Package Evolution

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*Apple AirPods and Audio Module*  
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# AirPods Pro TearDown

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  - Bosch MEMS Module

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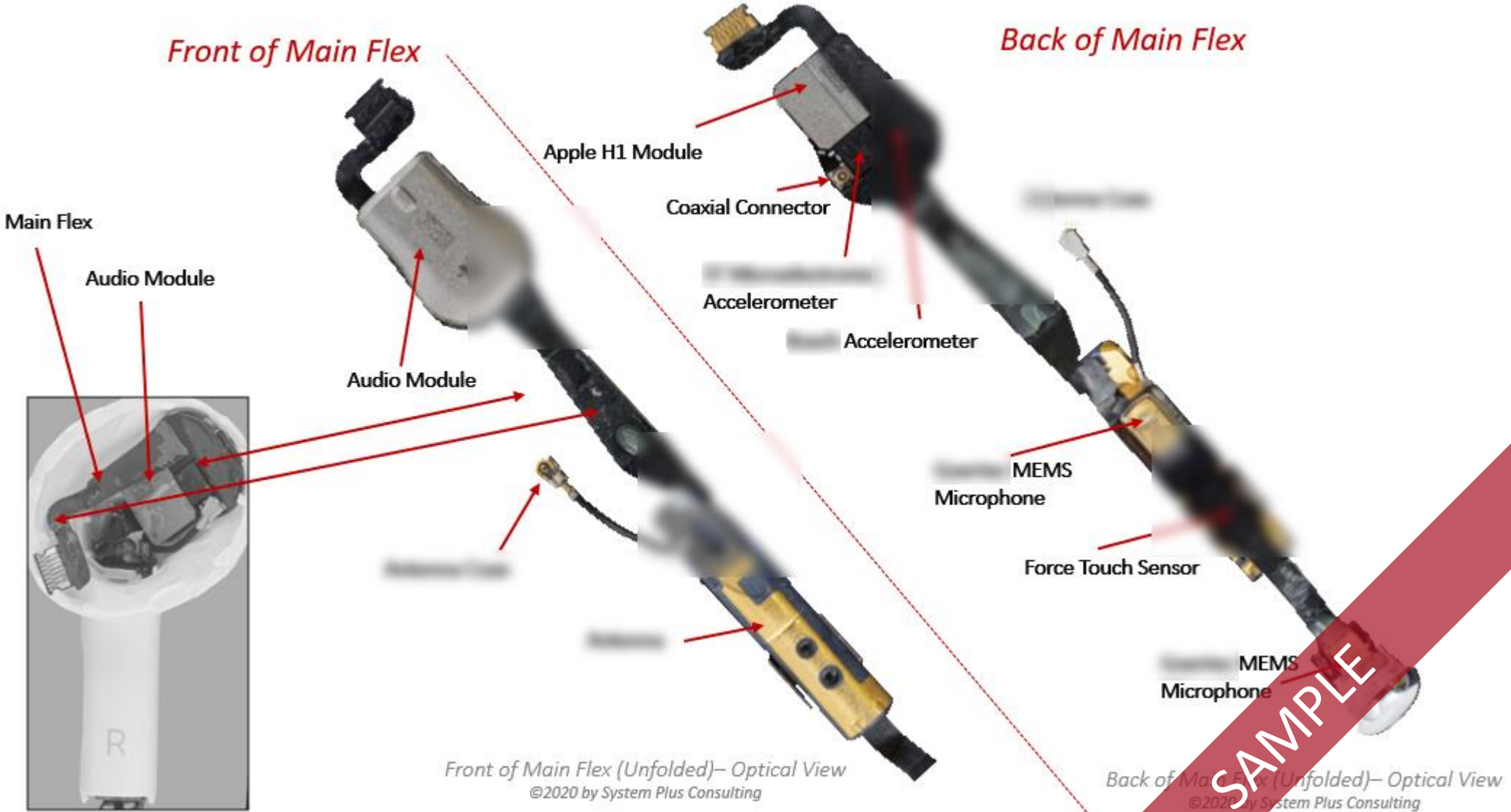
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AirPods Pro Earphone TearDown  
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# Module X-Ray View

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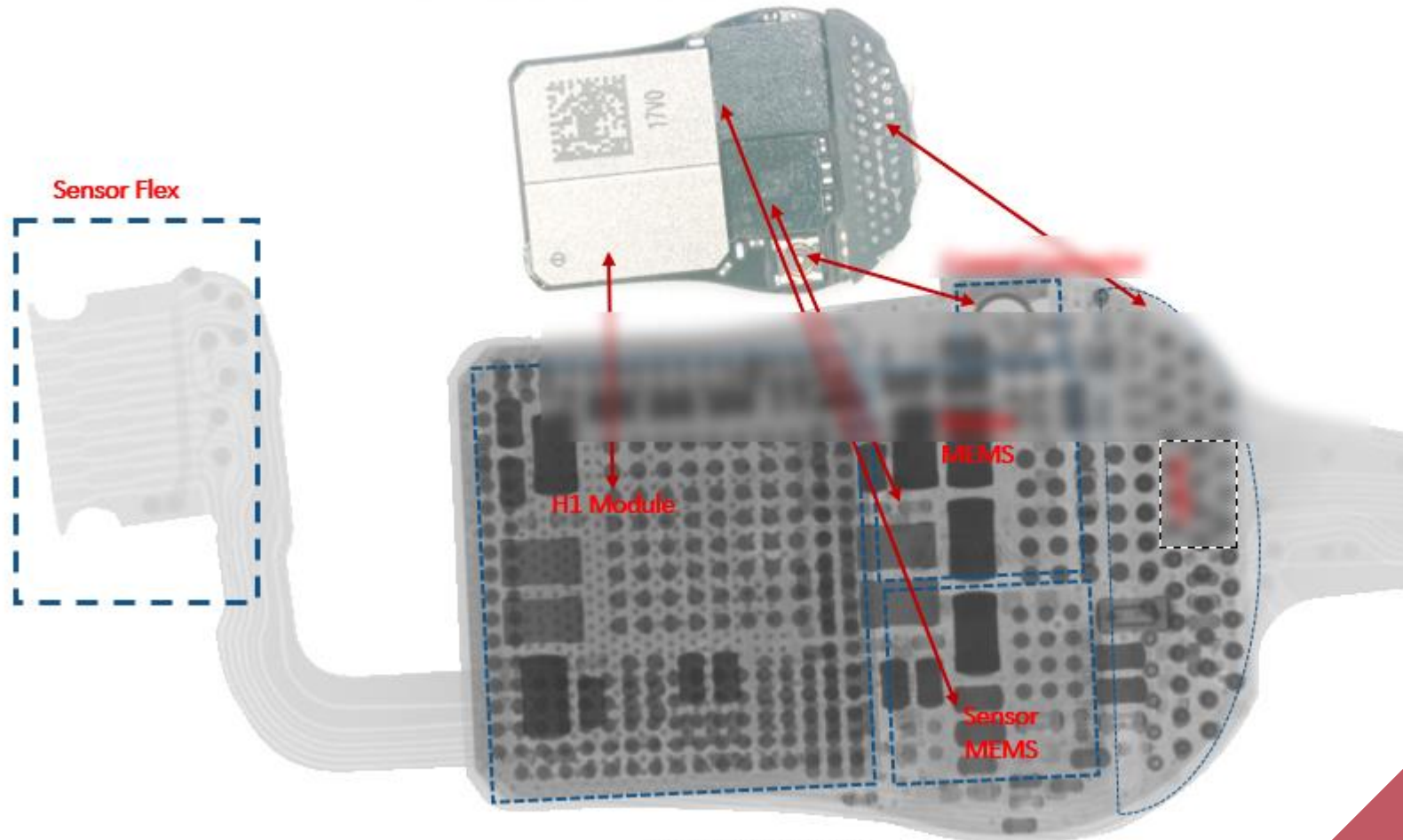
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- X-Ray images reveal the **MEMS** integrated in the Module.
- The dies occupy approximately **10%** of the Top Module package surface area.
- The X-Ray image reveals the **H1 Processor** integrated in the Module.



