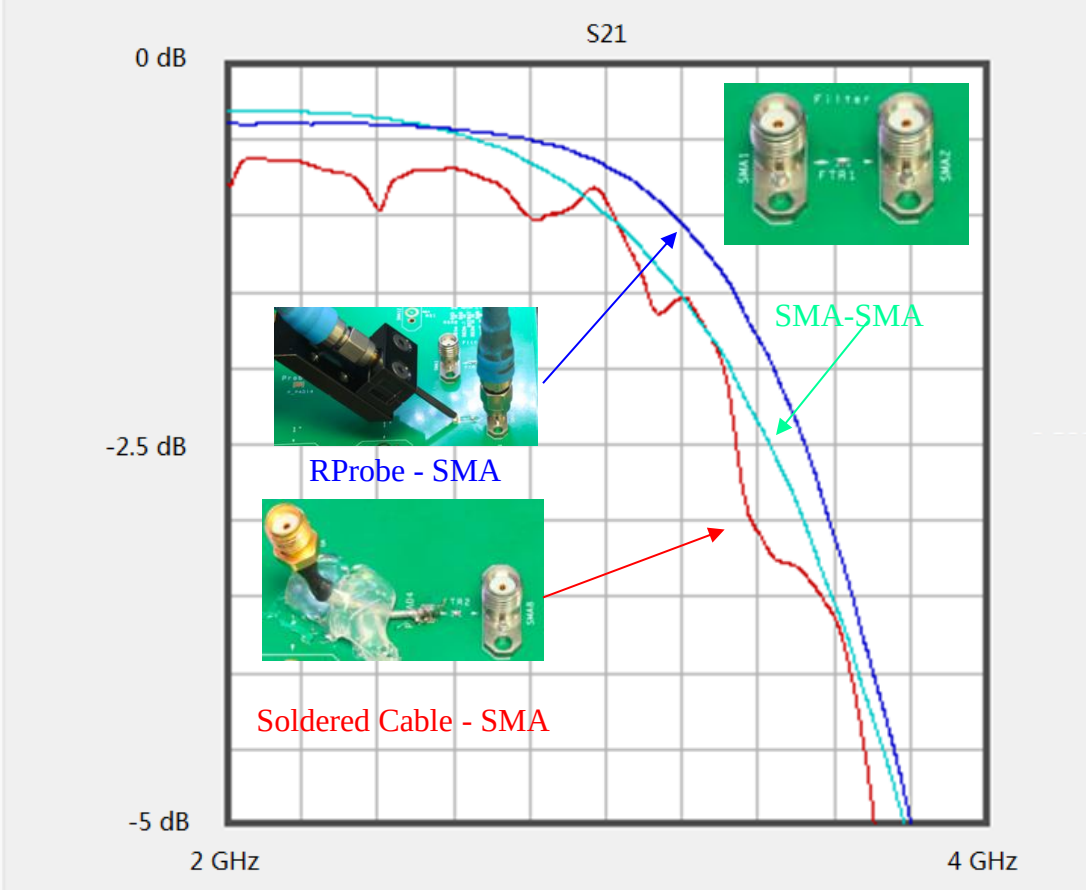
RF Probing
With
Rohde & Schwarz ZNB VNA

Outline

Why RF Probing?

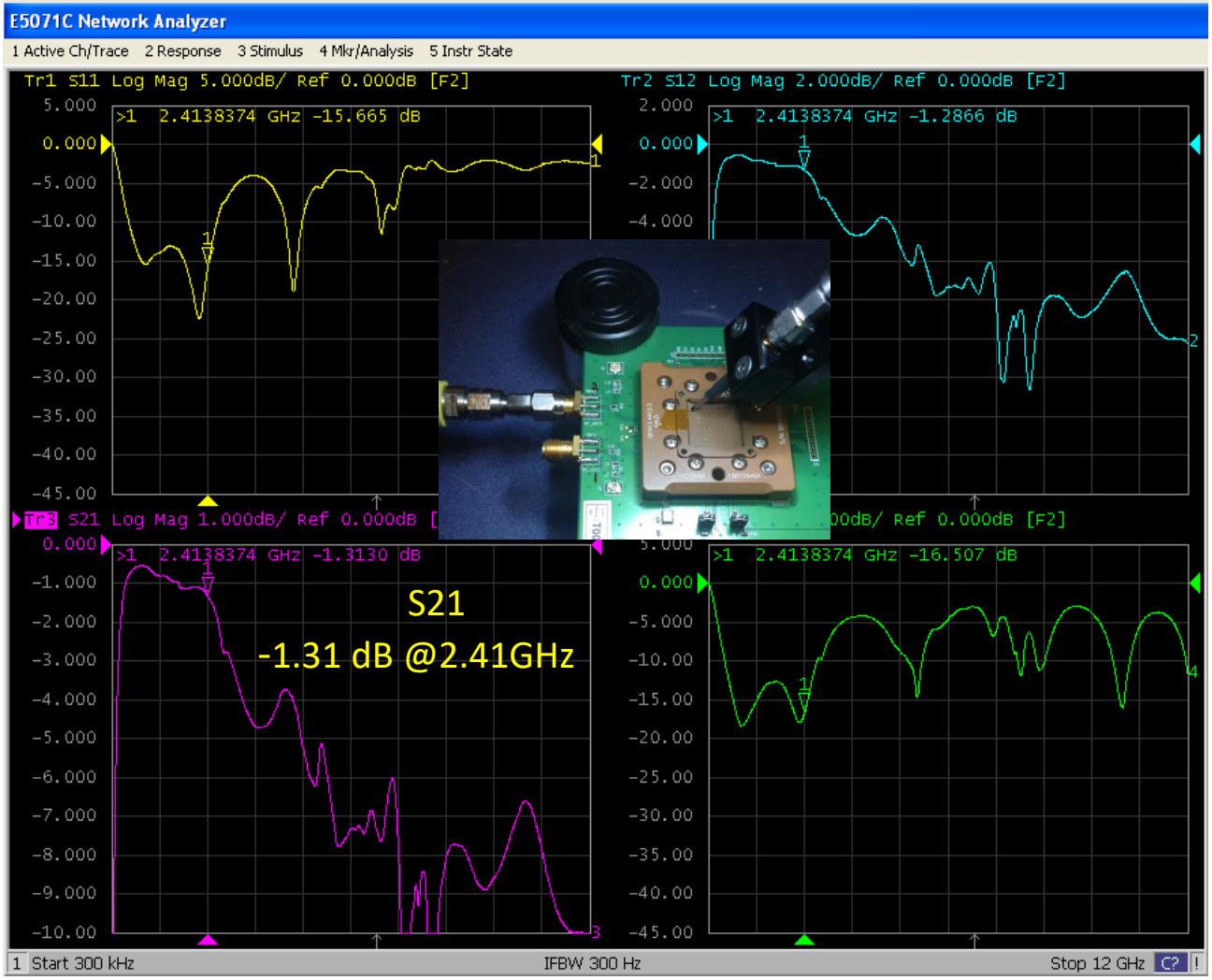
- **Necessity:** **Constant shrinking size of circuit components makes soldering semi-rigid RF cables to test gigahertz circuits impractical.**
- **Accuracy:** **RF probes and calibration substrates allow engineers to perform probe-tip calibration for accurate, repetitive measurements.**
- **Productivity:** **Any engineer can do RF measurements in minutes without the need of soldering semi-rigid cable**

Measurements of RF Low-Pass Filter

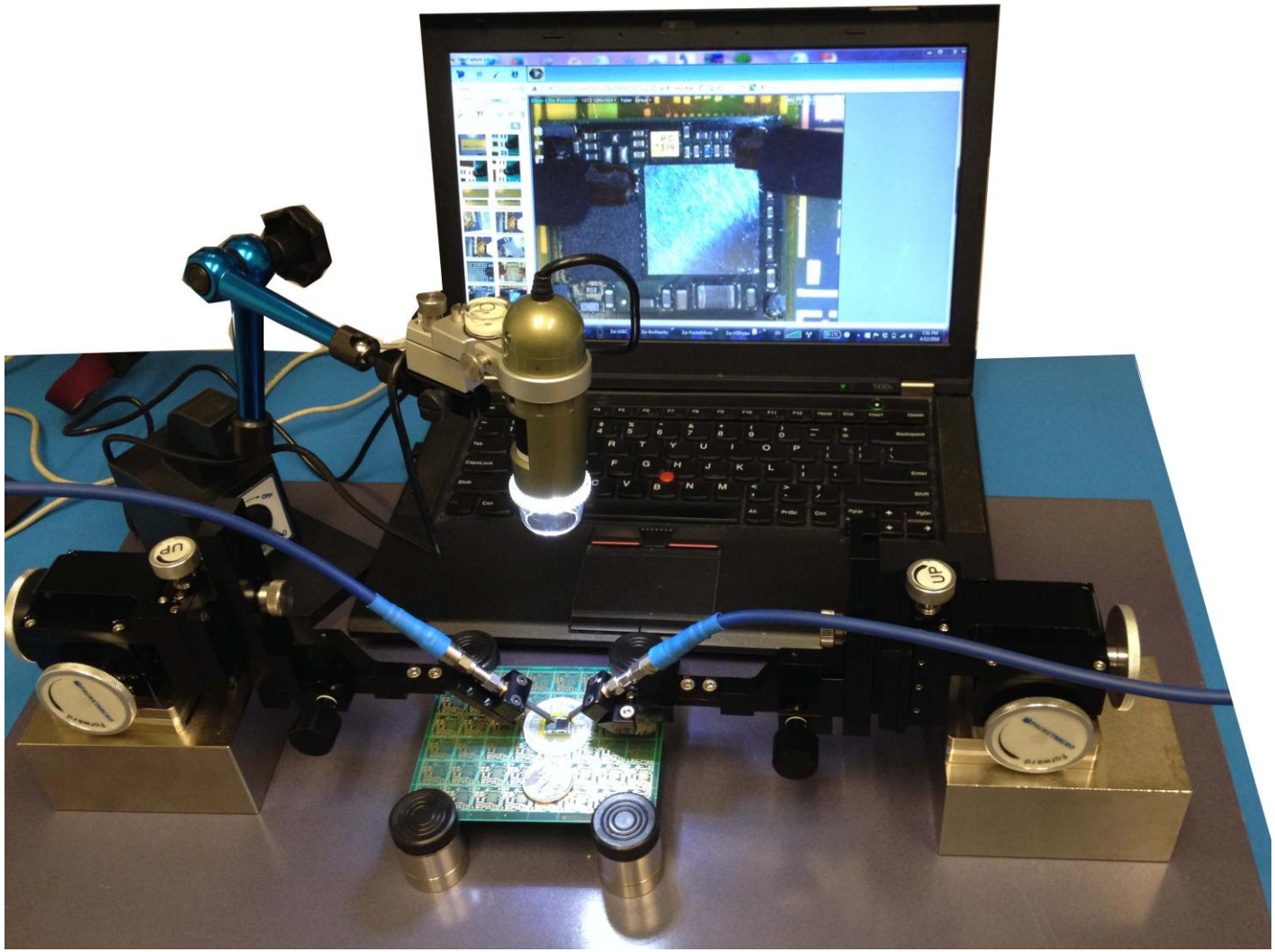


RF probe is almost as good as SMA connector!

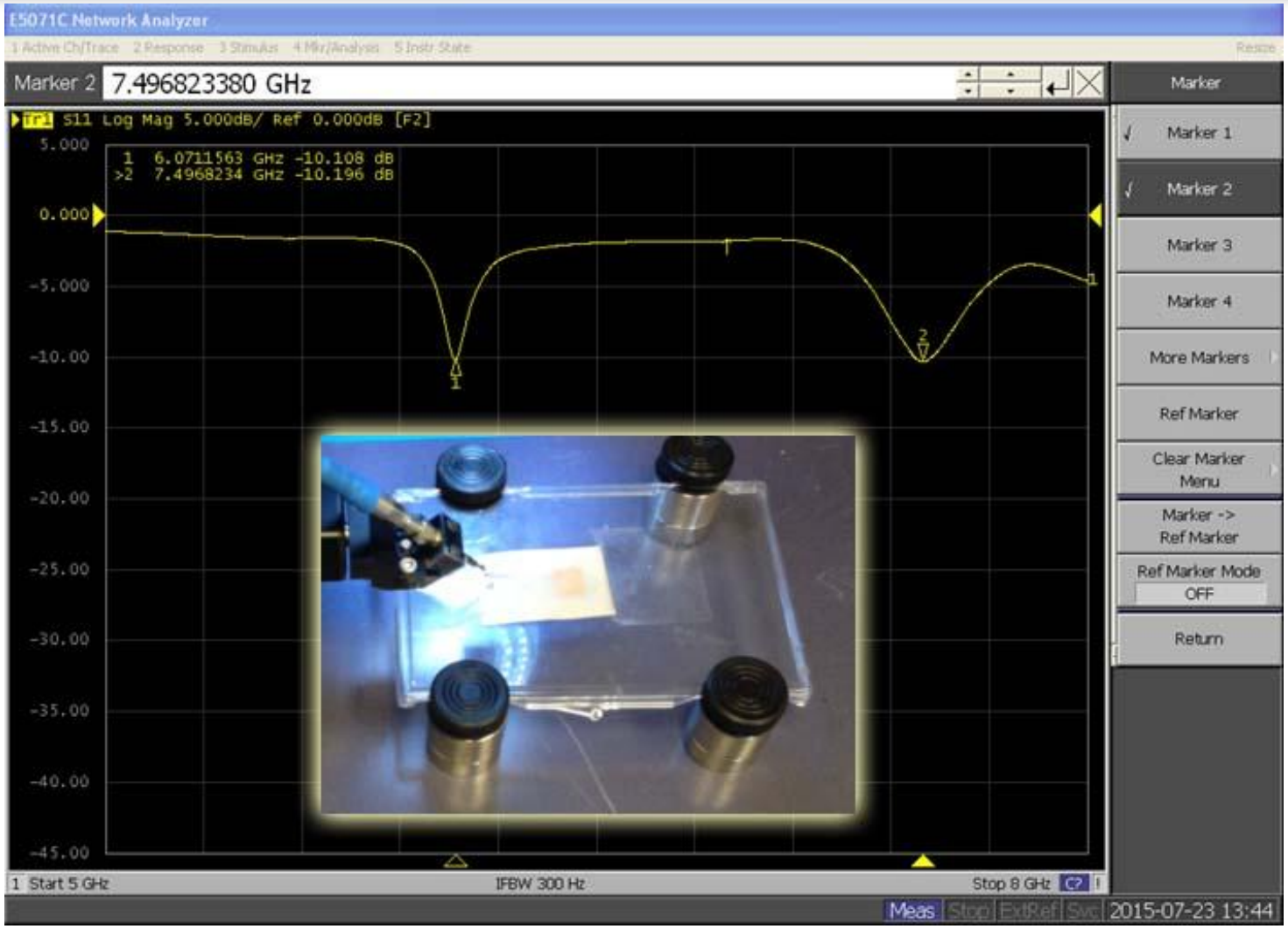
RF Fixture Testing



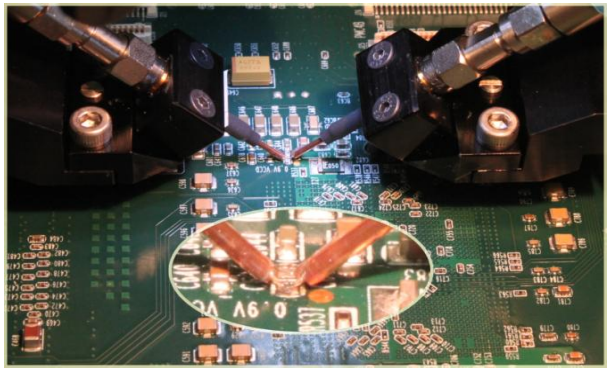
RF Module Testing



RF Antenna Testing

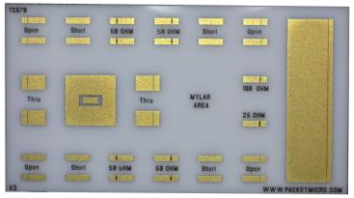


30/20 GHz S-Probe

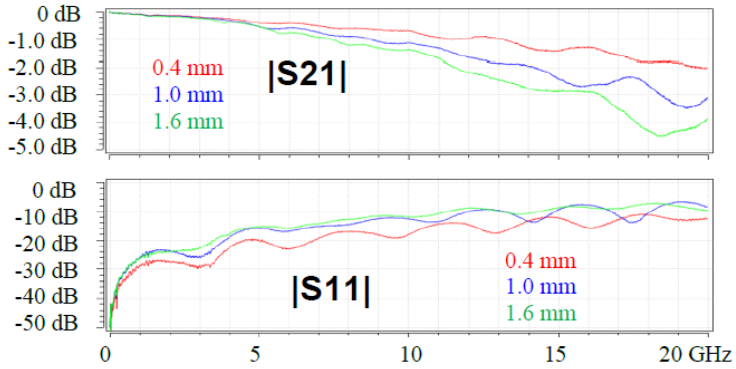


PCB Probing with S-Probe

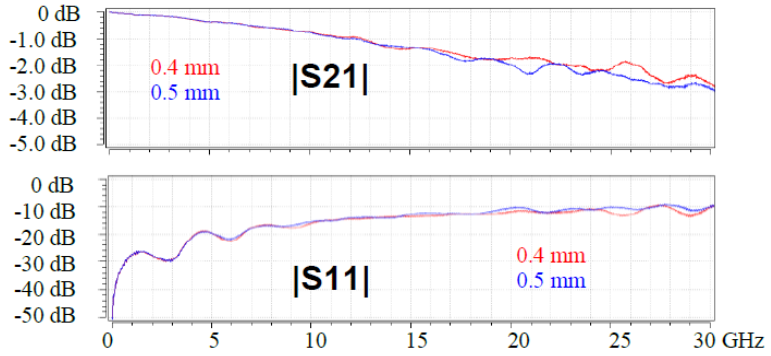
S-Probe
(1.5”x0.4”x0.3”)



