



JColocchia Case Study

A Partner for the Boutique Manufacturer

John Colocchia of JColocchia Guitars is a sought after producer of warmth, buzz, and snarl. Specializing in guitar effects pedals, sometimes called stomp boxes by musicians, Colocchia's unique passion for his customers and products sets him apart.

"My goal is to provide distinctive tones for my customers at a cost that doesn't force them to choose between a car and a pedal," said Colocchia.

Making Music Rise Above the Noise

"People say that the guitar effects market is crowded. I say that it is completely saturated. That said, it is saturated in a good way. For musicians, trying new things is the thing to do," said Colocchia.

To stand out from the competition, Colocchia takes his customer relationships and product quality very personally. "Every sale and every customer is precious to me. I spend a lot of time with them," he said.

"Instead of trying to make every product be all things to all people, I've taken the approach that the product should have focus, and it should be hard to screw up. You shouldn't have to twist knobs for an hour to find the magic settings that sound good or put up with compromises."

"I Need You to Be Reliable and on Time"

For any company, good suppliers matter. For a company working on a boutique scale in a crowded marketplace, it can make all the difference. Colocchia is very clear about his criteria for a good PCB partner: "I need you to be reliable and on time. I have a lot of dependencies. Some of my components have long lead times. Machine shops, powder coaters, and silk screeners need to be scheduled."

Sunstone Circuits has been JColoccia Guitars' PCB partner since 2013. Coloccia is an enthusiastic advocate of Sunstone's service record with his business. "It's just fire-and-forget with them."

Sunstone's reliable delivery and fast turnaround help him realize opportunities with his new products. "You have a window of opportunity. Need to get to market fast. If you sit around for six months, someone else might beat you to the punch," said Coloccia.

From Development to Manufacturing: Personal and Professional

For Coloccia, new products often result from a customer asking, "What if a pedal did this?"

With a customer-centric mindset, Coloccia can be nimble and responsive with his designs. Sunstone partners with his company to rapidly develop and deliver new products.

"With Sunstone, I can go from idea to production in about two months."

— John Coloccia,
JColoccia Guitars

"Audio, particularly this type, can be tricky when it comes to engineering. It takes a lot of experimenting," said Coloccia. "What kind of filters should I use? Which implementation? Where do they go



in the signal chain? These are the kinds of questions that are simple to answer when I can reliably get working boards in just a day or two."

Sunstone helps Coloccia answer such questions fast. With quickturn prototypes and around-the-clock availability, Sunstone speeds up the experimentation process. "I can get up at 4:00 a.m., run downstairs, design it, and then order a prototype. I get working boards in two days," said Coloccia. "If I like it, I get prototypes into the hands of my army of testers who love trying new things. They will put it through the paces live, in the studio, and at rehearsal."

"With their feedback and a lot of modifications along the way – perhaps a couple board spins – I may end up with something I like. Then I produce and sell it," said Coloccia.

Boutique Manufacturing: It's All About Speed

A supplier who gets an order wrong or ships late would delay product shipment, which can mean Coloccia will miss out on sales. He finds that Sunstone's orders always come in on time or even a little early. "They never slow down my production process," said Coloccia.

On a recent project, Sunstone responded to a last-minute revision and kept production on schedule. "I was able to go through redesign in about a week on a four-layer board," said Coloccia. "I ordered the revised prototype on the sixth, they shipped on the eighth, I got them on the ninth. That same day I placed the order for the production boards."

Exploring Opportunity Together

Coloccia has made a name for himself with his current line of products, but he is not likely to sit still. There are a lot of opportunities to apply his engineering experience to the requests of his customers. As new ideas come to him, he connects with Sunstone personnel.

Curious about the European market, Coloccia had some questions about lead-free solder. His Sunstone representative arranged a call so that he could consult with experts. "It is off the radar right now, but I wanted to know. I may revisit Europe in 2016," said Coloccia.

A Lifetime Warranty That Really Means Something

JColoccia Guitars offers an expansive lifetime warranty. Coloccia wants to provide durable, reliable devices that stand up to musicians' notoriously abusive treatment of equipment. As an experienced engineer, he is looking at ways to reduce the points of failure in his designs.

"When you worry about things like lifetime warranties, think about where the failures are," said Coloccia. "The failures are not in the boards but in the things that move, the wires and pots. We have been mulling over combining flex and rigid PCB to ease interconnects, eliminating wires."

As Coloccia continues to develop new sounds, Sunstone works in harmony with his efforts. Coloccia put it rather bluntly: "In a world where I rely on suppliers to come through, Sunstone is a breath of fresh air."