Module X-Ray View  
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# Module Cross-Section

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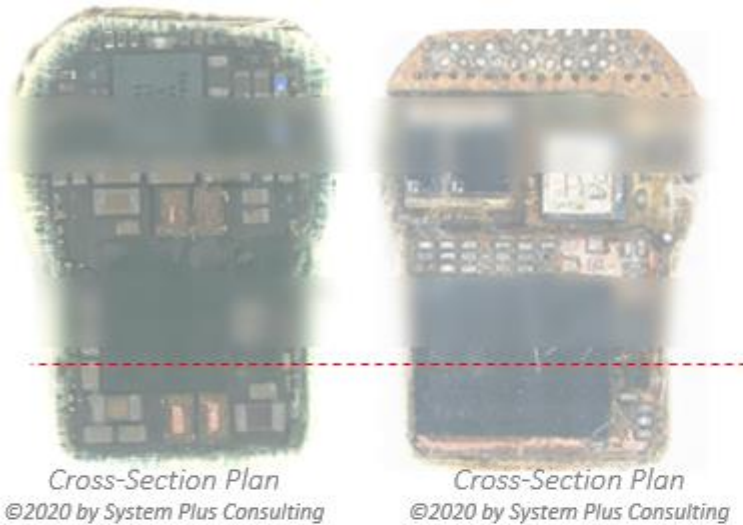
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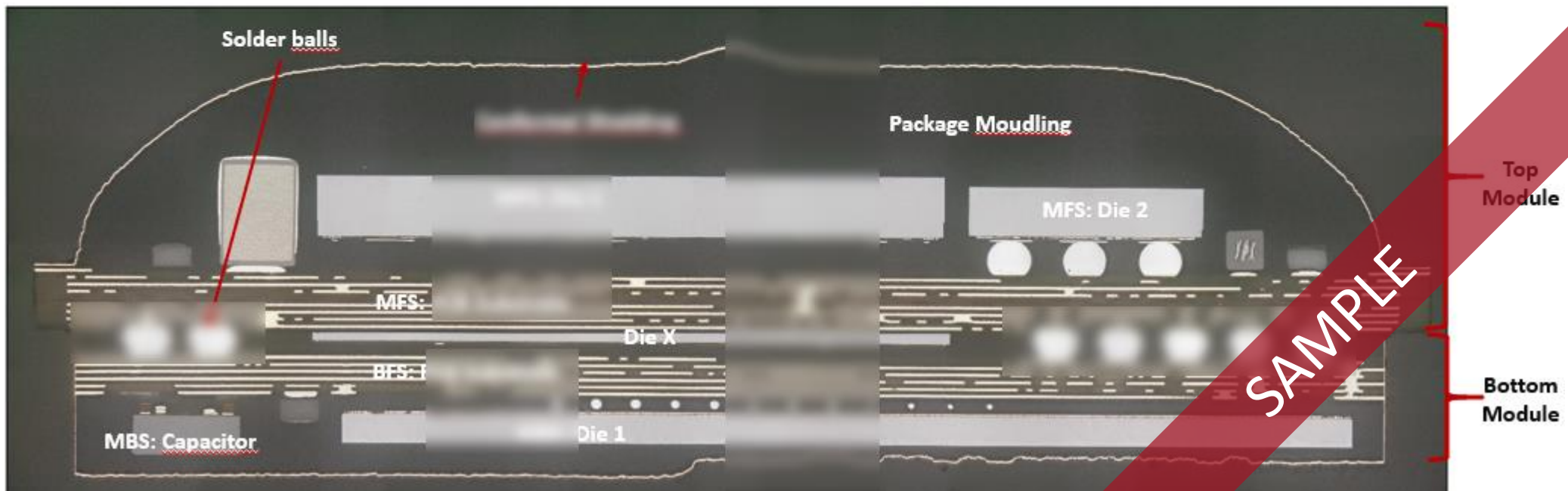
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- Cross-section of the package reveals the die placement on the Top Module PCB and the Bottom Module PCB.
- The Top Module PCB is attached to the Bottom Module/H1 Module PCB using **solder balls**.
- Package Conformal shielding structure is also revealed covering the whole Top module and the Bottom H1 Module.
- **Two dies from the Top Module and one die from the Bottom Module** from the back side of the module are revealed.
- **A memory die** is placed between the Top Module PCB and Bottom Module PCB.



Module Cross-Section – Optical View

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# Top Module Audio Code – Cross-Section