TCS70 Cal Substrate
(0.7” x 0.4” x 0.025”)



30 GHz S-Probe

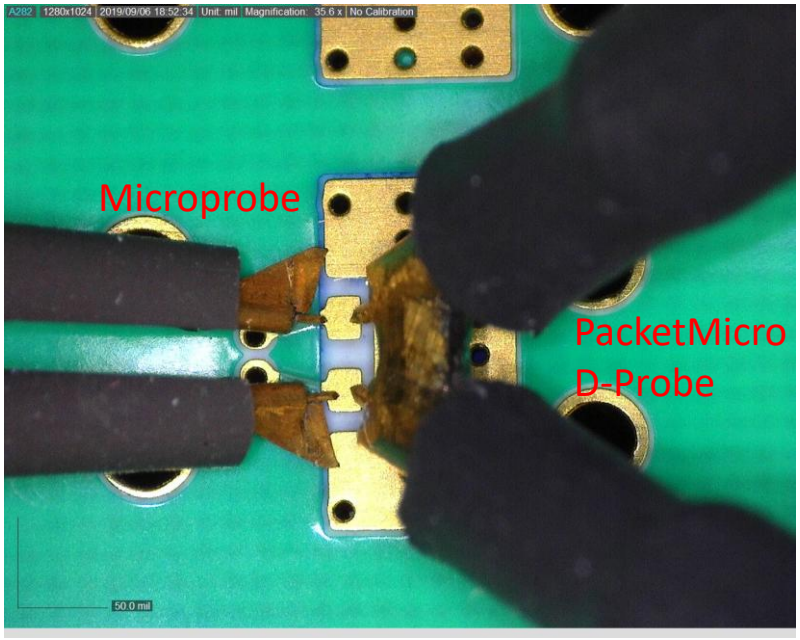


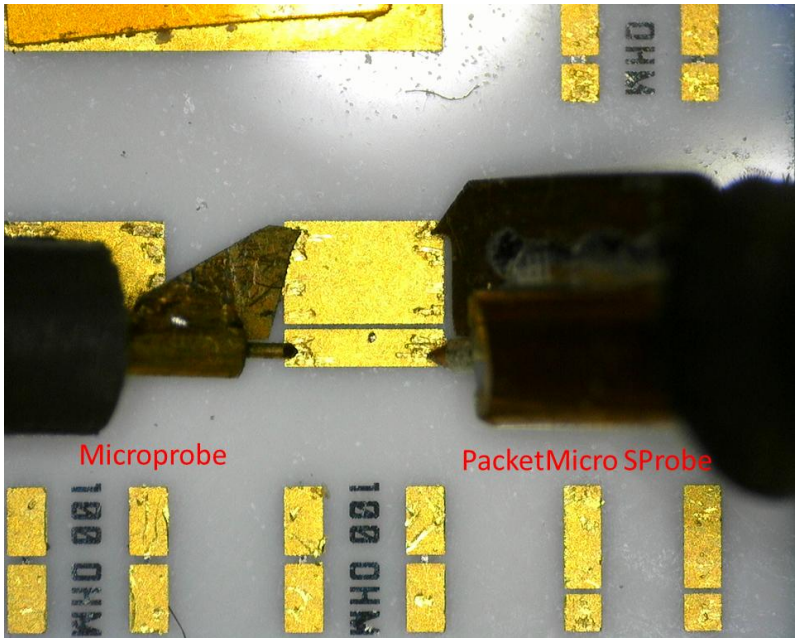
- **SP-GR-2015025** – 20 GHz, 0.25 mm
- **SP-GR-201504** – 20 GHz, 0.4 mm
- **SP-GR-201505** – 20 GHz, 0.5 mm
- **SP-GR-181508** – 18 GHz, 0.8 mm
- **SP-GR-181510** – 18 GHz, 1.0 mm
- **SP-GR-161512** – 16 GHz, 1.2 mm
- **SP-GR-161514** – 16 GHz, 1.4 mm
- **SP-GR-161516** – 16 GHz, 1.6 mm

- **SP-GR-3015025** – 30 GHz, 0.25 mm
- **SP-GR-301504** – 30 GHz, 0.4 mm
- **SP-GR-301505** – 30 GHz, 0.5 mm

Video demo:
https://packetmicro.com/Videos/PacketMicro_Probe_Planarization.mp4

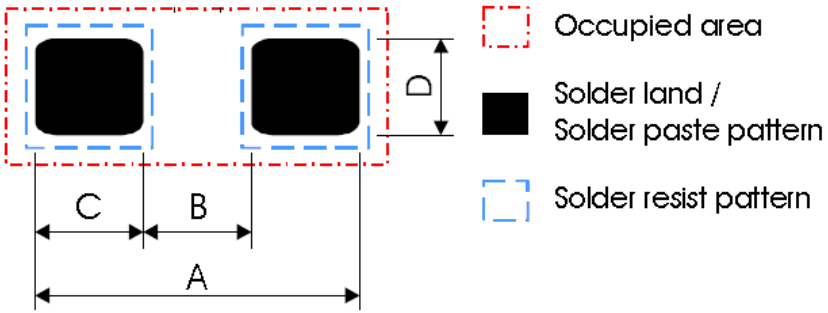
Rugged Probes vs. Microprobes





- **PacketMicro rugged probes are specifically designed for probing on test pads on uneven surfaces.**

Probe-Pitch Selection



S-Probe Part Number:

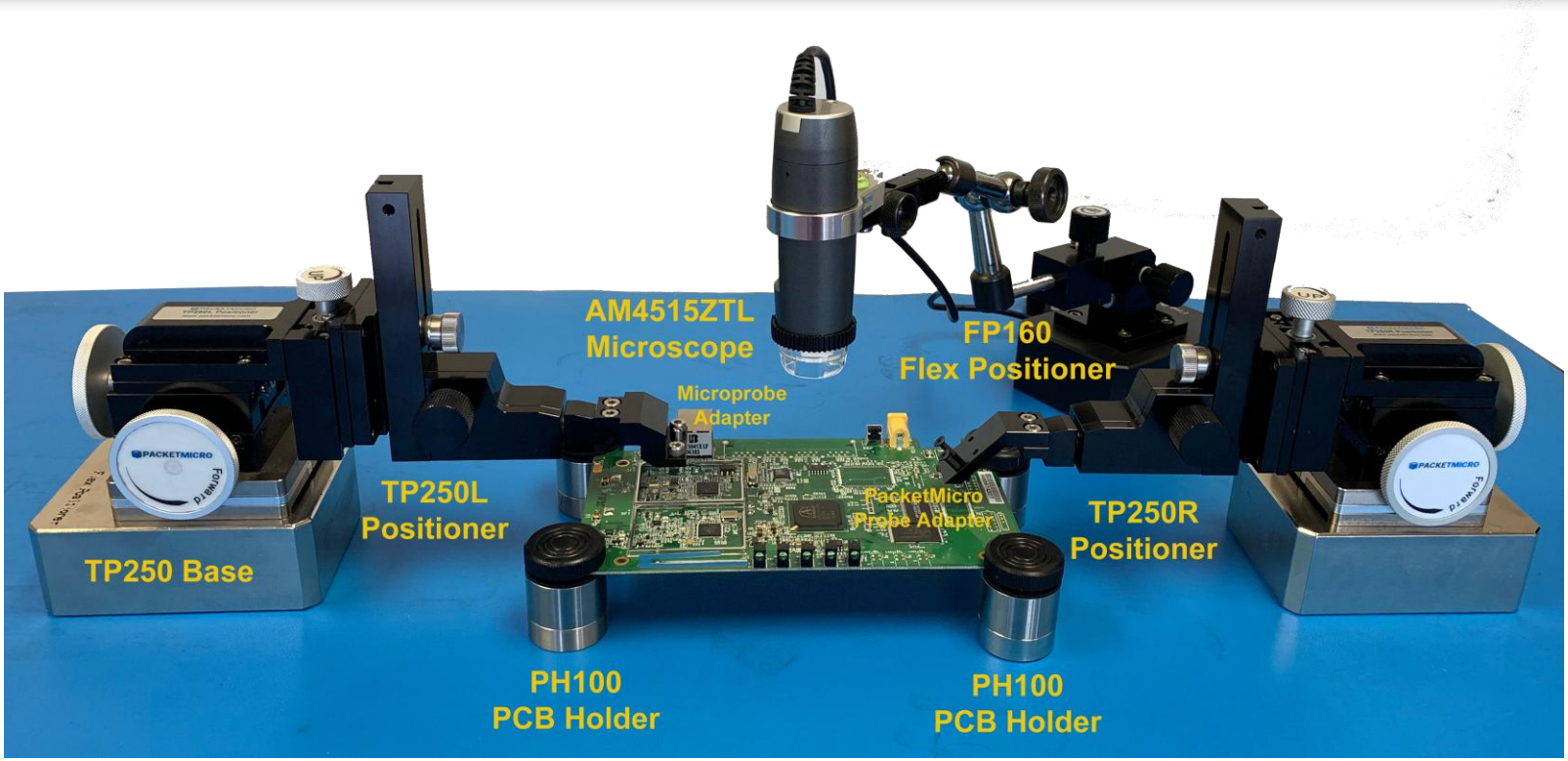
- **SP-GR-2015025** – 20 GHz, 0.25 mm/10 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-201504** – 20 GHz, 0.4 mm/16 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-201505** – 20 GHz, 0.5 mm/20 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-181508** – 18 GHz, 0.8 mm/32 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-181510** – 18 GHz, 1.0 mm/40 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-161512** – 16 GHz, 1.2 mm/48 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-161514** – 16 GHz, 1.4 mm/56 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-161516** – 16 GHz, 1.6 mm/64 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-3015025** – 30 GHz, 0.25 mm/10 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-301504** – 30 GHz, 0.4 mm/16 mil pitch
- **SP-GR-301505** – 30 GHz, 0.5 mm/20 mil pitch

Recommendation: B + 0.2 mm < Probe Pitch < A – 0. 2mm

Size	Probe Pitch	A	B	C	D	Component Size
01005	SP-GR-2015025	0.52	0.12	0.20	0.21	0.4 x 0. 2
0201	SP-GR-201505	0.90	0.30	0.30	0.35	0.6 x 0.3
0402	0.7mm < Pitch <1.3mm	1.50	0.50	0.50	0.60	1.0 x 0.5
0603	0.8mm < Pitch <2.2mm	2.40	0.60	0.90	1.00	1.6 x 0.8
0805	1.2mm < Pitch <2.8mm	3.0	1.0	1.0	1.25	2.0 x 1.25

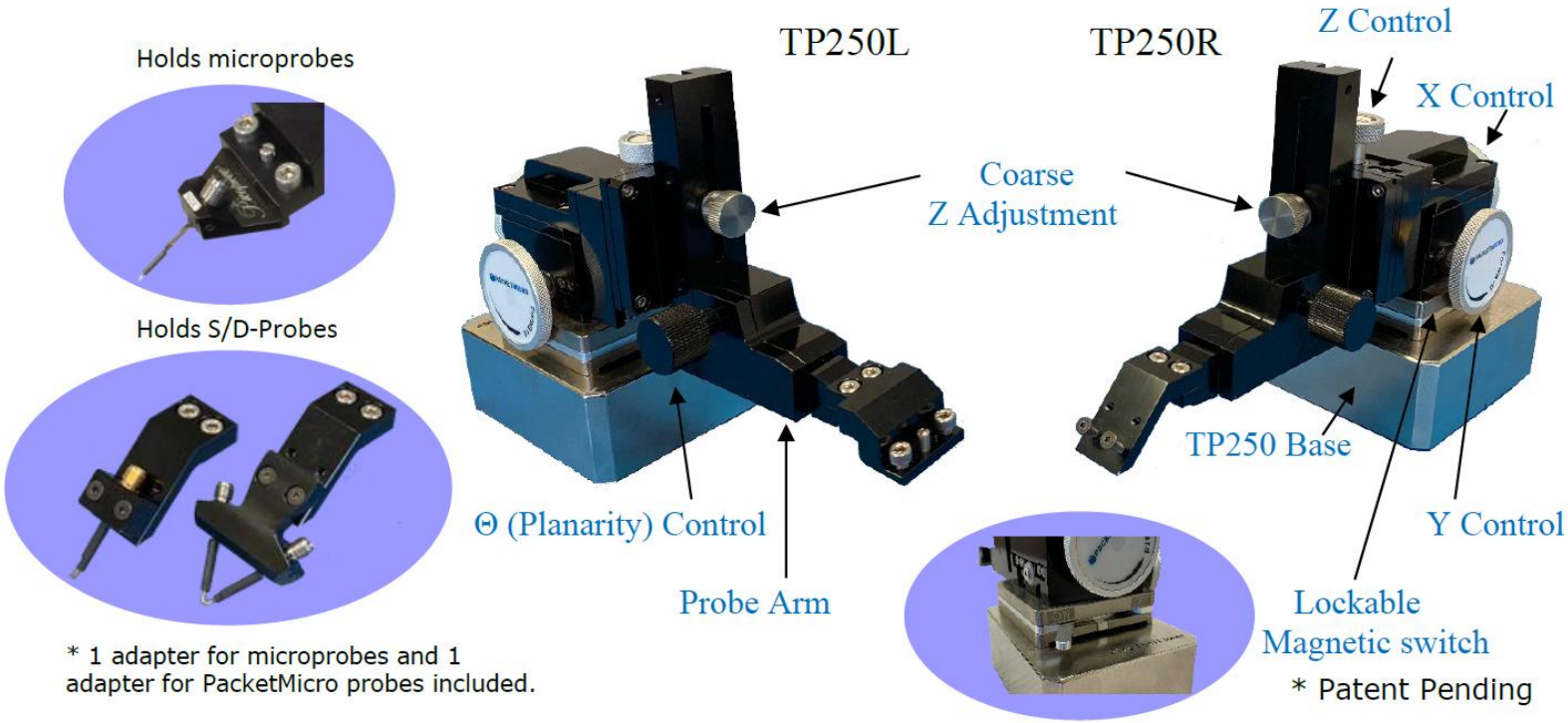
- The above component footprints are for reference only.
- Please use the specific component footprints in your PCB layout.

Simple DIY Probe Station



Set up your probe station in 5 minutes !

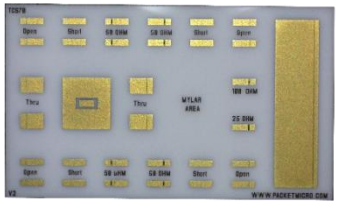
Precision Positioner – TP250



- **Precise:** XYZ stage (50 TPI, 2.5 µm resolution)
- **Versatile:** detachable θ stage
- **Easy:** lockable magnetic base

Tools - Accessories

Optical Microscope
(~ 90 x magnification)



TCS70
Calibration
Substrate

Mylar
Tape

Fine-tip
Sharpie pen

USB Digital Microscope
(~ 90 x magnification)

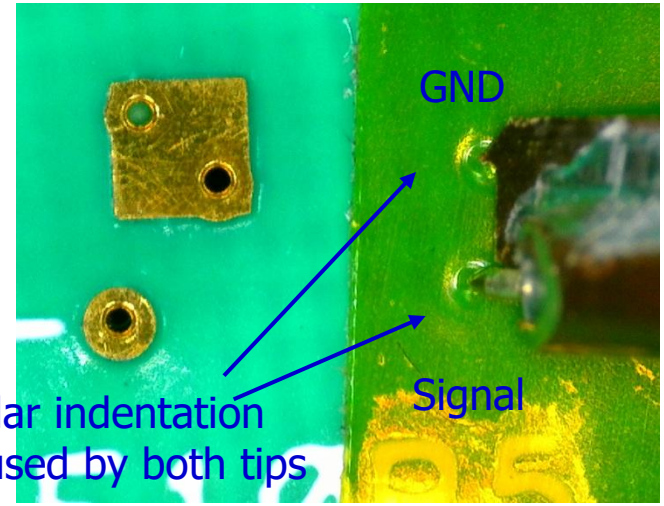
- Using a good microscope is essential.
- You might damage the probe if you cannot see its tips well.

