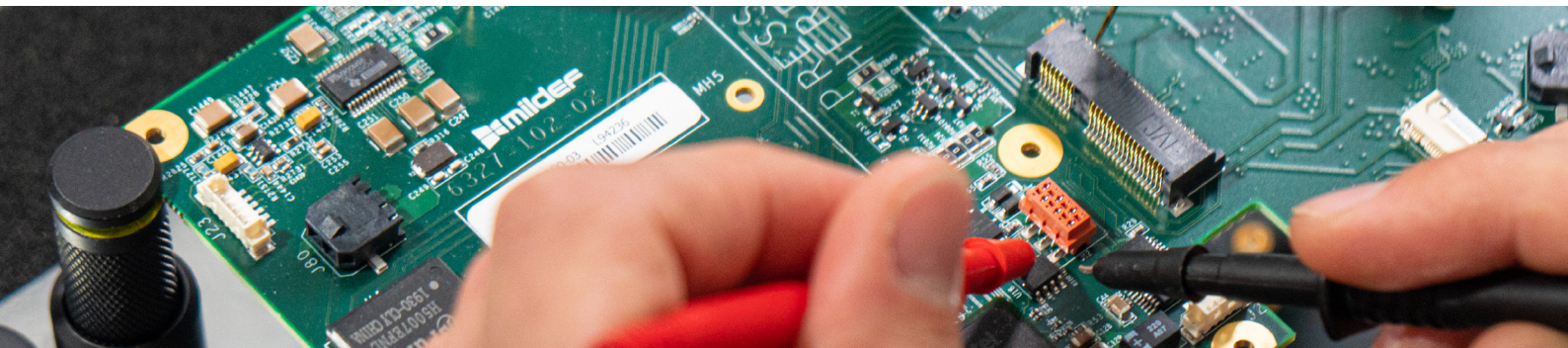


# Rugged Electronics Manufacturer or Rebranding Vendor?

## Why it matters, and how to spot the difference

When it comes to rugged computers manufactured specifically for the military, a new paint job alone shouldn't justify a rebrand or a unique SKU number. Yet some military hardware suppliers will claim to have manufactured rugged or semi-rugged equipment, when in fact they have simply rebranded that of an OEM.



### Why is this a problem?

Besides being a questionable business practice, this kind of misrepresentation has implications for you as the buyer:

- Cost** Every time a product passes through a party along the supply chain, the price of that product increases. For the buyer, the increased price added by a reseller or system integrator is one of convenience and the stated value-added services by that reseller or integrator. However, if a company rebrands a product it hasn't manufactured as its own, that's an added step in the supply chain, and one that comes with a price hike.
- Warranty** What happens if you purchase hardware from a company you were under the impression was the manufacturer, and you run into a technical issue? Maybe the reseller has some sort of agreement with the OEM around repairs and warranty, but maybe not. Regardless, your contract is with the seller, and thus repairs and warranty issues and requests are now managed by the middleman—not the OEM.
- Support** The same issue arises when you need support. For anything more than minor issues, the re-labeller who sold you the hardware will likely have to go to the OEM, which means resolution will take longer to be reached. Or worse—you'll get the run-around as neither the re-labeller or the OEM will want to take ownership of the problem.
- Product lifecycle** Companies that rebrand semi-rugged commercial products for military customers do not control the lifecycle of the rebranded product. The actual OEM, which doesn't consider defense as its primary market, will End-of-Life the product based on commercial market demand. That results in much shorter product lifecycles than what is typically required by military and defense programs.
- Transparency** It's up to the buyer to ensure a secure and trusted supply chain. All the more so with the strict data privacy requirements of the military. How can a company that rebrands and sells products from an OEM certify a trusted supply chain?

## What can you do about it?

How can you know whether the OEM you are vetting actually manufactured the hardware you're considering purchasing? Use the following list of questions to differentiate manufacturer from rebranding vendor:

- ✓ Are you the company that both designs and manufactures the product?
- ✓ Do you directly control the Bill of Materials (BOM) for the product?
- ✓ Do you administer the product warranty? Or is the product warranty maintained by a third party or another OEM?
- ✓ Do you have direct control over the product lifecycle?
- ✓ Can you guarantee a 5-year production lifecycle for the product?

## MilDef, Inside & Out

As an OEM solely focused on the military, MilDef has structured all processes—from concept design to component sourcing to rapid prototyping and customization—to get soldiers the technology they need, when they need it. By maintaining its own supply chain and developing all systems board-level up, MilDef is able to control product lifecycles, whereas other ruggedized computer providers have to rely on the lifecycles of commercially available products. Addressing survivability and sustainability at every stage results in a truly rugged product that not only passes any required tests, but will also be supported for an appropriate amount of time once the product is out in the field.



**International**  
**MilDef International AB**  
 Phone +46 (0) 42 250000  
[sales@mildef.com](mailto:sales@mildef.com)

**Sweden**  
**MilDef Sweden AB**  
 Phone +46 (0) 42 250000  
[salesse@mildef.com](mailto:salesse@mildef.com)

**UK and Ireland**  
**MilDef Ltd**  
 Phone +44 (0)29 2064 7040  
[salesuk@mildef.com](mailto:salesuk@mildef.com)

**North and South America**  
**MilDef Inc**  
 Phone +1 703 224 8835  
[salesus@mildef.com](mailto:salesus@mildef.com)

**Norway**  
**MilDef AS**  
 Phone +47 23 40 03 10  
[salesno@mildef.com](mailto:salesno@mildef.com)



[mildef.com](http://mildef.com)