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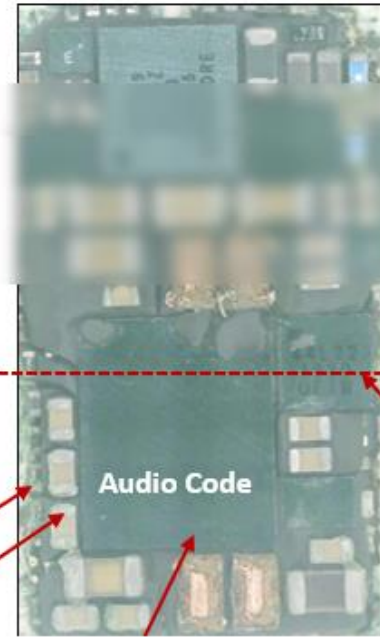
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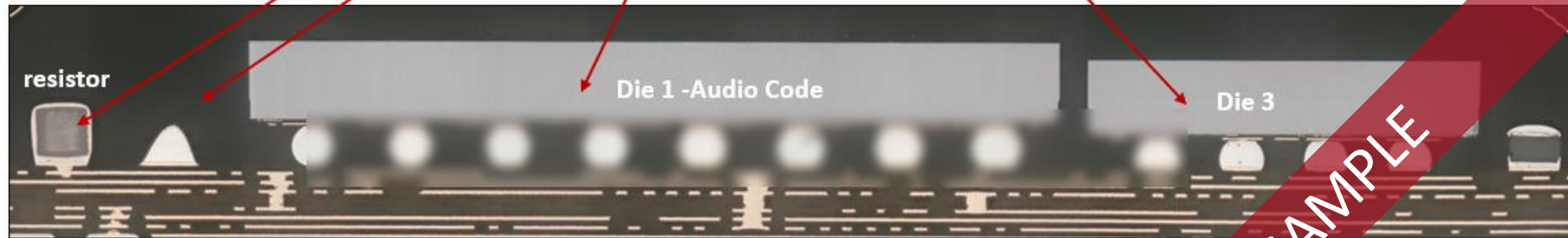
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Module Front Side Cross-Sectioning  
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Top Module- Cross-Sectioning  
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- The package Cross-Section reveals the **die** and **connections** on PCBs.
- Die 1 Audio Code is placed on **the PCB** that allow **connections to the PCB**.

# Top Module Operation Amplifier - Cross-Section

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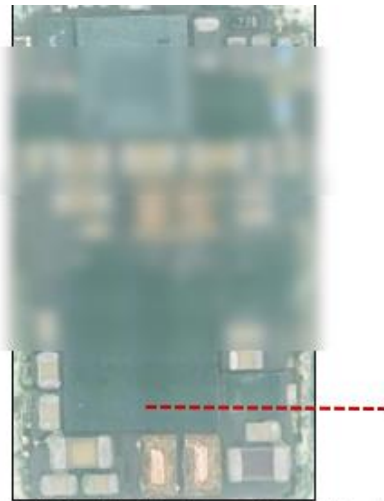
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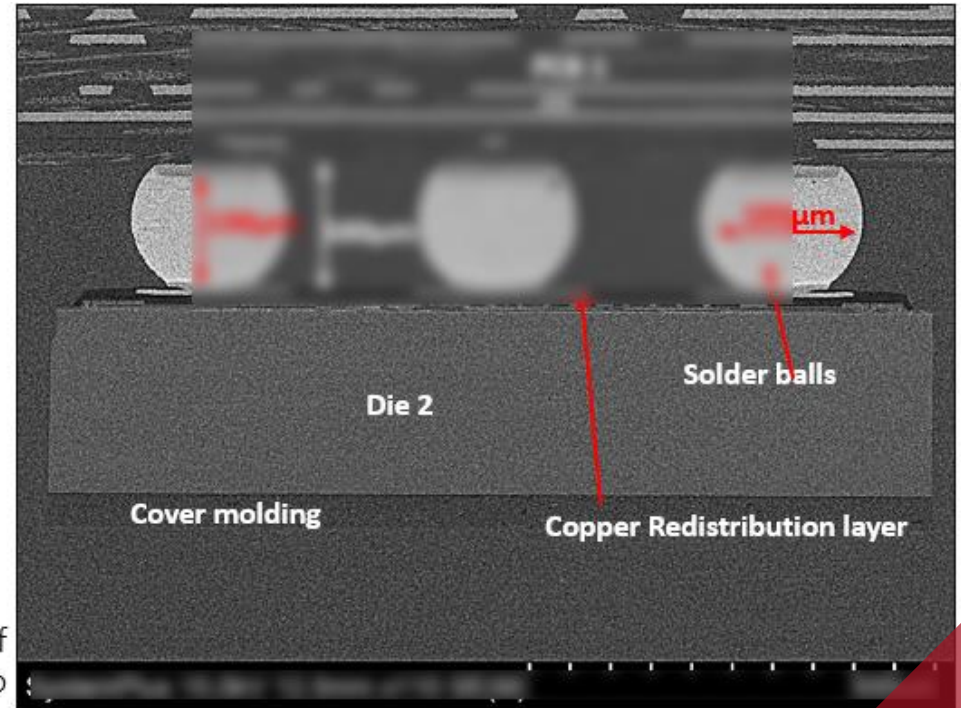
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Audio Module Package Cross-Section

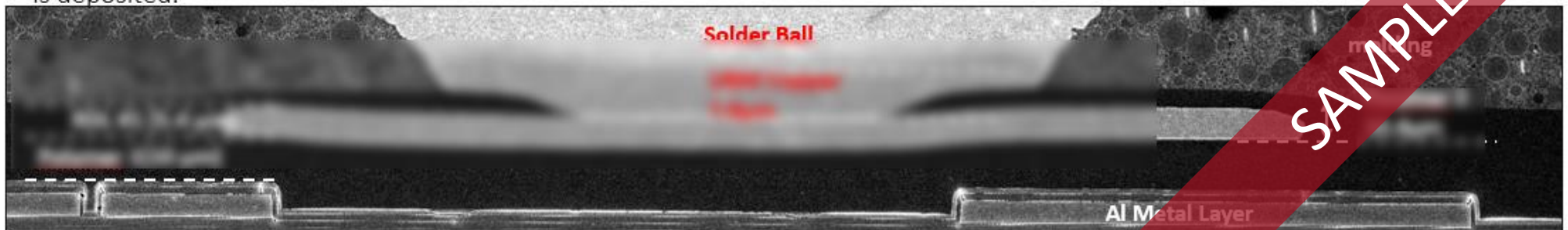
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- Solder balls connect the Operation Amplifier Die 2 to the PCB.
- The **cover molding** layer is deposited and patterned. A thin seed layer of **aluminum** is deposited and polymer layer is deposited and patterned to create opening for the copper redistribution layer.
- The **cover molding** layer is electroplated.
- A **polymer layer** is deposited and patterned and **aluminum** is deposited.