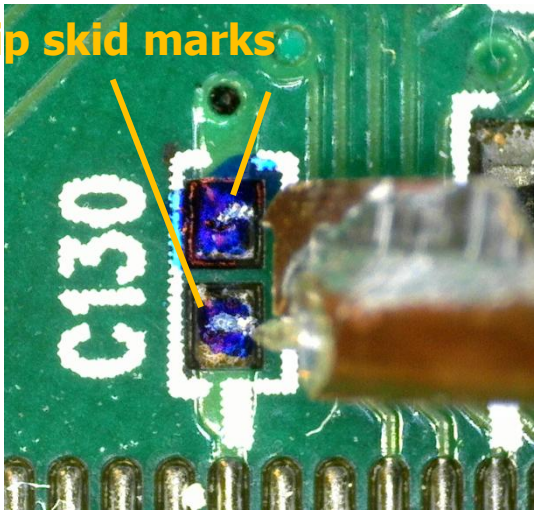
(Make sure to use a long working range (5 cm @ 90x) microscope!)

Probe Planarization Tips

- A good microscope is important. You may damage the probe if you cannot see its tips well.
- Good contact of both probe tips with the DUT is essential to accurate calibration and measurements.
- Mylar tape provides leveling guidance on flat, even surface (bare PCB).
- Color marker helps on uneven surface (solder bump).
- Probe Planarization Video:

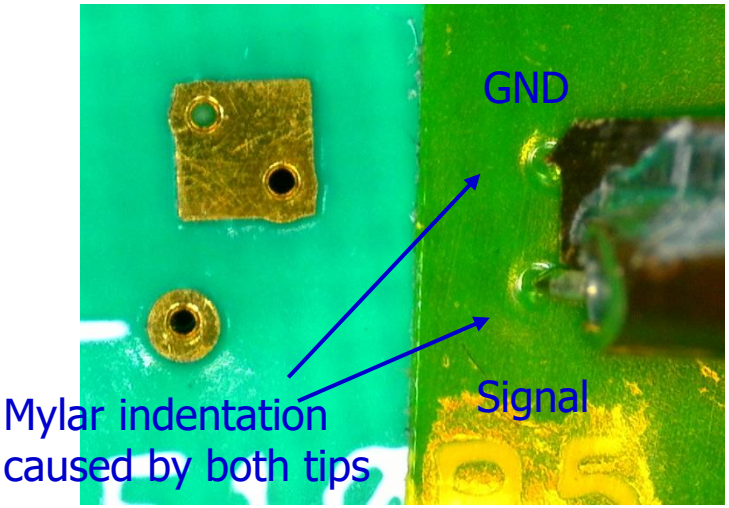
  https://packetmicro.com/Videos/PacketMicro_Probe_Planarization.mp4

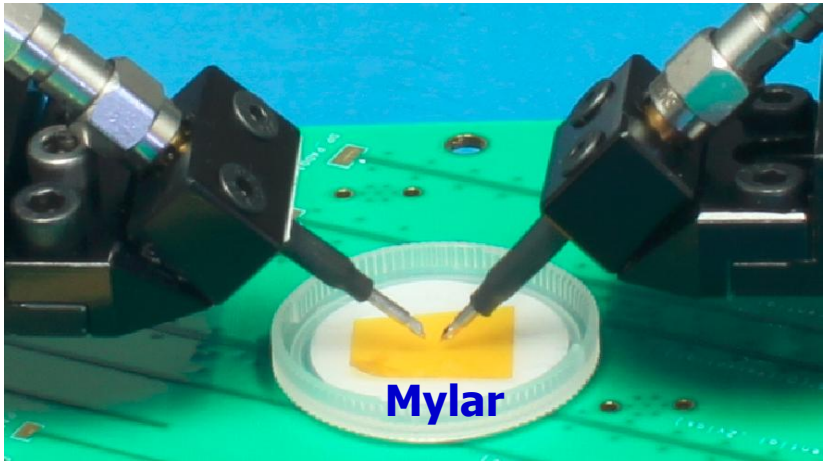




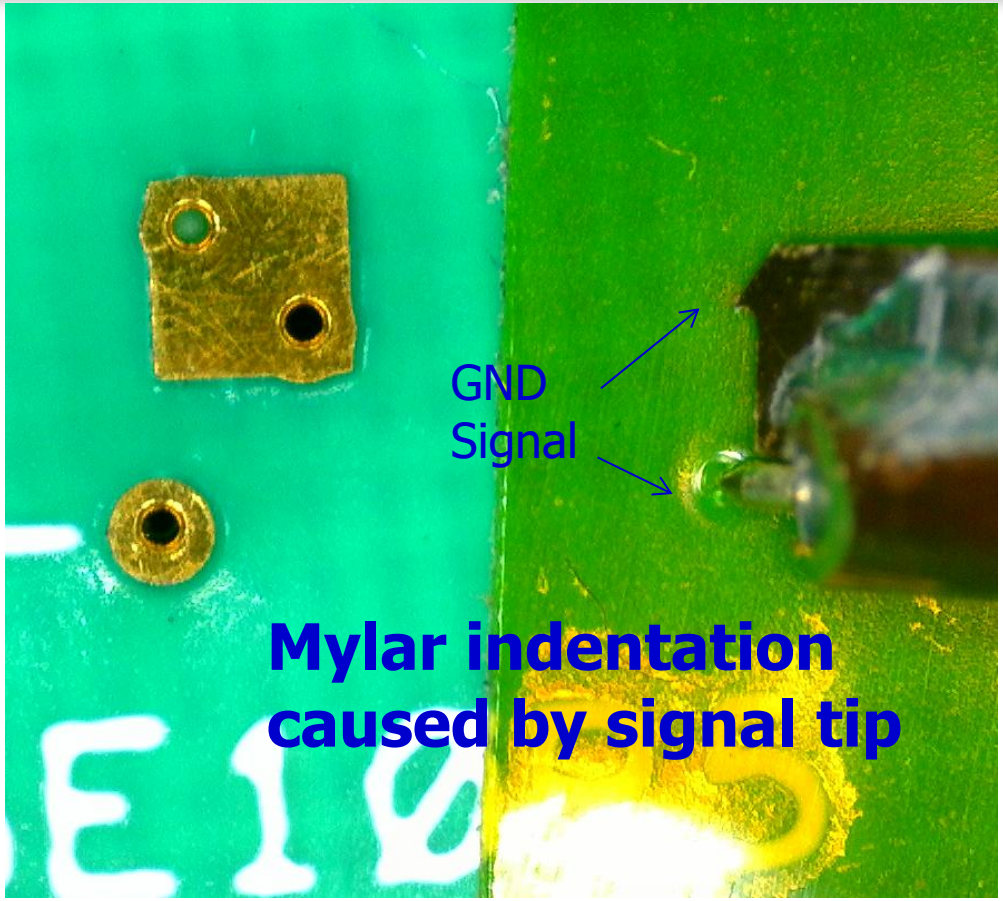
Probing Test Pads on Even Surfaces

- Use the Mylar tape on the back of the plastic cap for probe planarization by observing the indentation caused by the tips.
- Remove the plastic cap and perform probing
- Affix a Mylar tape next to test pads if there is not enough space for placing the plastic cap.





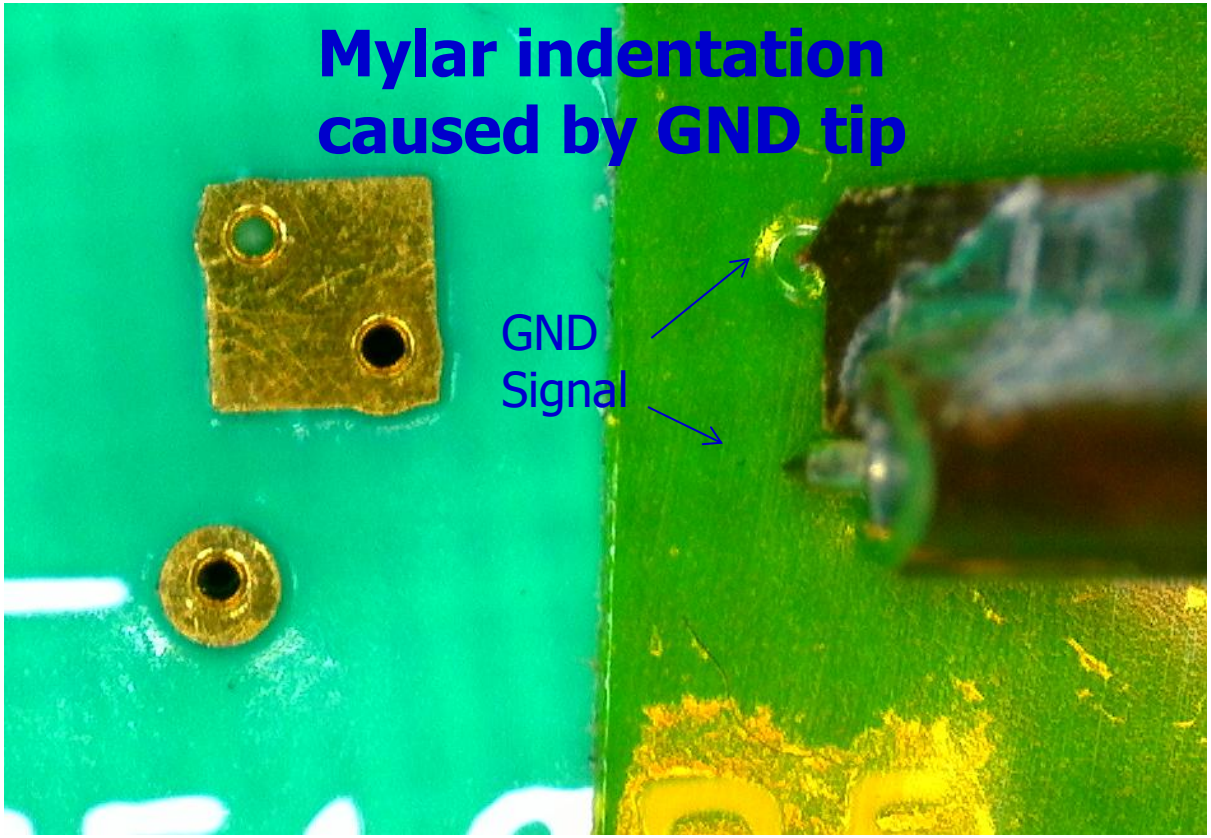
Signal tip touches down first



Step 1:

Land the probe tips on the tape and observe the probe-tip footprint. Above image shows that signal tip touches the surface first.

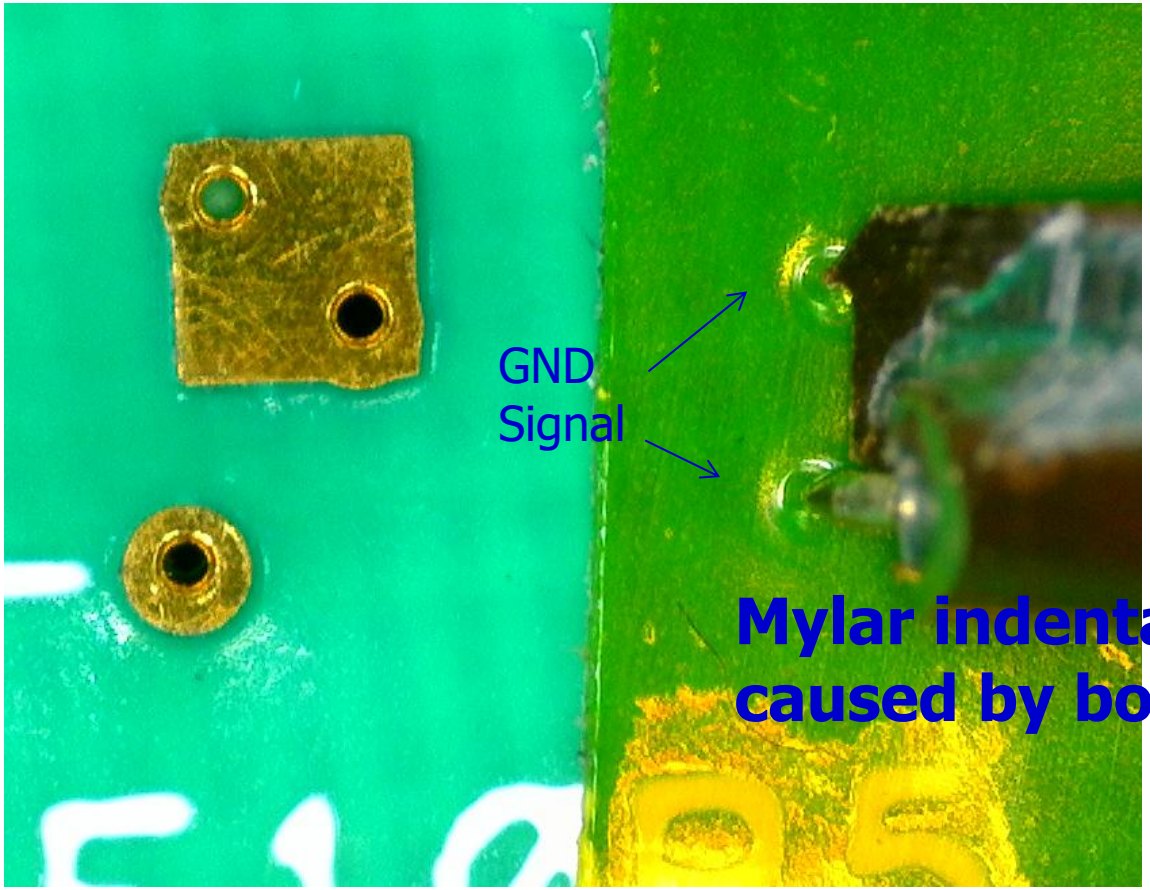
GND tip touches down first



Step 2:

Adjust the planarization knob on the TP150 positioner to lower the GND tip. Above image shows that GND tip touches the surface first.

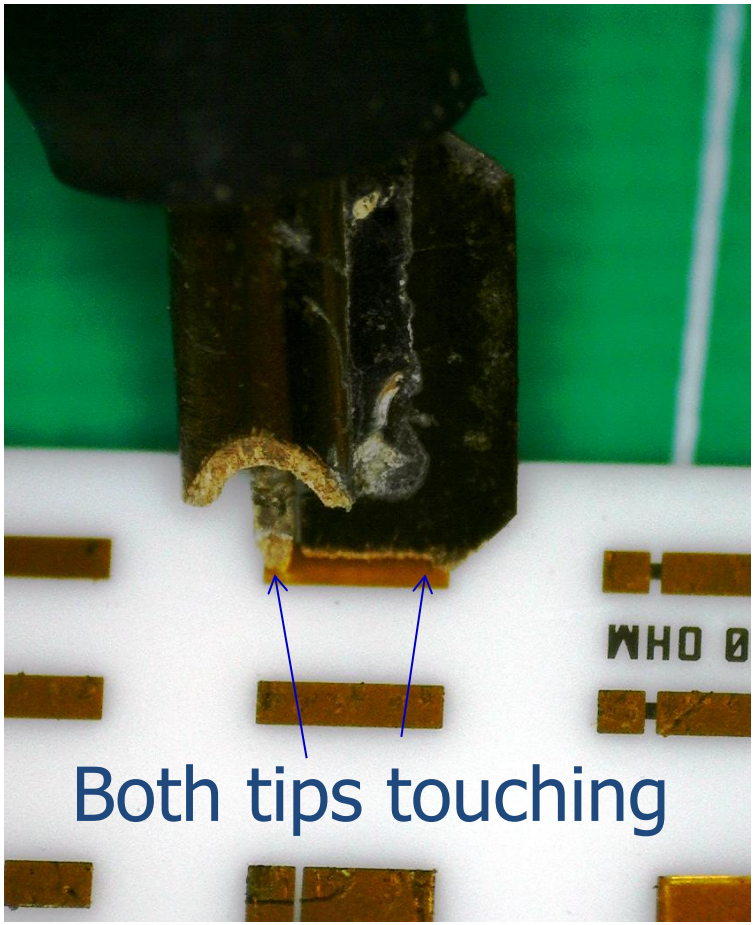
Both tips touch down simultaneously

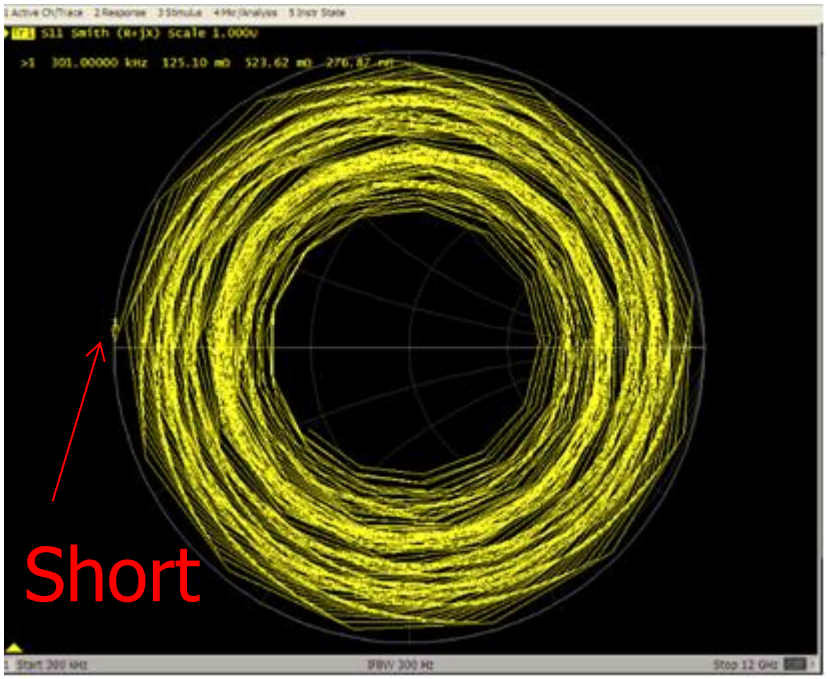


Step 3:

Adjust the planarization knob on the positioner to land both probe tips. Above image shows the two probe tips touch the surface evenly.

