STRATHAM, NH – ITW has acquired **Vitronics-Soltec** from **Francisco Partners** for an undisclosed sum. The deal creates the world's largest supplier, in revenues, of wave soldering equipment.

ITW plans to let the two units operate independent of each other, although there is speculation that arrangement won't last for long.

The two companies would have a combined global market share of about 15% in units, placing them second behind Folungwin. However, in sales, they would have more than 20% of the market.

In North America, the lead is more pronounced. There, Speedline and Vitronics have a combined share of more than 40% in units, and nearly 50% in revenues.

The two companies also hold a large -- but not dominant -- share of the worldwide reflow market.

The real prize, however, may be Vitronics's selective soldering technology. Global selective soldering revenues are forecast to overtake wave soldering within the next four years. Vitronics is a market leader in selective, whereas Speedline has no products in that area.

Francisco Partners purchased Vitronics in October 2006, as part of a deal that also brought **Universal Instruments**

and
Hover-Davis
(now
Unovis
) from
Dover Corp.
In the 17 months since, Vitronics has undergone a series of changes at the top, as Jeroen Schmits and then Erik Tobiason eventually gave way to Aaron Saxton, the current president.