Audio Module Package Cross-Section

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Audio Module Package Cross-Section – RDL SEM View

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# Top Module Circuit Regulator - Die 6 Cross Section

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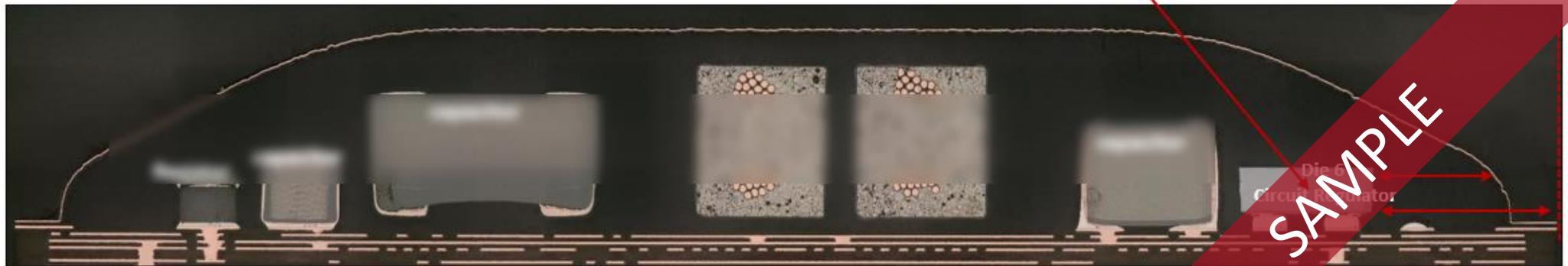
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Top Module - Cross-Sectioning  
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Module Cross-Section 5— Optical View  
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- The Cross-Section reveals the passive components and Die 6, the Circuit Regulator on the PCB.

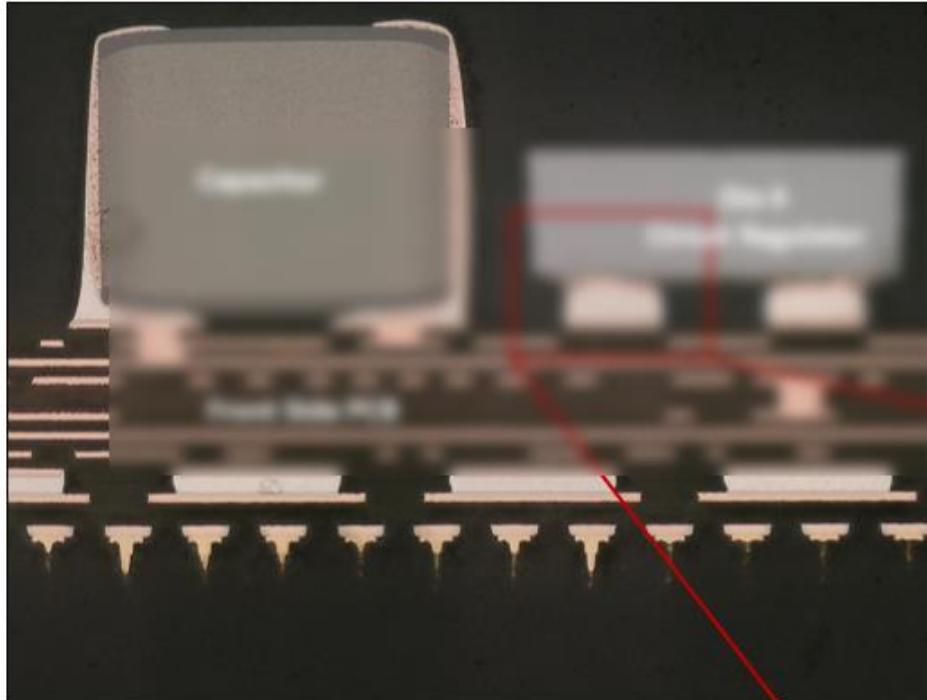
# Top Module Circuit Regulator - Die 6 Cross-Section

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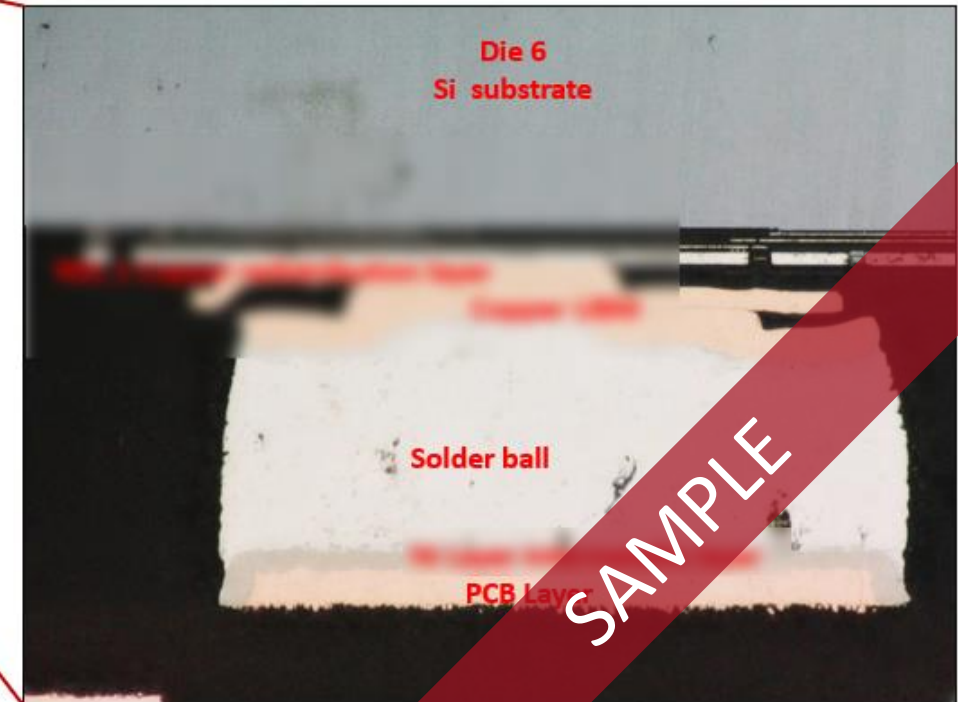
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Package Cross-Section  
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Package Cross-Section  
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- The circuit regulator die has a **dielectric** layer to ensure **isolation** of the PCB and the metal layers.
- A **conductive** layer under the bump is deposited and patterned.
- A **conductive** layer is deposited and patterned. This layer **provides connection** between the solder ball and the PCB copper metal.