Use VNA to Verify Probe Contacts

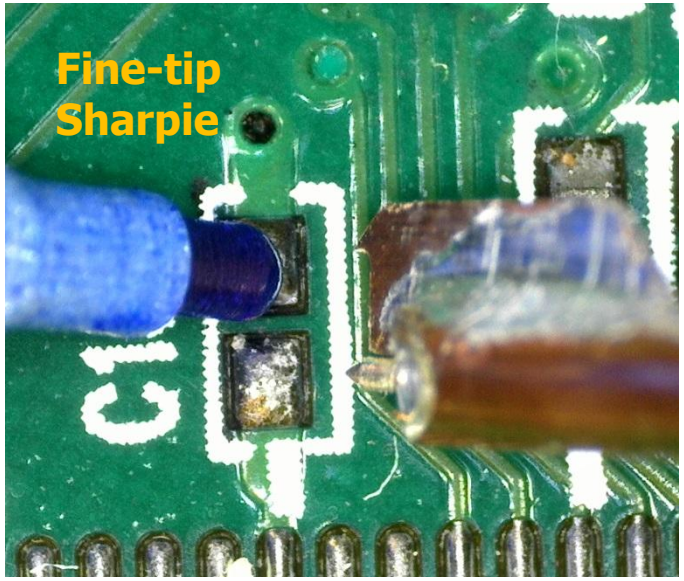


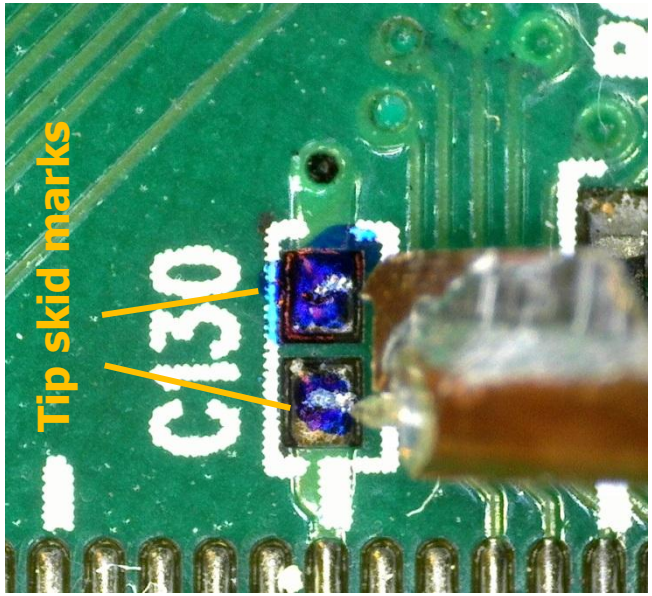


- Both tips leave light probe marks
- VNA Smith Chart shows “Short”

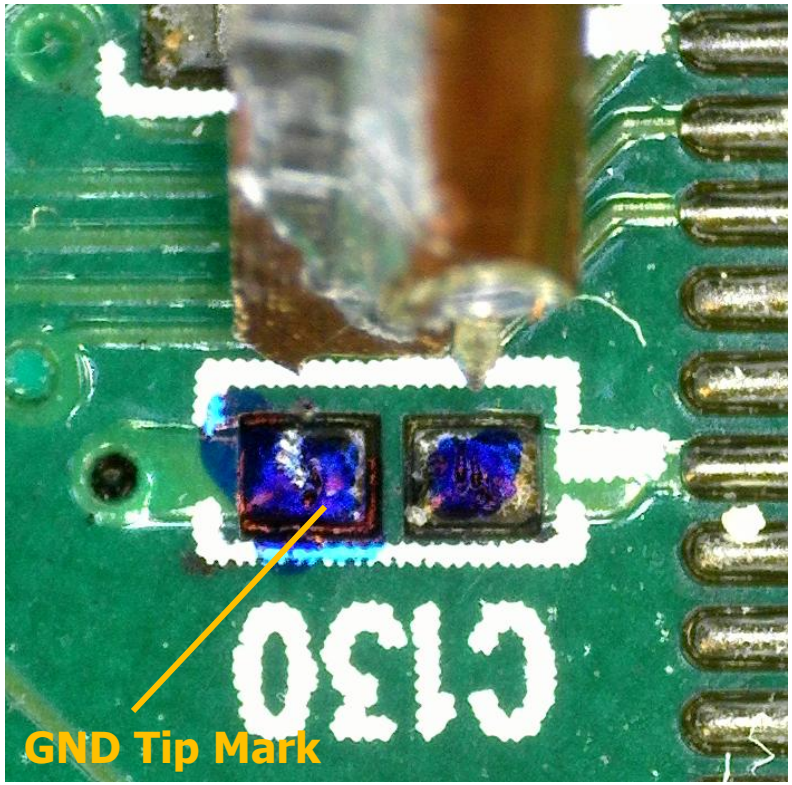
Probing Test Pads on Uneven Surfaces

- Color solder bumps with a Sharpie
- Use the probe skid marks to confirm good tip contact
- Clean up the solder bumps with industrial alcohol after probing

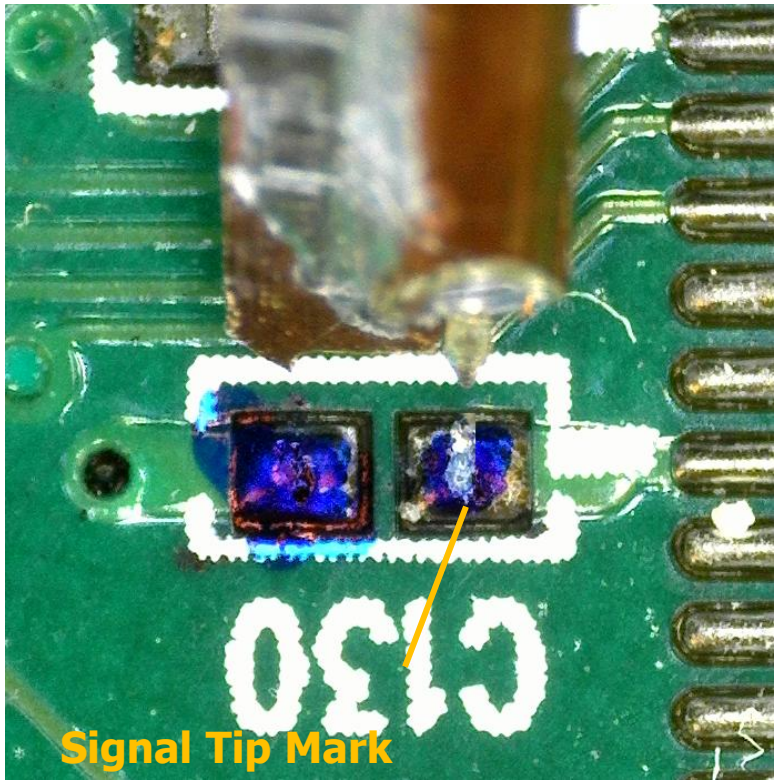




Use Probe Skid Marks on Solder Bumps

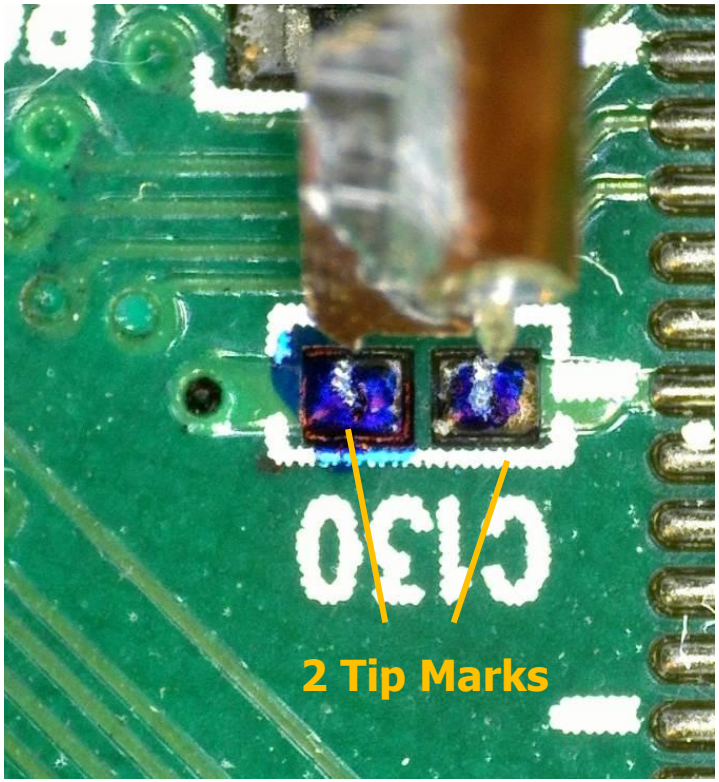


Left GND tip touches down first

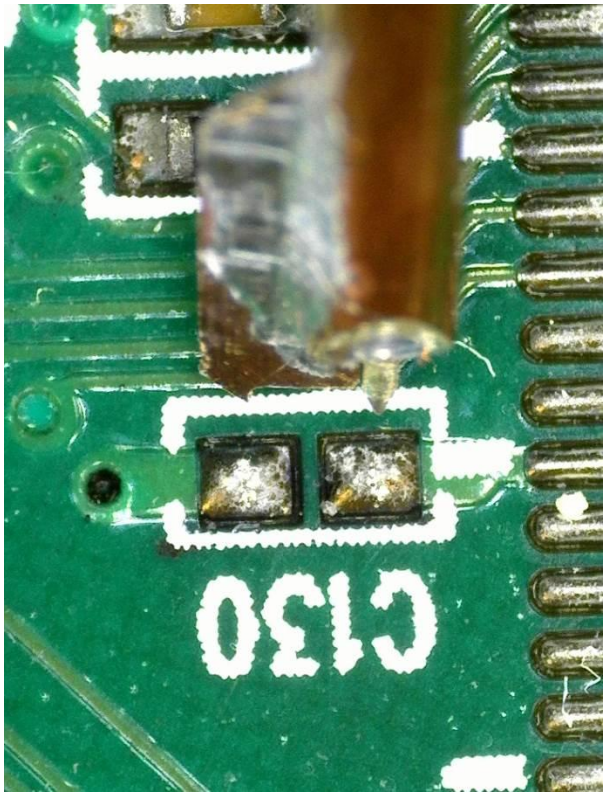


Right signal tip touches down first

Both Tips Touch Down Simultaneously



Both tips touch down simultaneously



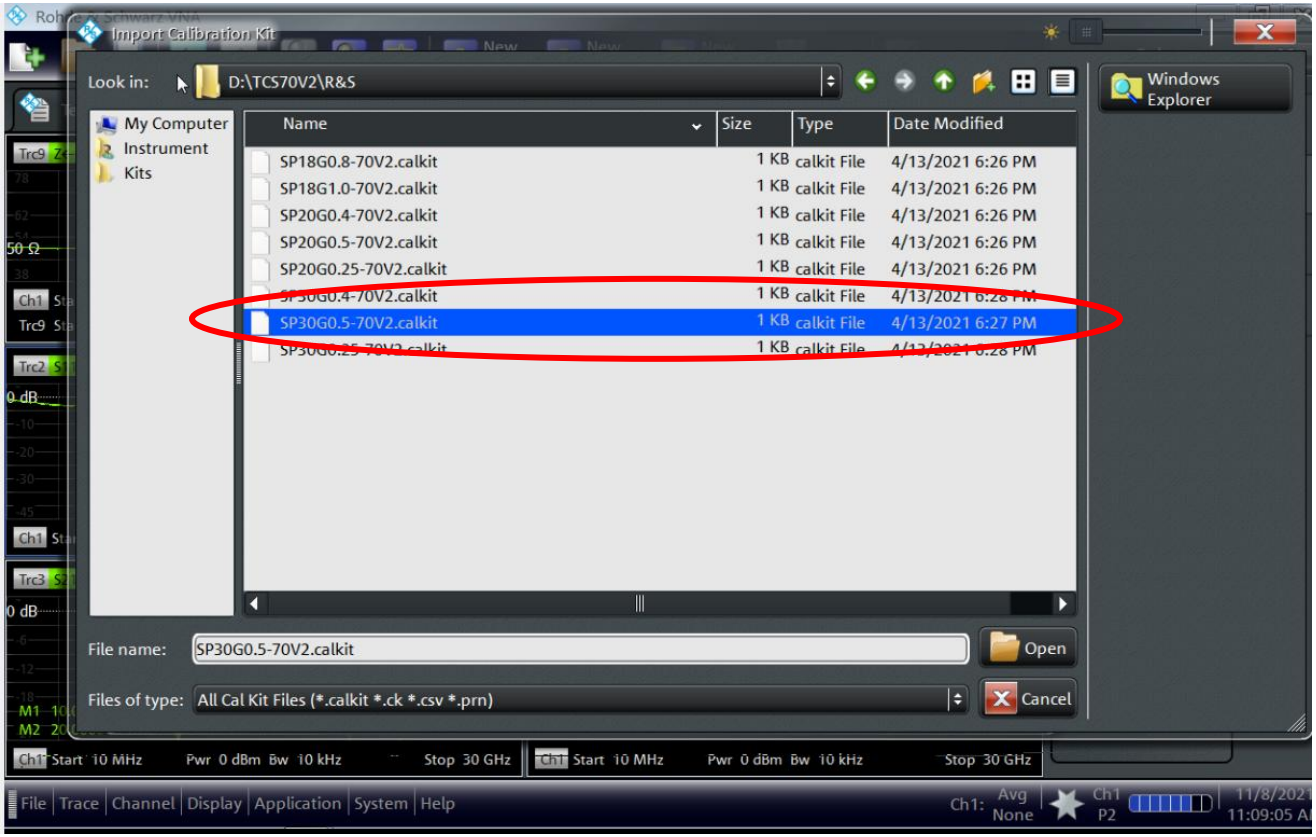
Clean up solder bumps with industrial alcohol after probing

Import TCS70xx.calkit file

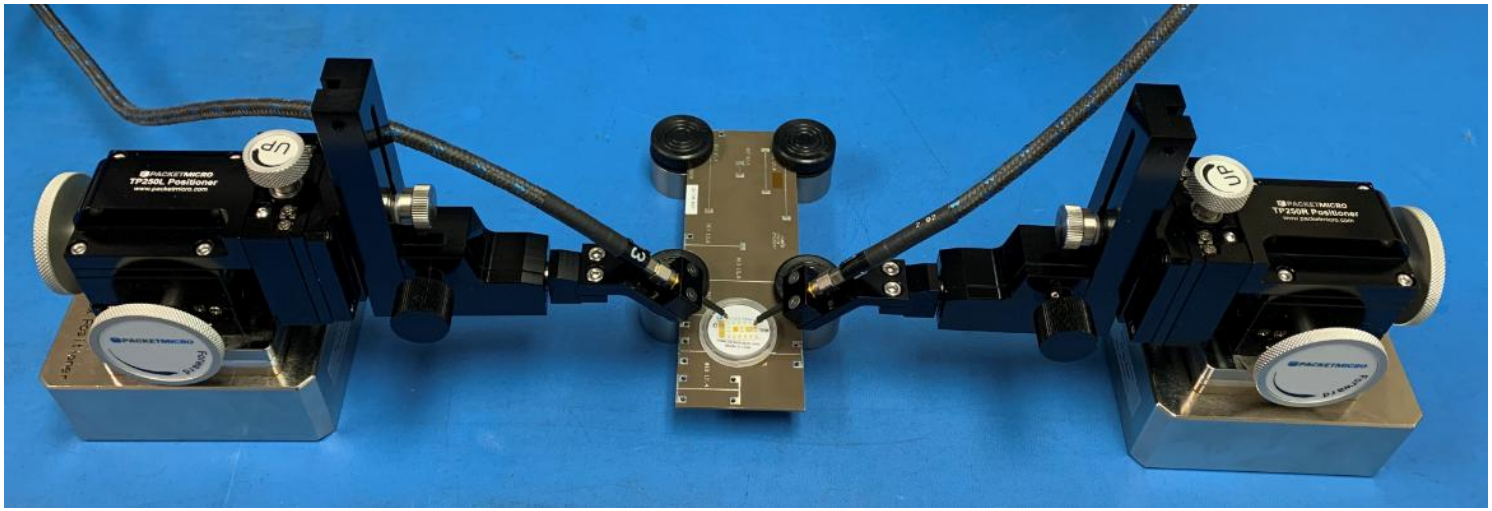
Press hard “Cal” button -> Cal Devices -> Cal Kits -> Import Cal Kit

Import SP30G0.5-TCS70V2.calkit file – cont.