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# Bottom Module Memory Die - Cross-Section

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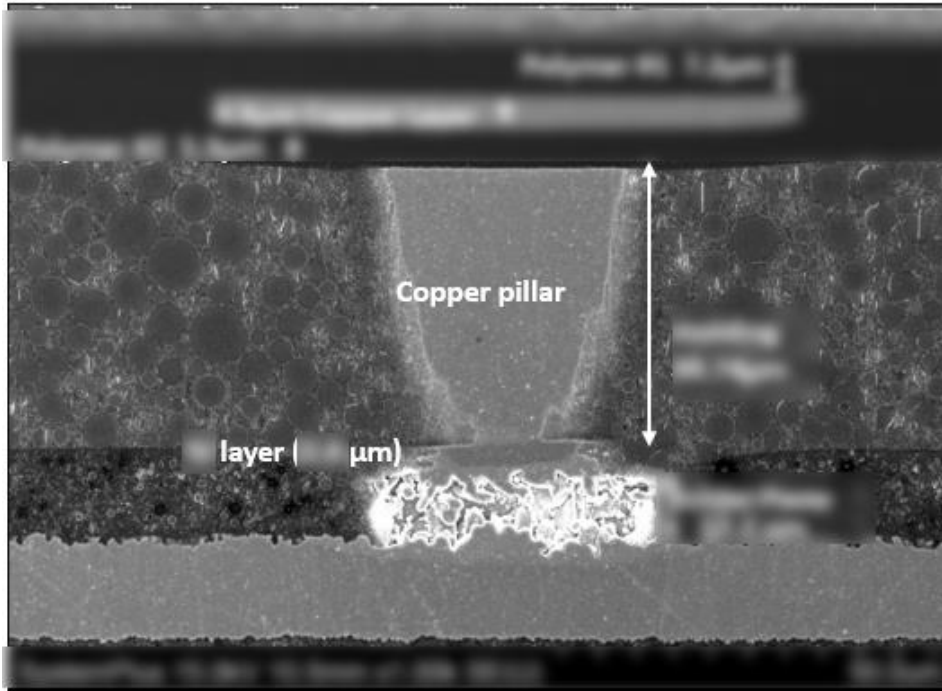
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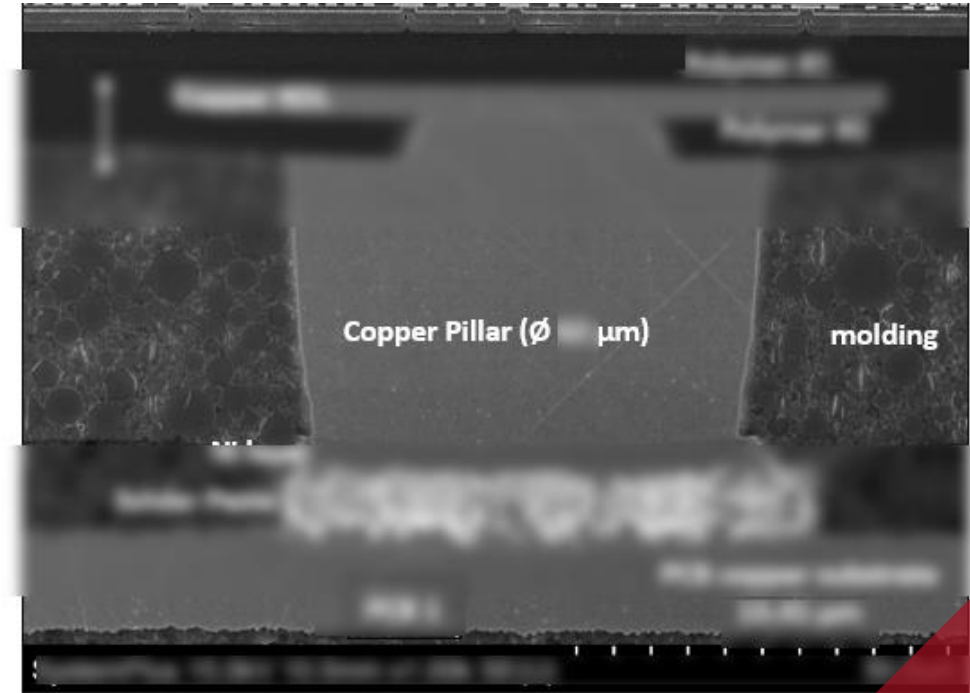
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Memory Die Cross-Section  
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Memory Die Cross-Section  
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- The copper pillar is deposited on the bottom PCB.
- The copper pillar attaches the die to the PCB.

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# Module Cross-Section - MEMS Modules

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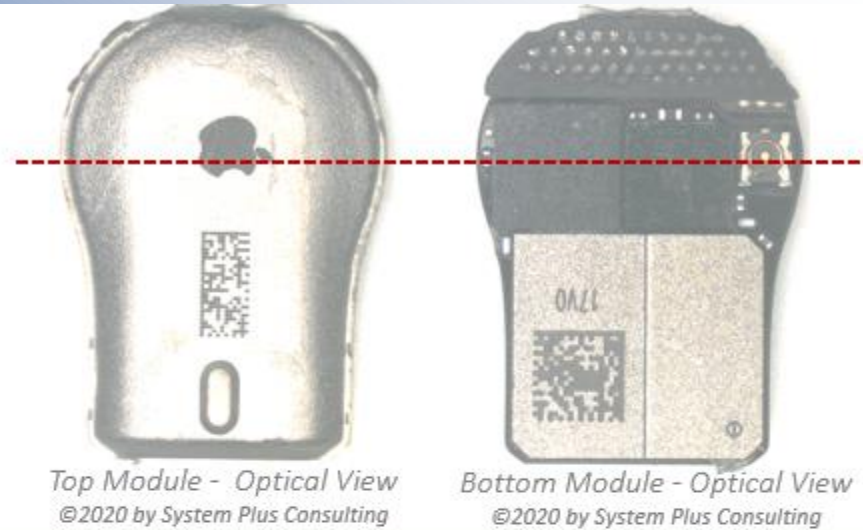
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Top Module - Optical View  
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Bottom Module - Optical View  
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Module Cross-Section – Optical View  
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- The Bottom Side has two Sensor Modules integrated on a different PCB.
  - MEMS Module: Accelerometer and Gyroscope
  - MEMS Module: Accelerometer

# Top Module Die 1 - WLSCP

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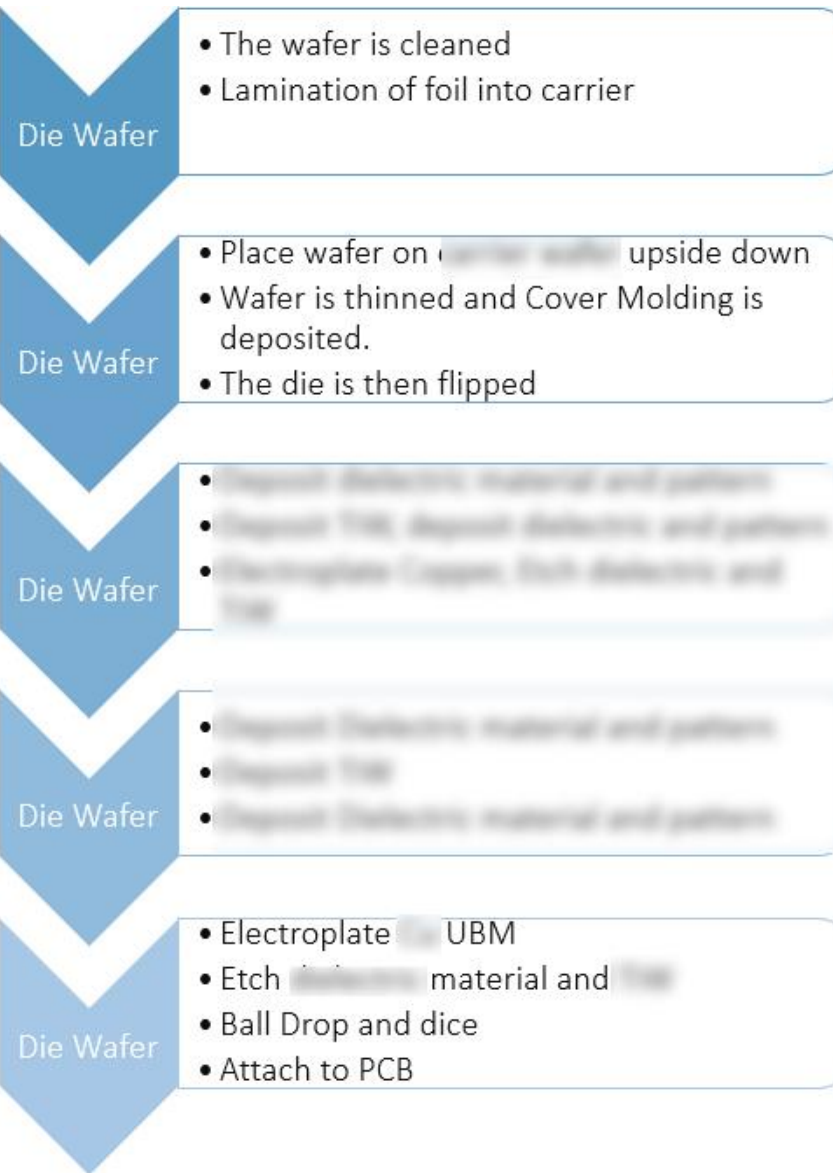
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# H1 Die - Wafer Front-End Cost

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| Front-End                           | Low Yield |           | Medium Yield |           | High Yield |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                                     | Cost      | Breakdown | Cost         | Breakdown | Cost       | Breakdown |
| Raw wafer Cost 300mm                |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Clean Room Cost                     |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Equipment Cost                      |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Consumable Cost                     |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Labor Cost                          |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Yield losses Cost                   |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>H1 Processor Front-End Cost</b>  |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Foundry Gross Profit                |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Mask Set Depreciation               |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>H1 Processor Front-End Price</b> |           |           |              |           |            |           |

The **front-end cost** for the die circuit is estimated between **\$1,000** and **\$1,500** according to yield.

The largest portion of the manufacturing cost is due to the **equipment cost**.

We estimate a **gross margin of 20%** for the die supplier **\$1,000** and mask set depreciation, which result in a **Wafer price at \$1,200 in 2020 and \$1,300**.

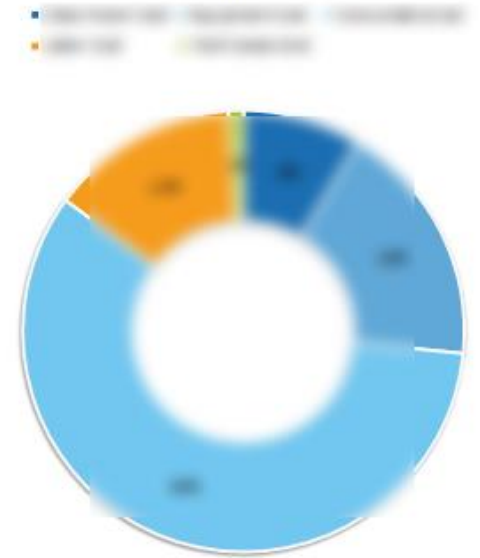
**H1 Processor Front-End Cost Breakdown (Medium Yield)**





# Top Module - Audio Codec Module Packaging Cost

Package Manufacturing Cost Breakdown (Medium Yield)



|                                                  | Low Yield | Medium Yield | High Yield |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Audio Code Die Price                             |           |              |            |
| Operation Amplifier Die Price                    |           |              |            |
| Audio Amplifier Die Price                        |           |              |            |
| Touch Controller Die Price                       |           |              |            |
| LED Driver Die Price                             |           |              |            |
| Circuit Regulator Die Price                      |           |              |            |
| Passive Components Cost                          |           |              |            |
| <b>Total Cost of Dies and Passive Components</b> |           |              |            |
| Dies per Reconstruct Panel                       |           |              |            |
| <b>Reconstituted Wafer Cost</b>                  | \$        |              |            |

| Bottom SIP Module Assembly         | Low Yield |           | Medium Yield |           | High Yield |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                                    | Cost      | Breakdown | Cost         | Breakdown | Cost       | Breakdown |
| PCB Substrate Cost                 |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Clean Room Cost                    |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Equipment Cost                     |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Consumable Cost                    |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Labor Cost                         |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Yield losses Cost                  |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>Package Manufacturing Cost</b>  |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| OSAT Gross Profit                  |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>Package Manufacturing Price</b> |           |           |              |           |            |           |

The **Total Cost of Dies and Passive components** is estimated at \$1,200.

The **Package Manufacturing Cost** is estimated between \$1,000 and \$1,200.

We estimate a gross margin of 16% for the die packaging, which result in packaging price between \$1,200 and \$1,400.

The largest portion of the manufacturing cost is due to the **PCB Substrate** at 40%.

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# Audio Codec Module - Packaging cost per process steps