- Import the correct .calkit file for your probe
- SP30G0.5-TCS70V2.calkit is for 30GHz, 0.5 mm S-Probe (SP-GR-301505)

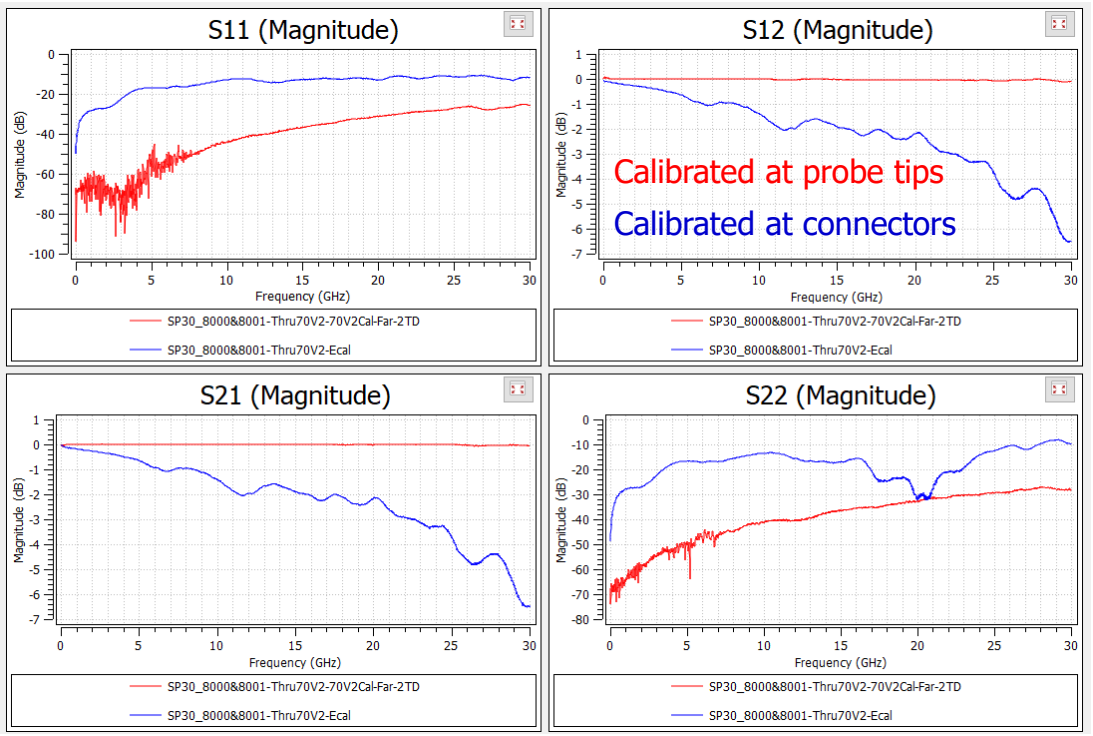


2-Port Probe-Tip Calibration Setup



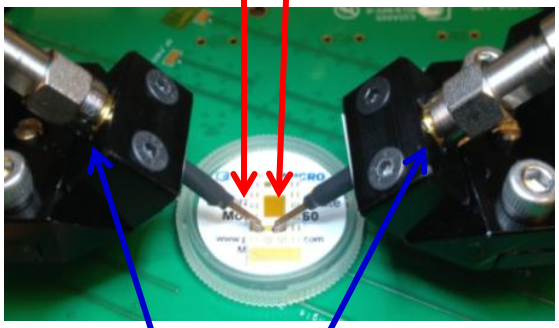
Precision TP250 Positioners with S-Probes

Thru Measurement with Probe-Tip Calibration



Thru Measurement

Calibrated at probe tips

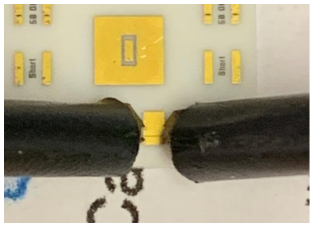


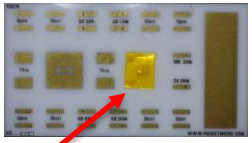
Calibrated at connectors

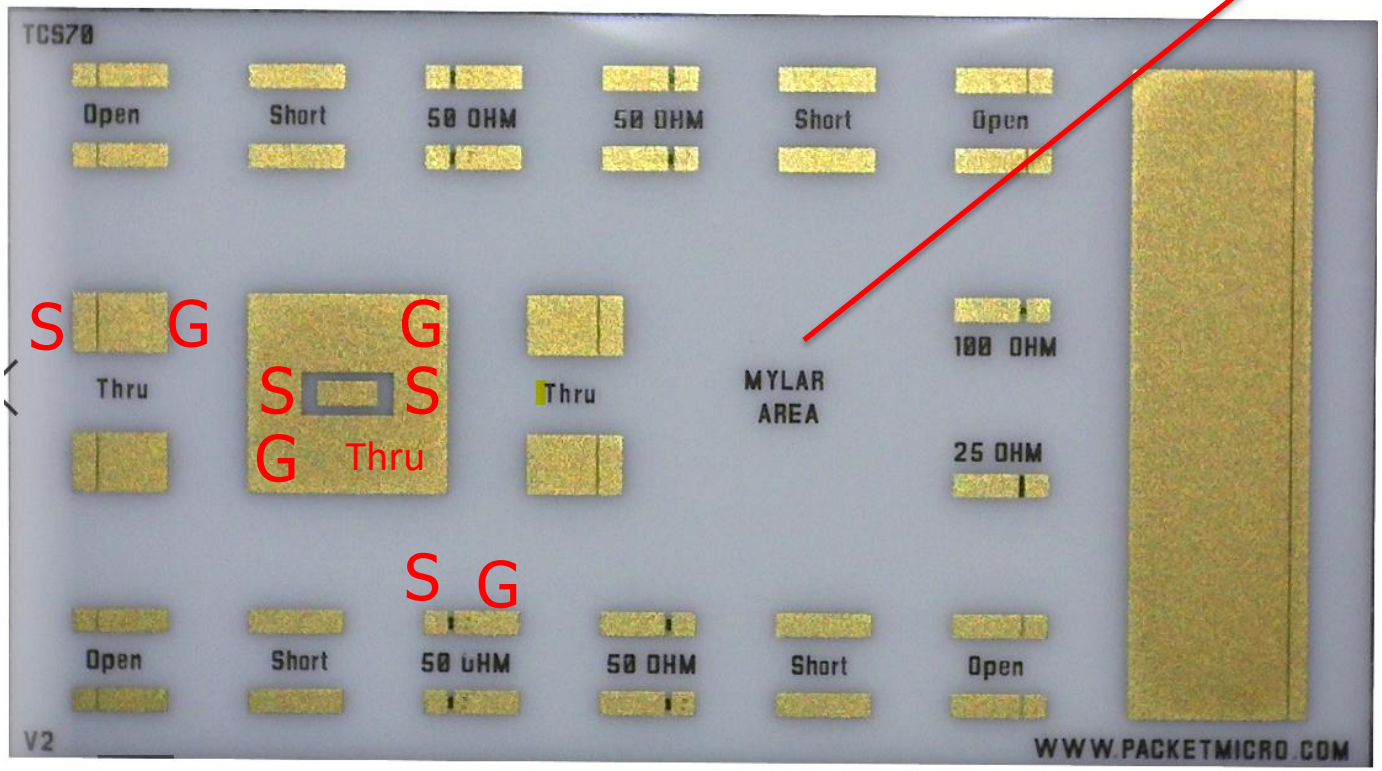
Probe-tip calibration (30 GHz 0.5 mm S-Probe)

2-Port Calibration with TCS70

- Reflection calibration (Short, Open, Load calibration for two ports)
- Transmission calibration (Thru calibration)

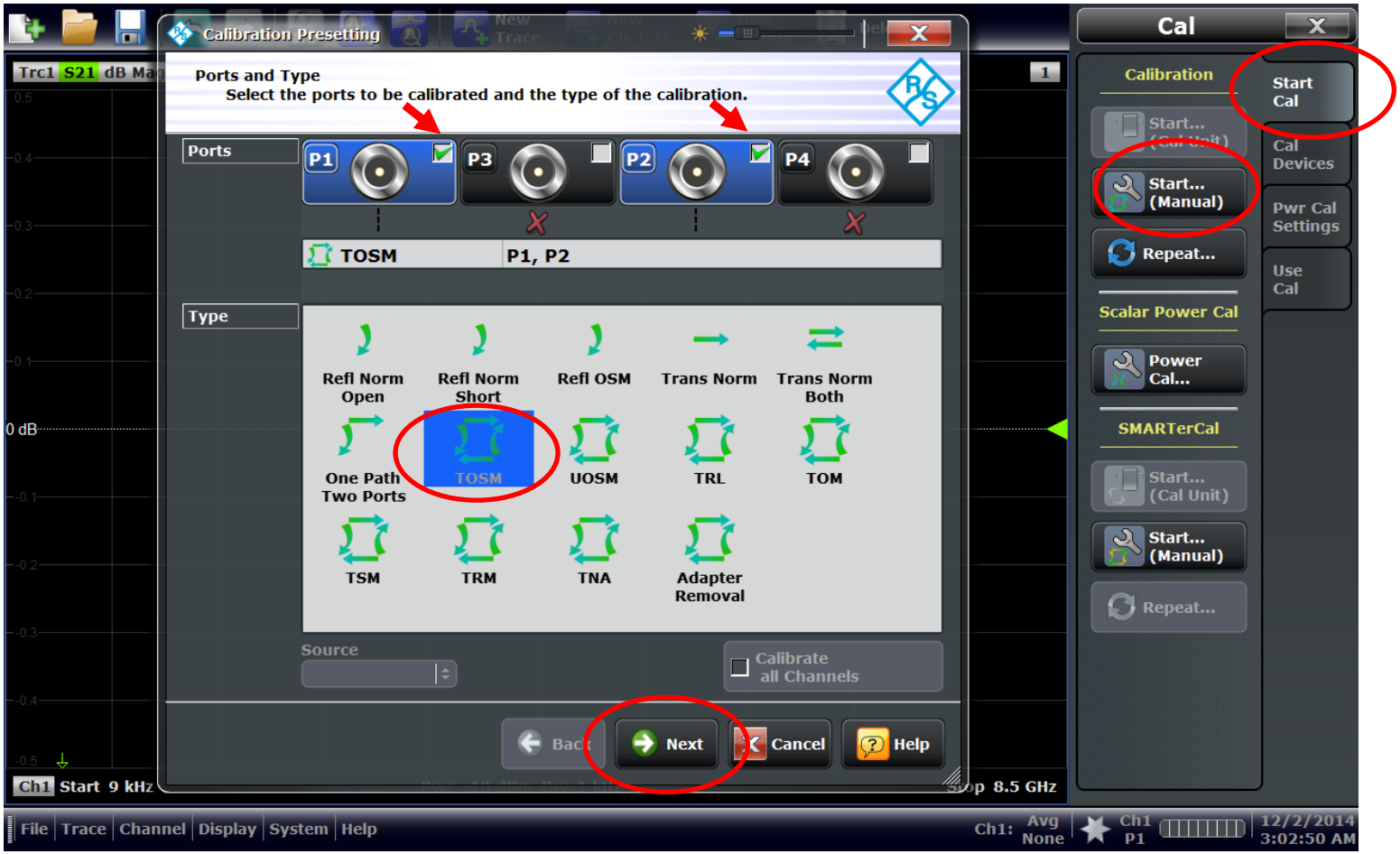






Start Manual Calibration

Press hard “Cal” button -> Start Cal -> Start (Manual)



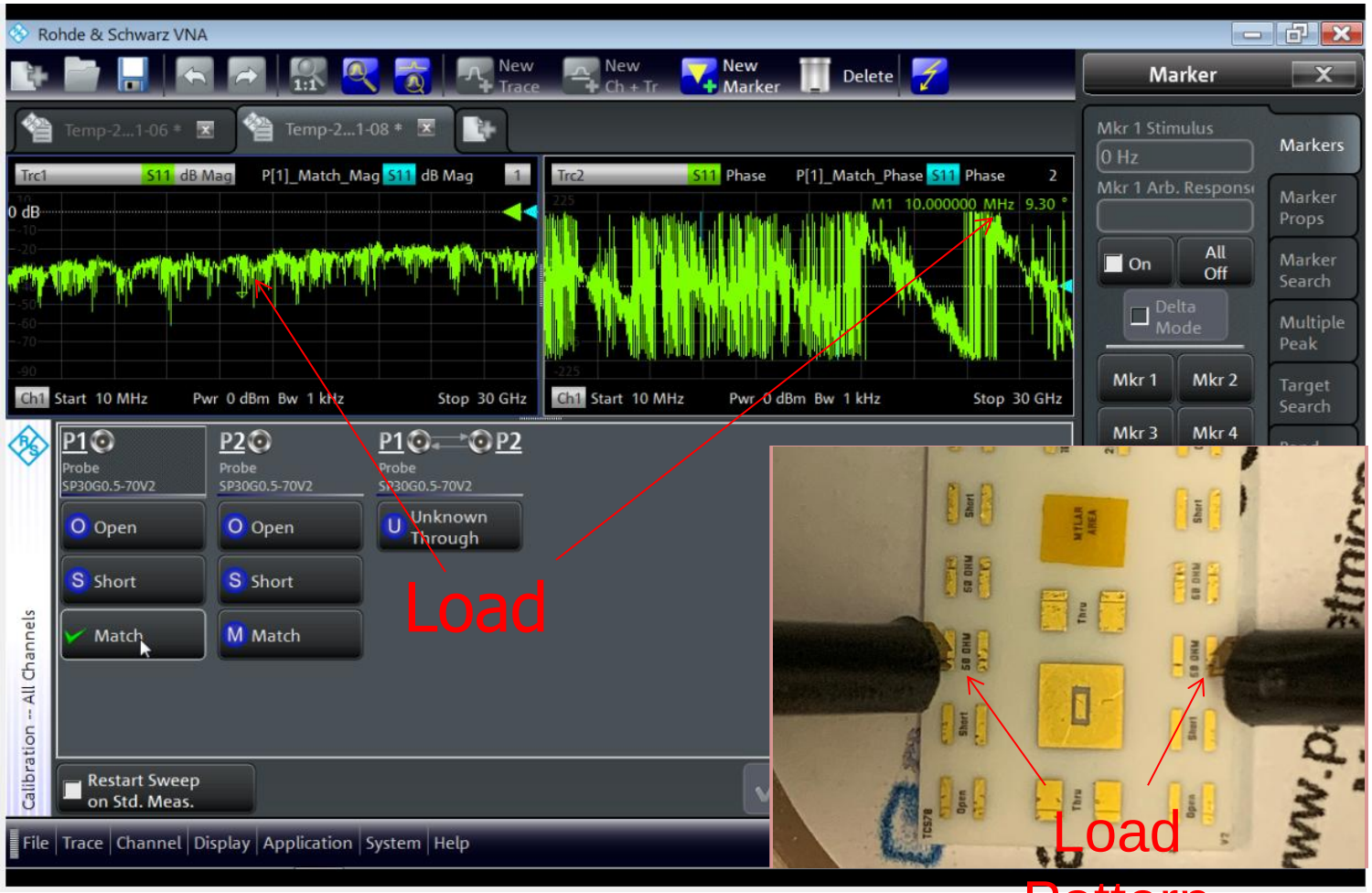
Select Cal Kit

- Select “Probe” connector -> “Cal Kit” ->Start

Set Marker to Lowest Frequency

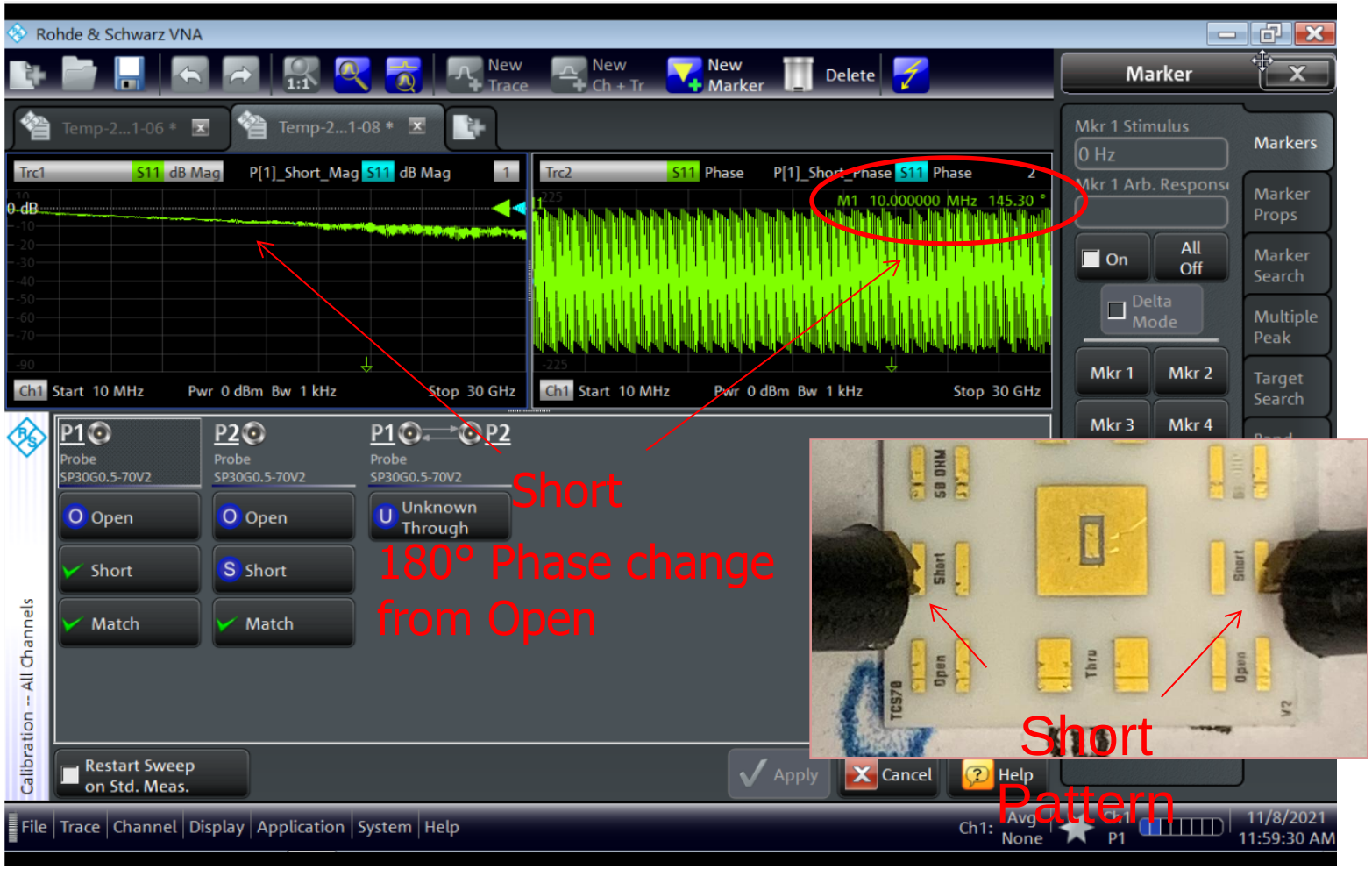
Use 180° change in phase to detect short.

Reflection Calibration - Load



Reflection Calibration - Short

- Perform Short first to verify probe planarization



Reflection Calibration - Open

Complete Reflection OSM Cal

Correct Thru Calibration

Transmission Calibration - Thru

- At least one probe does not touch down.
- Need to redo the Thru measurement

Completion of SOLT Calibration

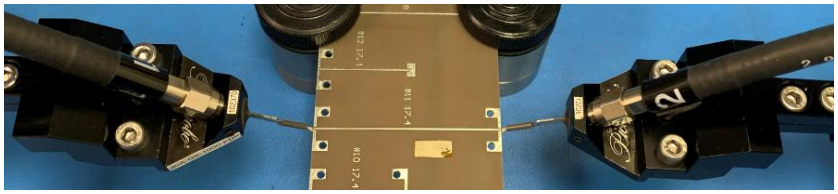
S11/S22 Measurements of a 50Ω Standard

Test Trace: 2” (5.08 mm) Microstrip

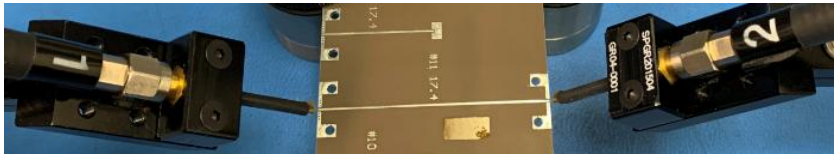
- **Compare measurements between 2.92 mm connectors and probes with probe-tip SOLT calibration**

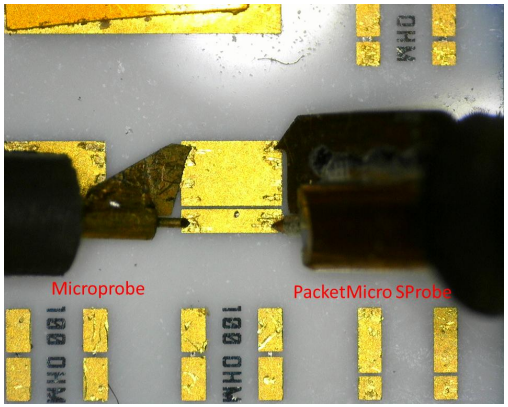
40 GHz 2.92 mm connector

40 GHz Microprobe

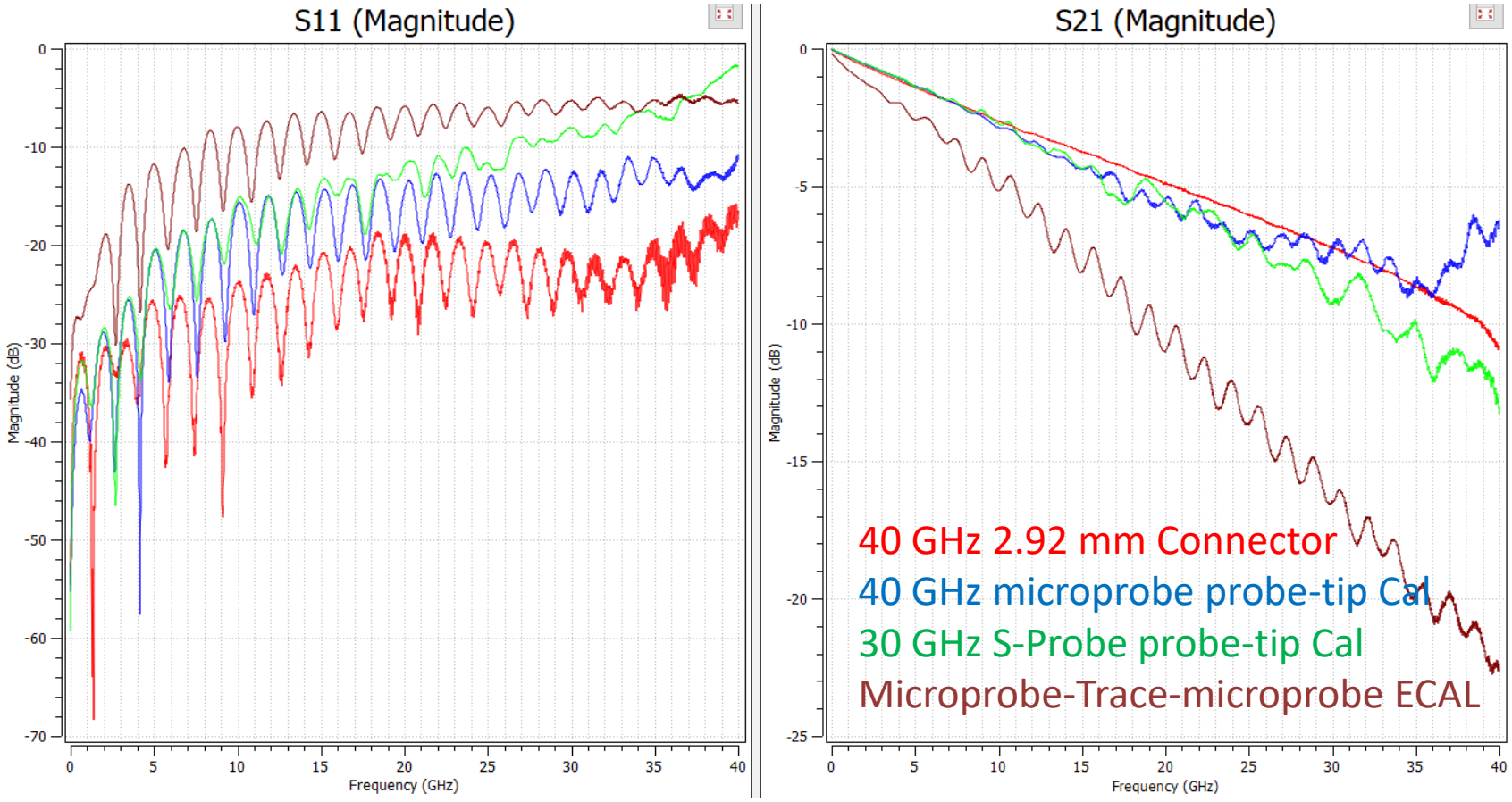


30 GHz S-Probe

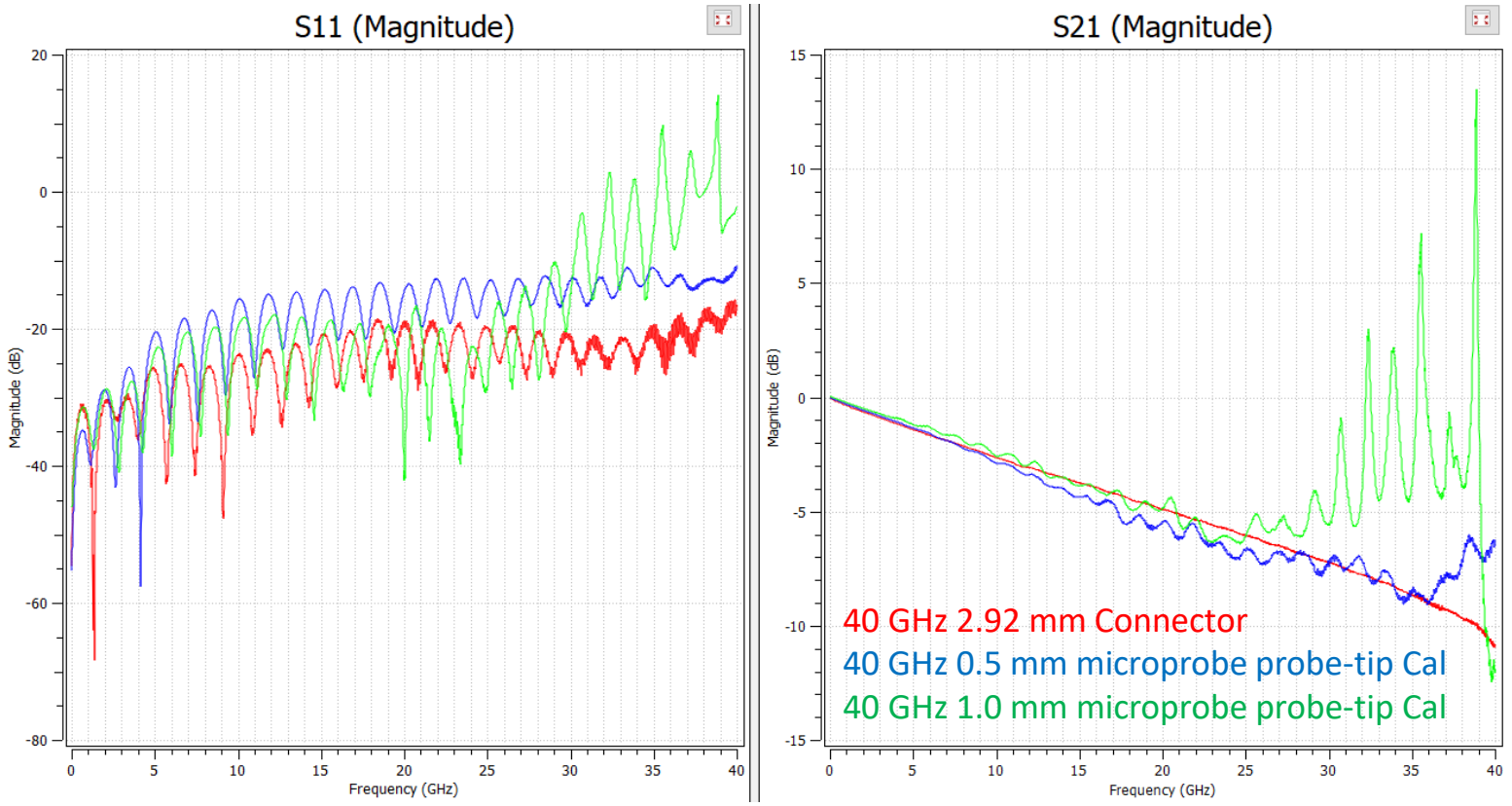




Connector vs. Probes

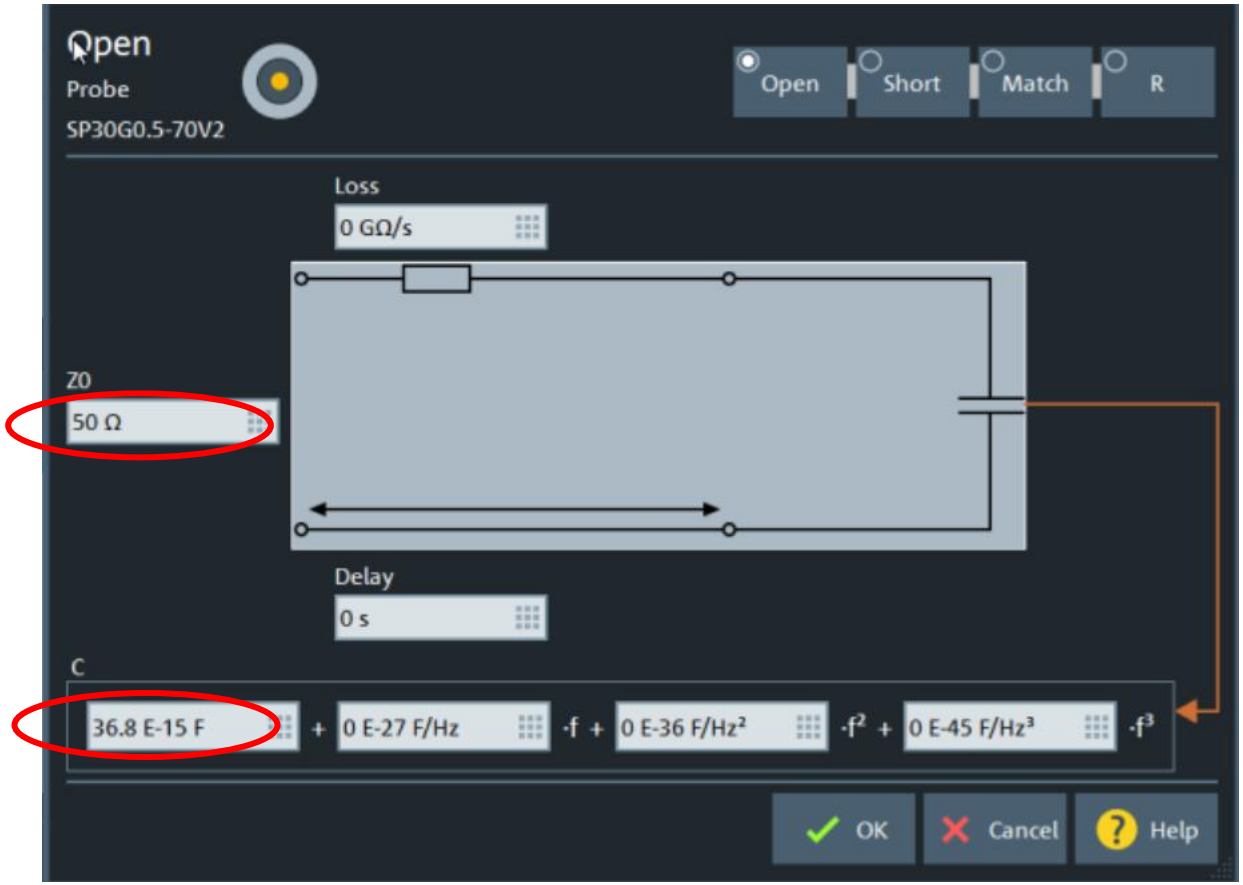


Limitation of Probe-Tip SOLT CAL



Typical probe-tip SOLT calibration for GS probes is accurate up to ~50% of probe bandwidth because higher order coefficients cannot be defined due to probe contact.