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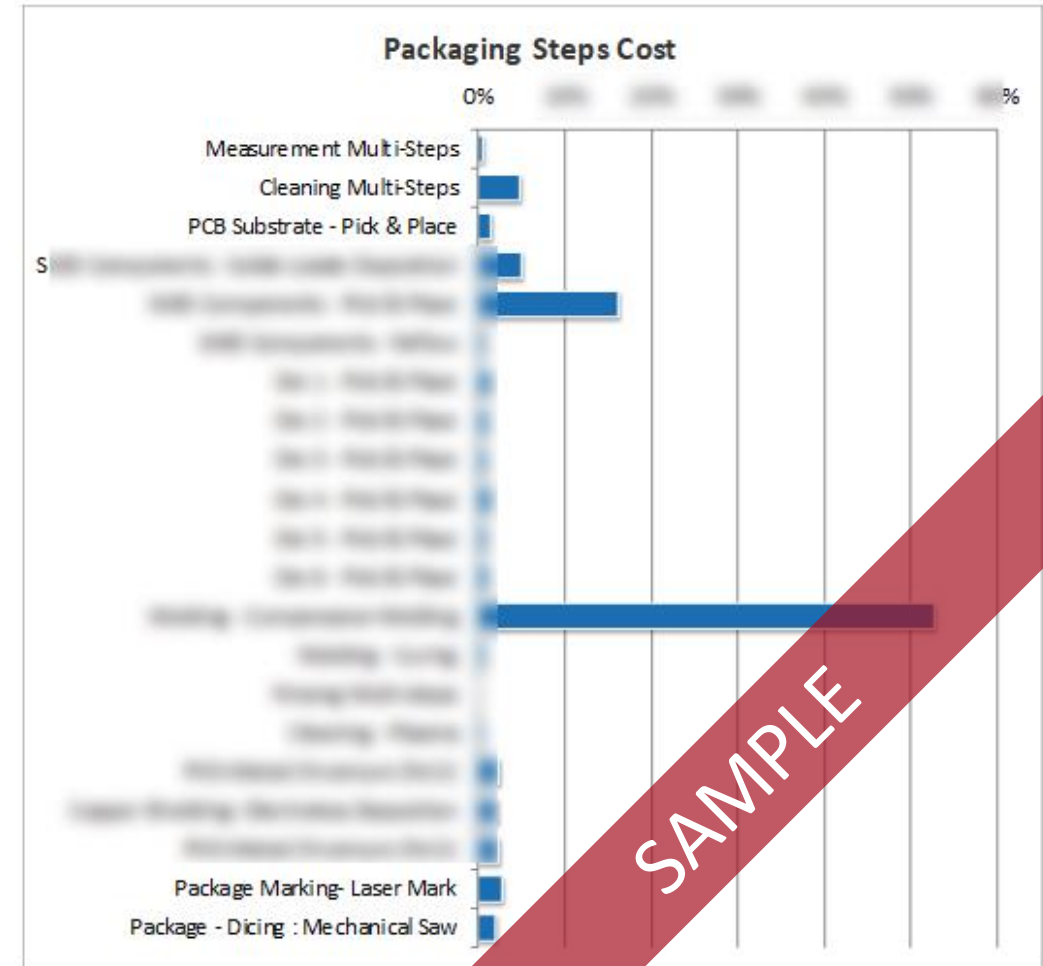
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| Packaging Total Cost Per Step     |                         |               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Process Operation                 | TOTAL COST (USD / Unit) | Breakdown     |
| Measurement Multi-Steps           |                         | 0.4%          |
| Cleaning Multi-Steps              |                         | 4.8%          |
| PCB Substrate - Pick & Place      |                         | 1.4%          |
|                                   |                         | 5.0%          |
|                                   | \$                      | 16.2%         |
|                                   |                         | 0.7%          |
|                                   |                         | 1.4%          |
|                                   |                         | 1.0%          |
|                                   |                         | 0.8%          |
|                                   |                         | 1.4%          |
|                                   |                         | 0.8%          |
|                                   |                         | 1.0%          |
|                                   | \$                      | 52.8%         |
|                                   |                         | 0.7%          |
|                                   |                         | 0.1%          |
|                                   |                         | 0.4%          |
|                                   |                         | 2.3%          |
|                                   |                         | 2.2%          |
|                                   |                         | 2.3%          |
| Package Marking- Laser Mark       |                         | 2.7%          |
| Package - Dicing : Mechanical Saw |                         | 1.9%          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>\$:</b>              | <b>100.0%</b> |



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# Bottom/H1 Module - Component Cost

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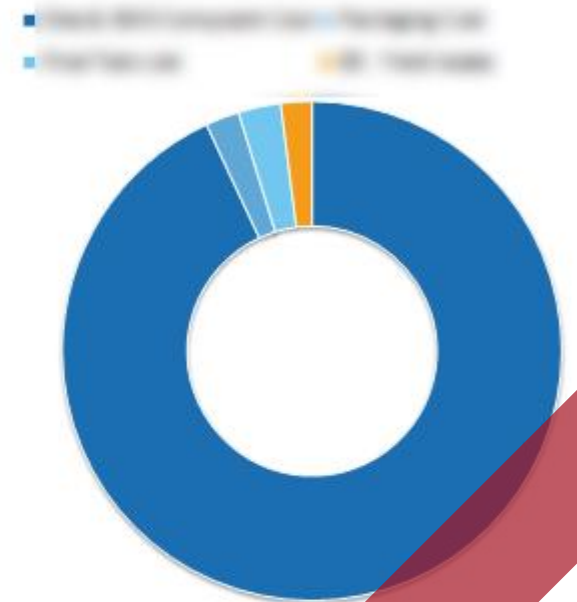
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|                                      | Low Yield |           | Medium Yield |           | High Yield |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                                      | Cost      | Breakdown | Cost         | Breakdown | Cost       | Breakdown |
| Dies Cost per Reconstruct Panel& SMD |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Packaging Cost                       |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>Total Panel Cost</b>              |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>Nb of package per Panel</b>       |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Dies & SMD Component Cost            |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Packaging Cost                       |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| Final Test cost                      |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| BE : Yield losses                    |           |           |              |           |            |           |
| <b>Component Cost</b>                |           |           |              |           |            |           |

Component Cost Breakdown (Medium Yield)



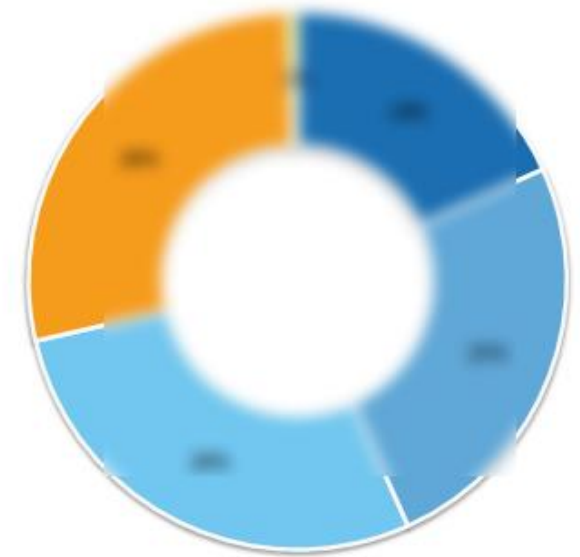
The total **panel cost** ranges from \$ [redacted] according to yield variations.

The number of **good packages per wafer/panel** is estimated at [redacted] which results in a **die cost** ranging from [redacted].