Cal Kit Standard



Typically, only the coefficient of f^0 is used for Open and Short standards for probes

Manual Entry of TCS70 Coefficients

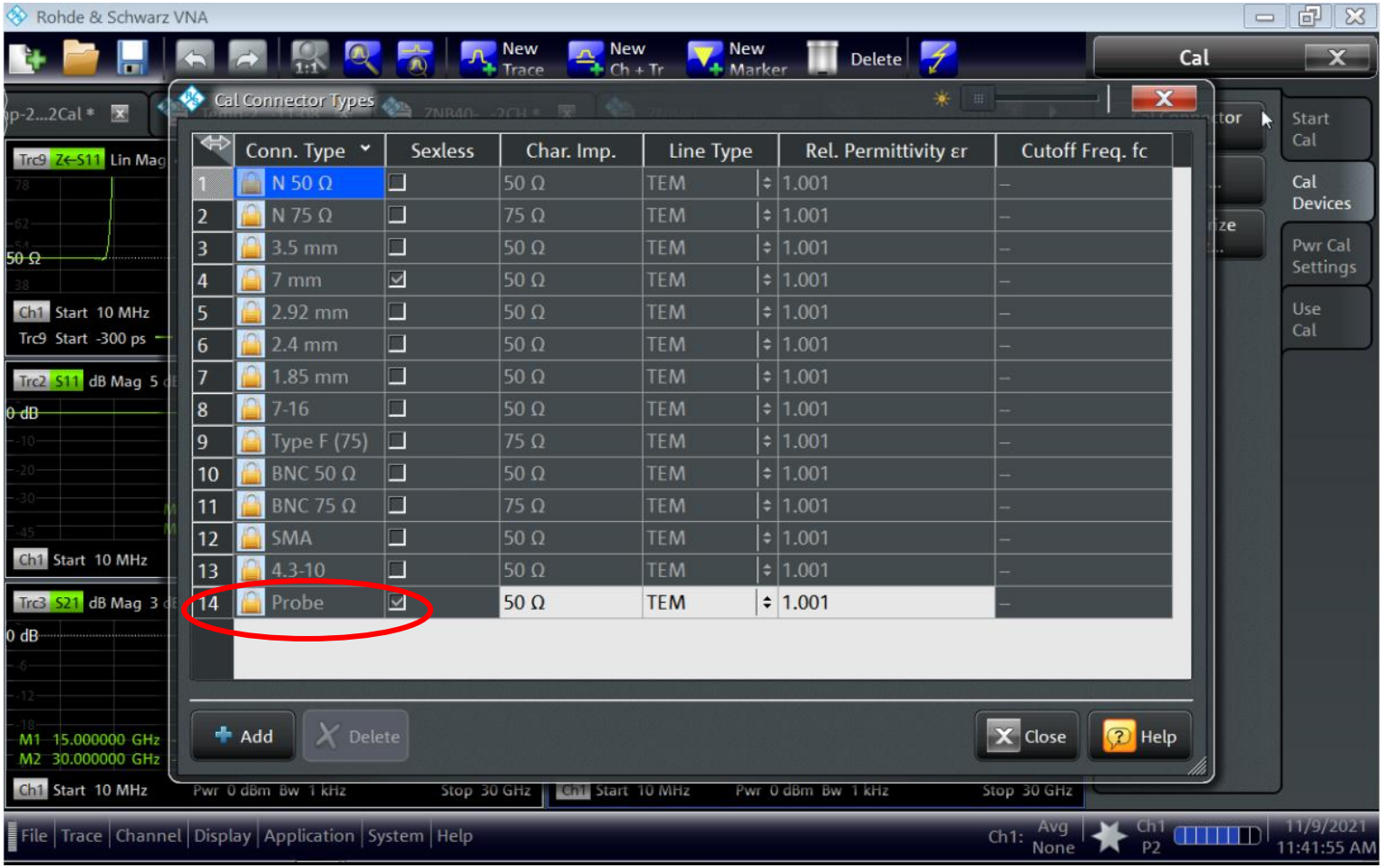
Press hard "Cal" button -> Cal Devices -> Cal Connector Types

Need to add connector type before adding the Cal Kit!

Select Connector Type

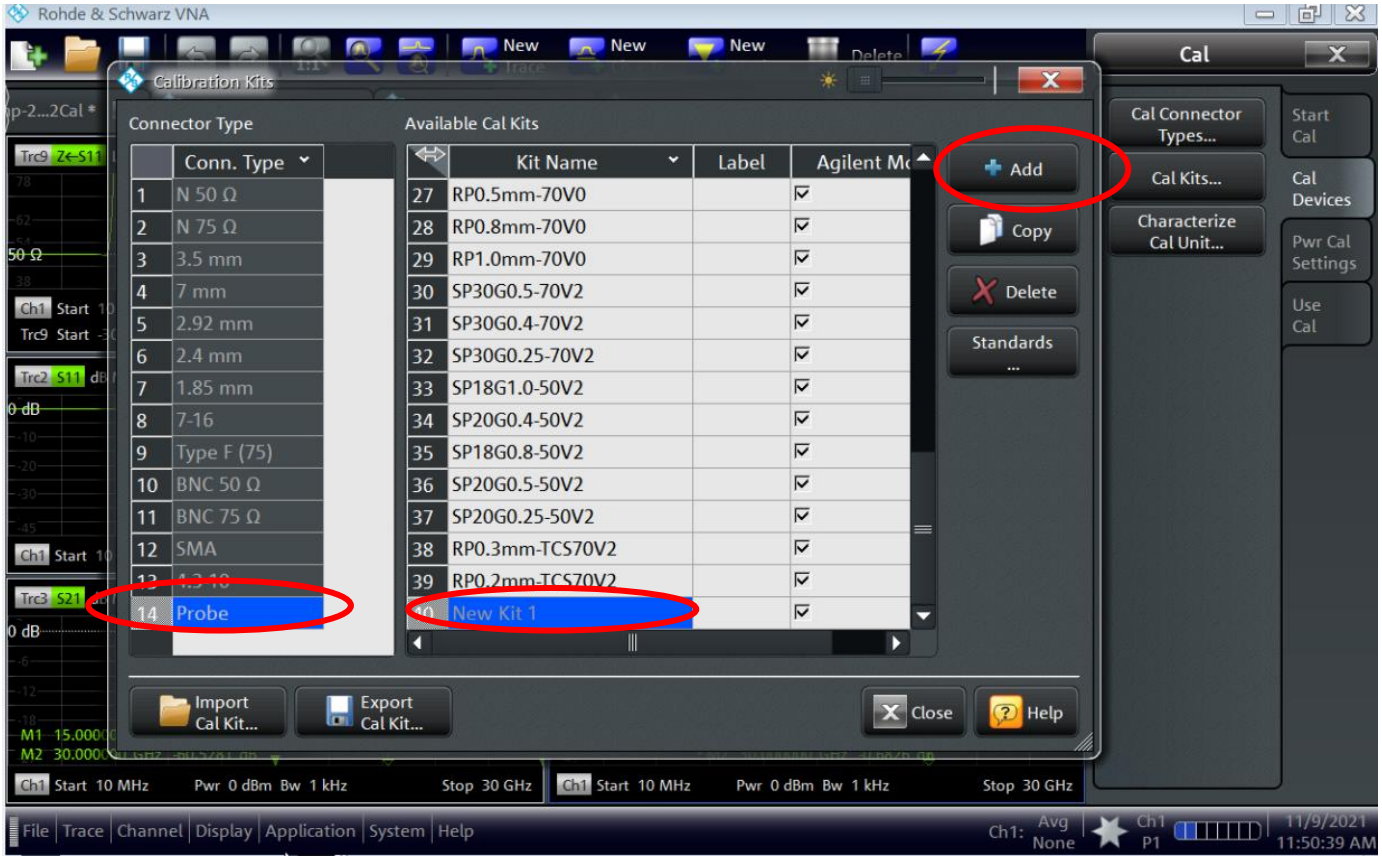
Select "Sexless and 50Ω" for connector type and rename it to "Probe"

Probe Connector Type



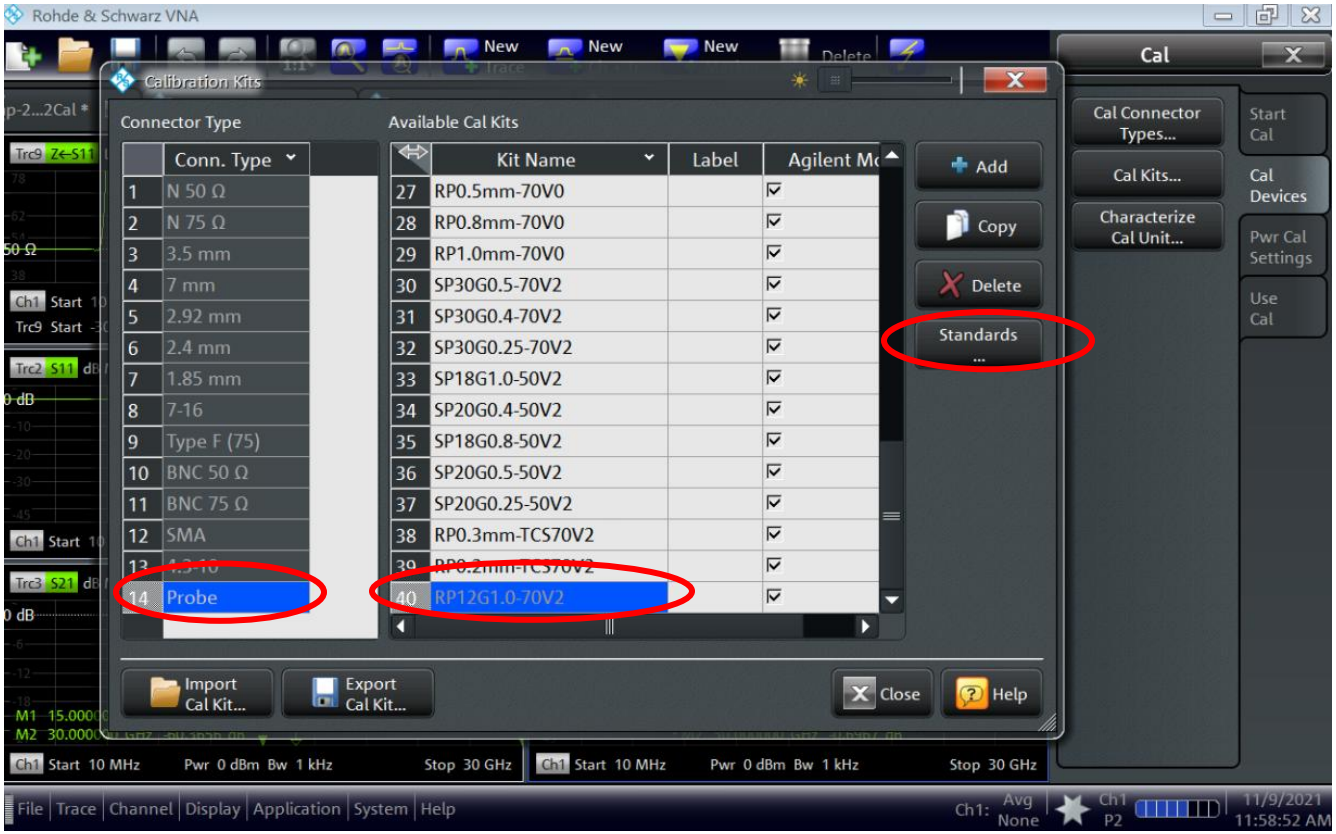
Add Cal Kit

Press hard “Cal” button -> Cal Devices -> Cal Kits
Click on “Probe” -> Add -> Rename “New Kit 1” to “RP12G1.0-70V2



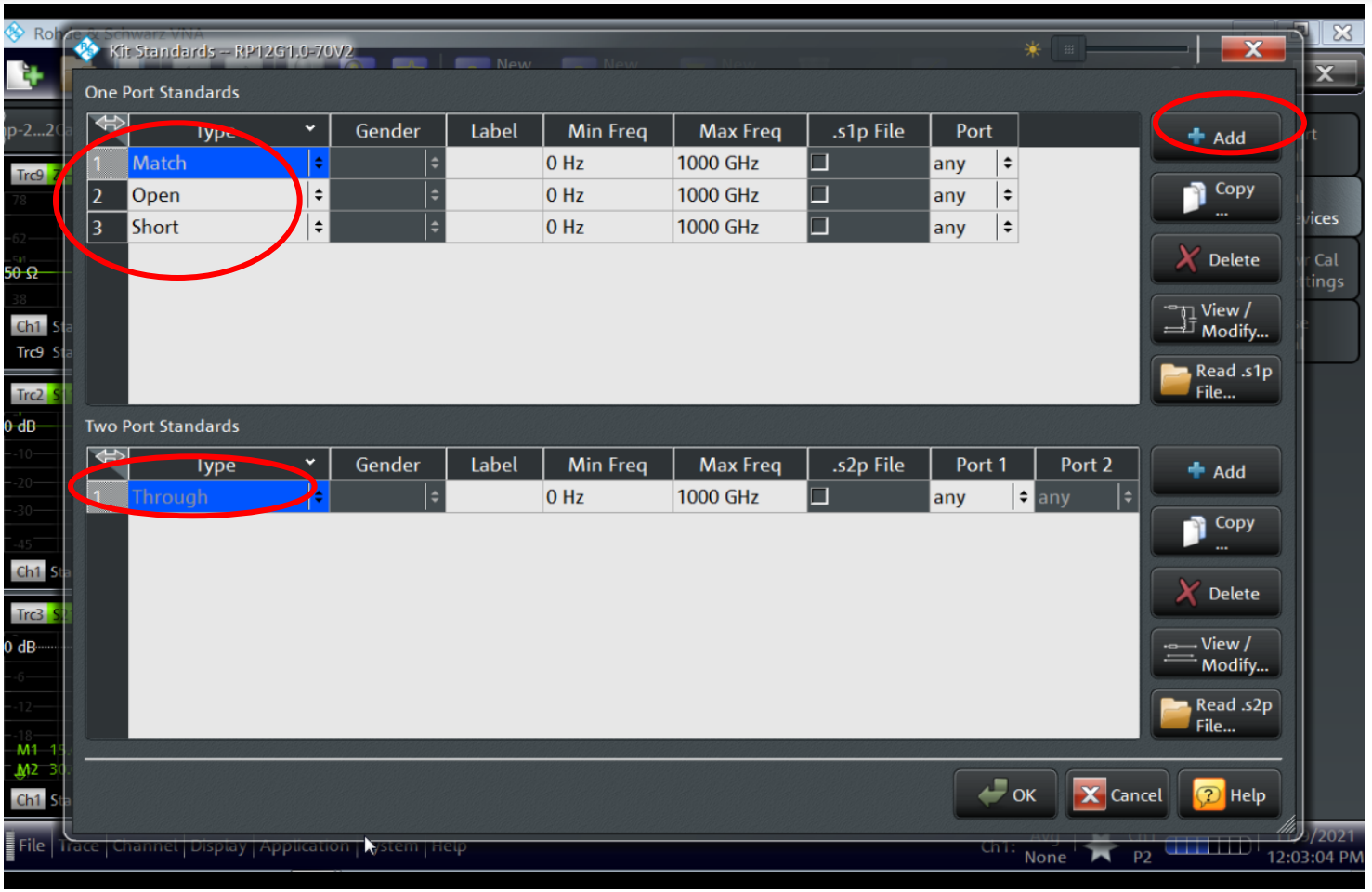
View or Modify Cal Kit Standards

Press hard "Cal" button -> Cal Devices -> Cal Kits
Click on "Probe" -> RP12G1.0-70V2 -> Standard



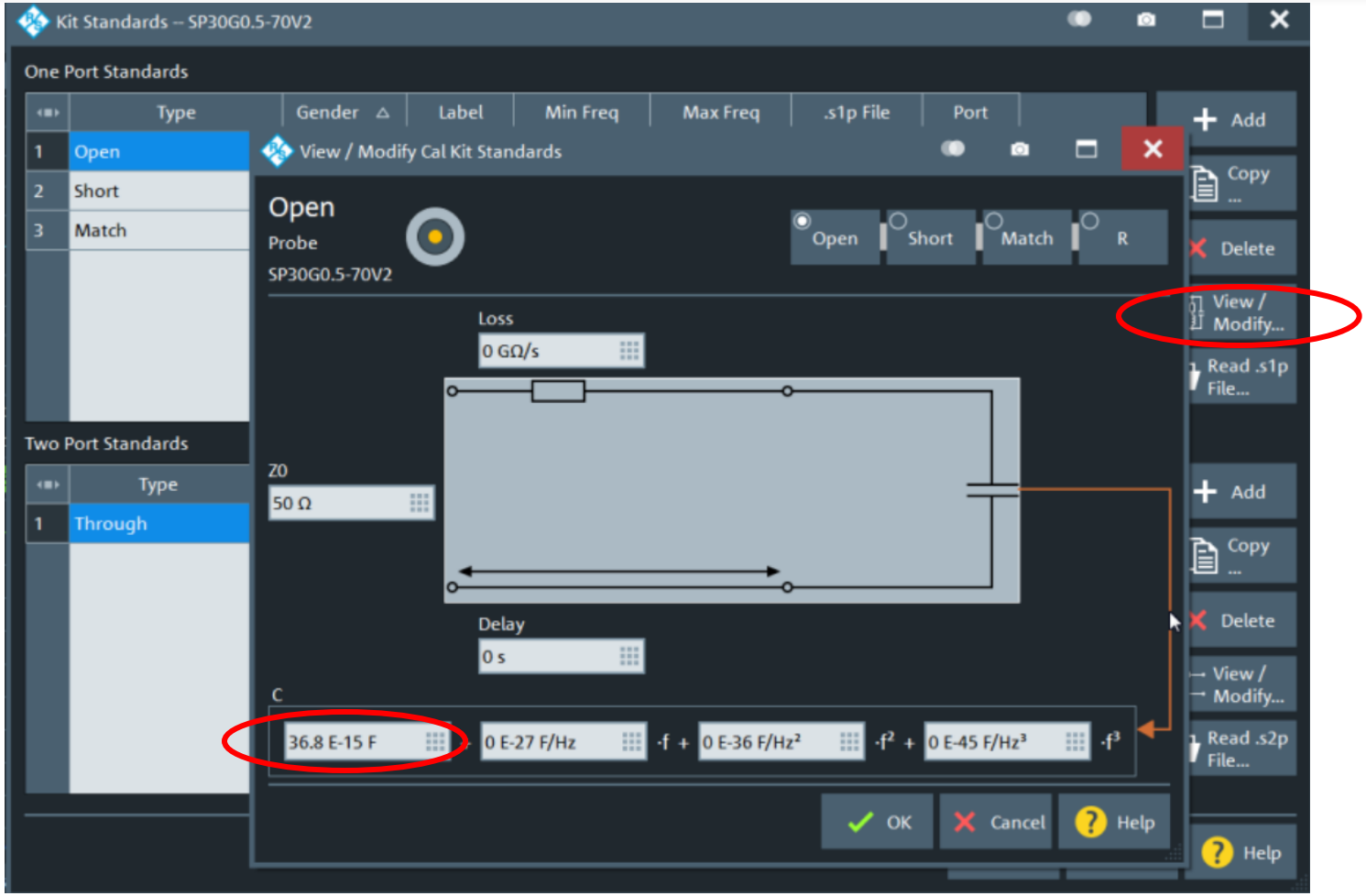
Define or modify Cal Kit Standards

Add Cal Kit Standards



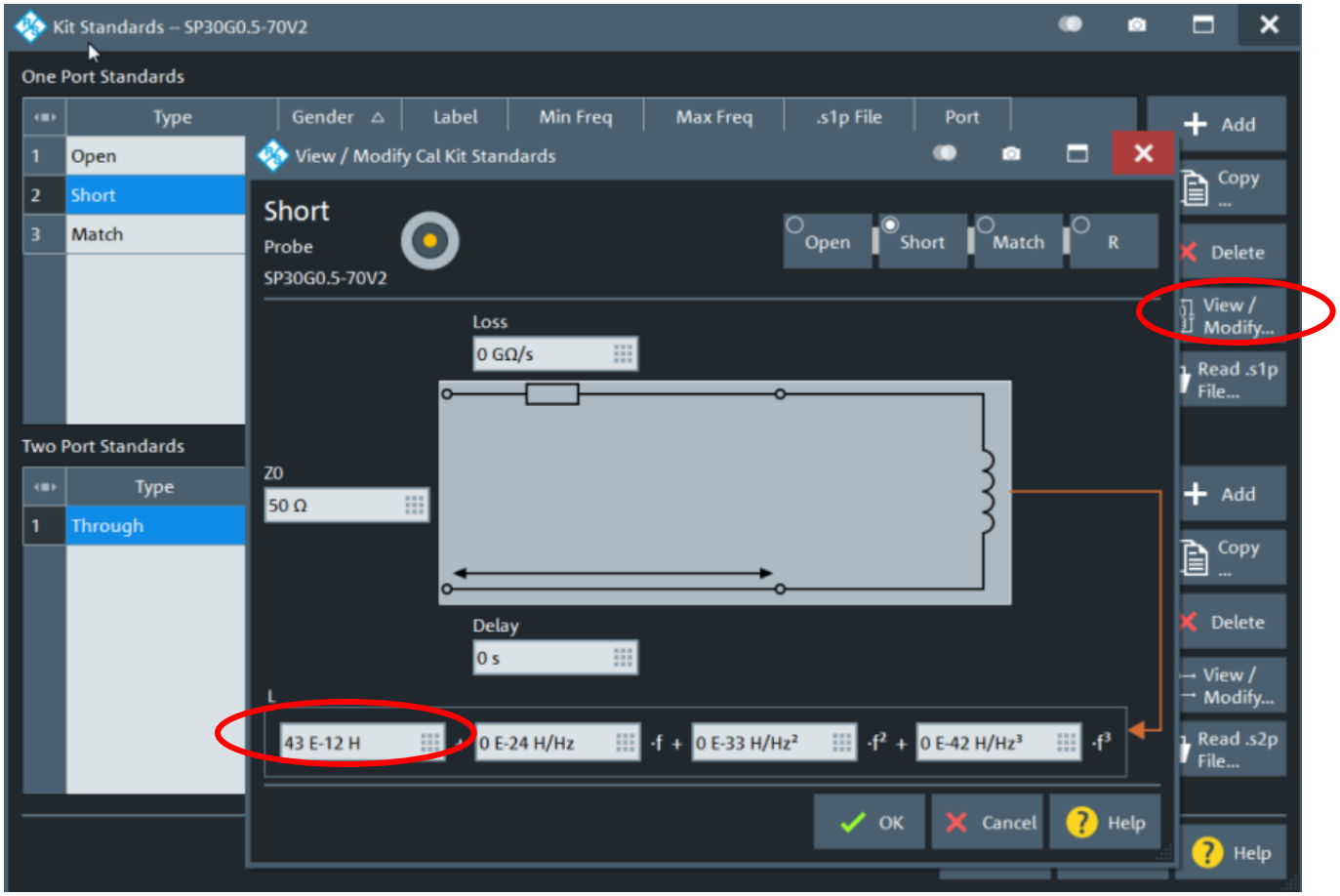
Add Open, Short, Match and Through standards

Enter Open Coefficient



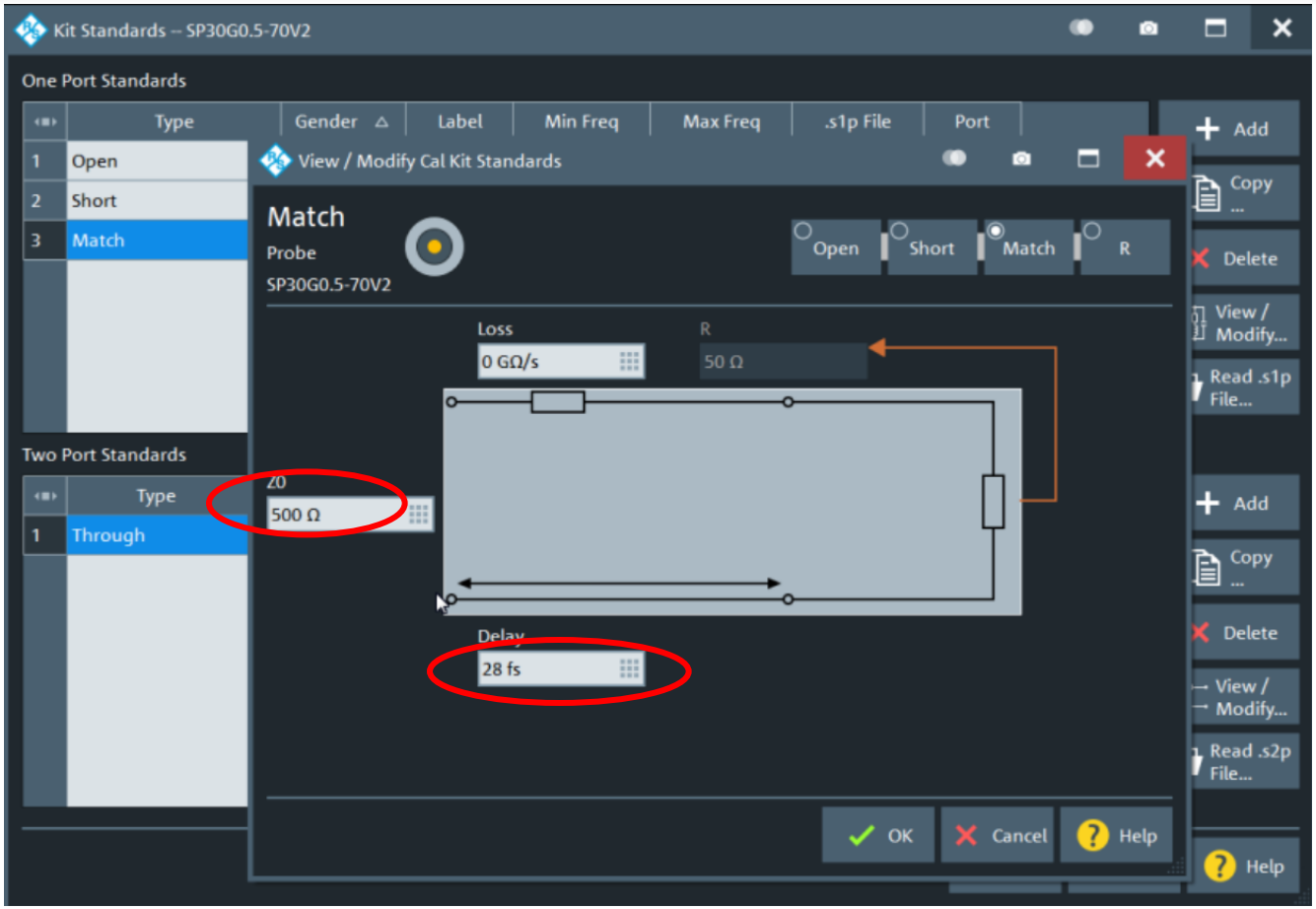
Enter coefficient for Open standard

Enter Short Coefficient



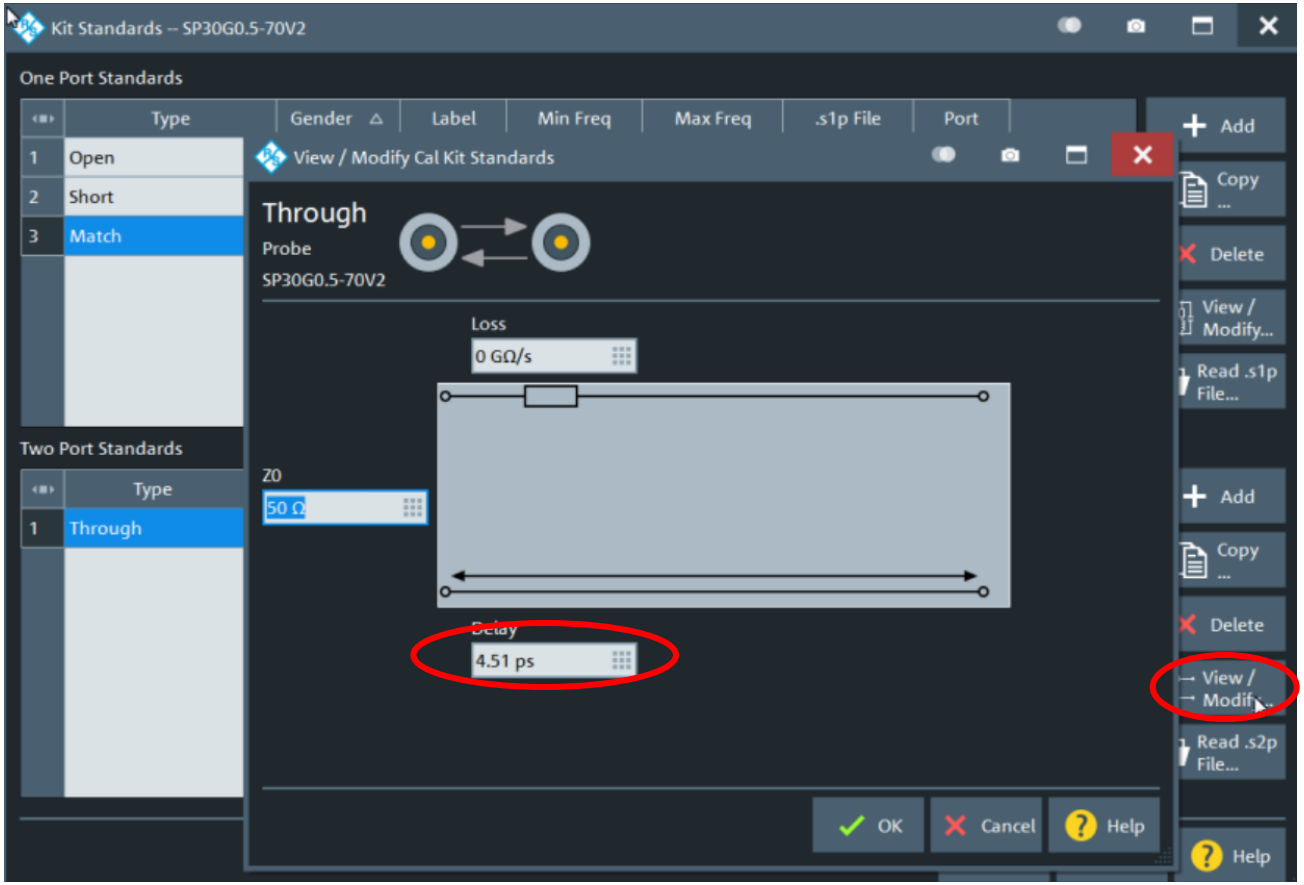
Enter coefficient for Short standard

Enter Match (Load) Coefficient



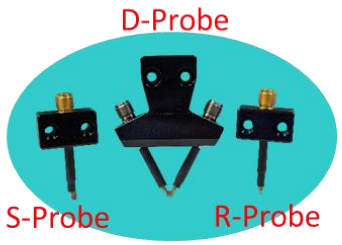
Enter coefficient for Match (Load) standard

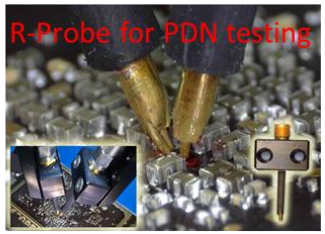
Enter Through Coefficient

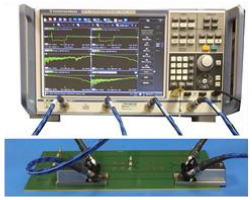


Enter coefficient for Through standard

PacketMicro Product Offering






Delta-L 4.0 Solution

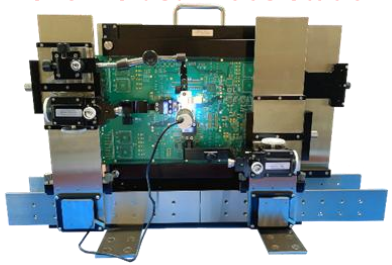

TCS70
Cal Substrate

Precision Positioners


TP250


TP150

VPS10 2-Sided Probe Station



Flex Positioners

F80

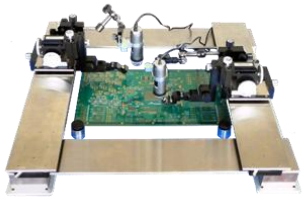

FP40

FP160MS

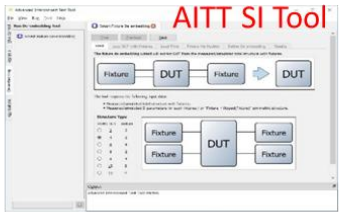

FP160

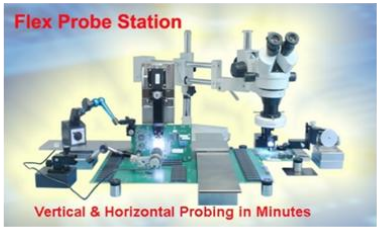
USB Type-C Fixtures

HPS24 Probe Station



AITT SI Tool





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- CSS AITT Signal-Integrity Tool
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