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# Module Assembly Cost

## Package Manufacturing Cost Breakdown (Medium Yield)



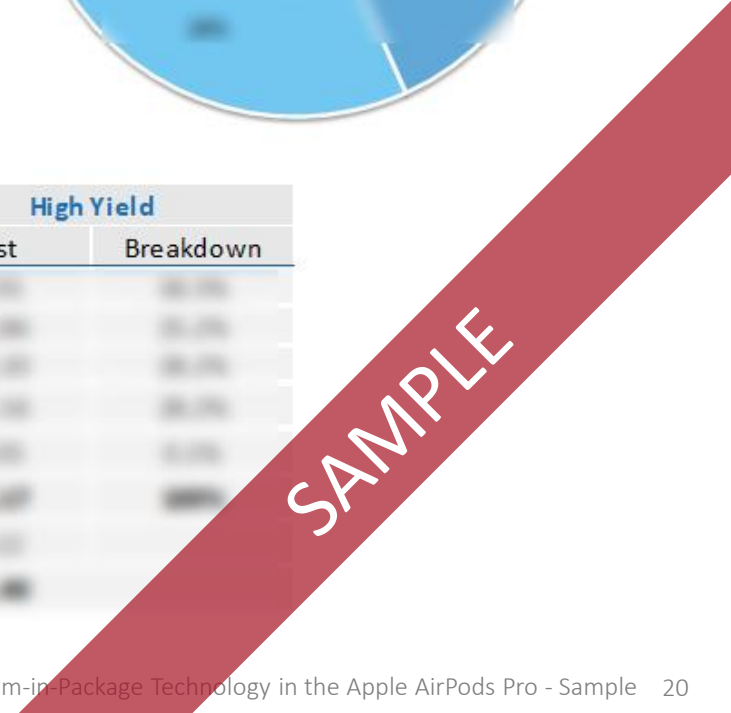
The package manufacturing cost is estimated between **\$100.00 and \$150.00**.

The largest portion of the manufacturing cost is due to the **reconstituted wafer at 30%**.

We estimate the packaging gross margin of **30%**, this results at the packaging price varying from **\$100.00 and \$150.00**.

|                                 | Low Yield       | Medium Yield    | High Yield      |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Top Module                      | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| Bottom H1 Module                | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| ST Microelectronics MEMS Module | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| Bosch MEMS Module               | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| Passive Components & Antenna    | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| 2-Layer Added PCB               | \$1,000         | \$1,000         | \$1,000         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>\$7,000</b>  | <b>\$7,000</b>  | <b>\$7,000</b>  |
| Dies per Reconstruct Panel      | 70              | 70              | 70              |
| <b>Reconstituted Wafer Cost</b> | <b>\$100.00</b> | <b>\$100.00</b> | <b>\$100.00</b> |

| Final Module Assembly              | Low Yield    |              | Medium Yield |              | High Yield   |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                    | Cost         | Breakdown    | Cost         | Breakdown    | Cost         | Breakdown    |
| Clean Room Cost                    | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| Equipment Cost                     | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| Consumable Cost                    | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| Labor Cost                         | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| Yield losses Cost                  | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| <b>Package Manufacturing Cost</b>  | <b>\$500</b> | <b>\$500</b> | <b>\$500</b> | <b>\$500</b> | <b>\$500</b> | <b>\$500</b> |
| OSAT Gross Profit                  | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        | \$100        |
| <b>Package Manufacturing Price</b> | <b>\$600</b> | <b>\$600</b> | <b>\$600</b> | <b>\$600</b> | <b>\$600</b> | <b>\$600</b> |



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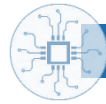
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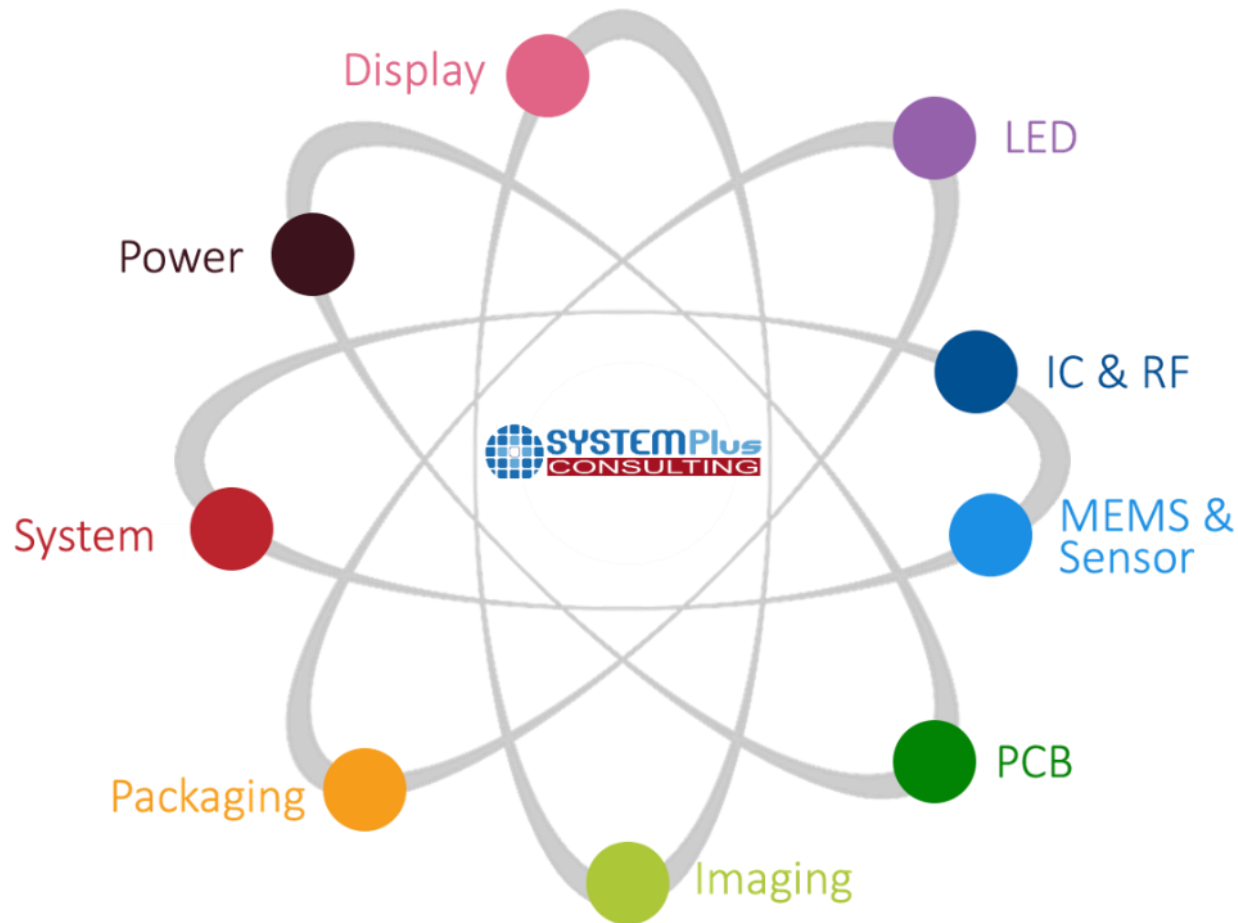
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