

SILICON LABORATORIES INC
Form 10-K
February 01, 2013

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**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark One)

**ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 29, 2012

or

**TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

**For the transition period from _____ to _____
Commission file number: 000-29823**

SILICON LABORATORIES INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

74-2793174
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

400 West Cesar Chavez, Austin, Texas
(Address of principal executive offices)

78701
(Zip Code)

(512) 416-8500

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of exchange on which registered
Common Stock, \$0.0001 par value	The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: **None**

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

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Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Sections 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of the registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the voting and non-voting common equity held by non-affiliates computed by reference to the price at which the common equity was last sold as of the last business day of the registrant's most recently completed second fiscal quarter (June 29, 2012) was \$1,509,894,751 (assuming, for this purpose, that only directors and officers are deemed affiliates).

There were 41,971,094 shares of the registrant's common stock issued and outstanding as of January 22, 2013.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the Proxy Statement for the registrant's 2012 Annual Meeting of Stockholders are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Form 10-K.

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Cautionary Statement

Except for the historical financial information contained herein, the matters discussed in this report on Form 10-K (as well as documents incorporated herein by reference) may be considered "forward-looking" statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Such forward-looking statements include declarations regarding the intent, belief or current expectations of Silicon Laboratories Inc. and its management and may be signified by the words "believe," "estimate," "expect," "intend," "anticipate," "plan," "project," "will" or similar language. You are cautioned that any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve a number of risks and uncertainties. Actual results could differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include those discussed under "Risk Factors" and elsewhere in this report. Silicon Laboratories disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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Part I

Item 1. Business

General

Silicon Laboratories Inc. designs and develops proprietary, analog-intensive, mixed-signal integrated circuits (ICs) for a broad range of applications. Mixed-signal ICs are electronic components that convert real-world analog signals, such as sound and radio waves, into digital signals that electronic products can process. Therefore, mixed-signal ICs are critical components in products addressing a variety of markets, including communications, consumer, industrial and automotive.

Our world-class, mixed-signal ICs leverage standard complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS), a low cost, widely available process technology. This enables smaller, more cost effective solutions. Our expertise in analog-intensive, mixed-signal IC design in CMOS allows us to develop new and innovative products that are highly integrated, simplifying our customers' designs and improving their time-to-market.

Industry Background

The pervasiveness of connectivity and the explosion in mobile computing is driving semiconductor consumption. Intelligence is being added to electronic systems to enable remote monitoring, power efficiency and an improved user experience. This in turn is increasing the demand for bandwidth, requiring more infrastructure to support higher performance networks. The nearly ubiquitous availability of Internet access, the increasing intelligence of electronic devices and mobility are enabling what is called the Internet of Things, a term that describes the exponential increase in IP-enabled devices connected to the Internet.

These trends are requiring more and more interaction between the analog world we live in and the digital world of computing, and therefore require analog-intensive, mixed-signal circuits. Traditional mixed-signal designs relied upon solutions built with numerous, complex discrete analog and digital components. While these traditional designs provide the required functionality, they are often inefficient and inadequate for use in markets where size, cost, power consumption and performance are increasingly important product differentiators. In order to improve their competitive position, electronics manufacturers need to reduce the cost and complexity of their systems and enable new features or functionality to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Simultaneously, these manufacturers face accelerating time-to-market demands and must be able to rapidly adapt to evolving industry standards and new technologies. Because analog-intensive, mixed-signal IC design expertise is difficult to find, these manufacturers increasingly are turning to third parties, like us, to provide advanced mixed-signal solutions. Mixed-signal design requires specific expertise and relies on creative, experienced engineers to deliver solutions that optimize speed, power and performance, despite the noisy digital environment, and within the constraints of standard manufacturing processes. The development of this design expertise typically requires years of practical analog design experience under the guidance of a senior engineer, and engineers with the required level of skill and expertise are in short supply.

Many IC providers lack sufficient analog expertise to develop compelling mixed-signal ICs. As a result, manufacturers of electronic devices value IC providers that can supply them with mixed-signal solutions with greater functionality, smaller size and lower power requirements at a reduced cost and shorter time-to-market.

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Products

We provide analog-intensive, mixed-signal solutions for use in a variety of electronic products in a broad range of applications including portable devices, AM/FM radios and other consumer electronics, networking equipment, test and measurement equipment, industrial monitoring and control, and customer premises equipment. Our products integrate complex mixed-signal functions that are frequently performed by numerous discrete components in competing products into a single chip or chipset. By doing so, we are able to create products that, when compared to many competing products:

Require less board space;

Reduce the use of external components lowering the system cost and simplifying design;

Offer superior performance improving our customers' end products;

Provide increased reliability and manufacturability, improving customer yields; and/or

Reduce system power requirements enabling smaller form factors and/or longer battery life.

We group our products into the following categories:

Broad-based products, which include our microcontrollers, timing products (clocks and oscillators), power and isolation devices, and touch controllers;

Broadcast products, which include our broadcast audio and video products;

Access products, which include our Voice over IP (VoIP) products, embedded modems and our Power over Ethernet (PoE) devices; and

Mature products, which include certain devices that are at the end of their respective life cycles and therefore receive minimal or no continued research and development investment.

The following table summarizes the diverse product areas and applications for the various ICs that we have introduced to customers:

Product Areas and Description

Applications

Broad-based Products

Microcontrollers

We offer a family of products ideal for embedded systems that include, 8-bit mixed-signal microcontrollers, 32-bit wireless MCUs acquired in 2012, ultra low power 32-bit MCUs introduced in 2012 as well as peripheral devices such as our EZRadio® family of fully integrated, low power transceivers. These products generally integrate intelligent data capture, high performance processing, and communication interfaces in a single system on a chip. This family of products addresses a variety of end-markets, including the automotive, communications, consumer, industrial, medical and power management markets.

Industrial automation and control

Home automation

Automotive sensors and controls

Medical instrumentation

Electronic test and measurement equipment

Consumer electronics

Computer peripherals

White goods

Smart metering

Remote controls

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Product Areas and Description

Applications

Timing Devices

Leveraging our patented DSPLL® and MultiSynth technologies to offer frequency agile, extremely low jitter clock and oscillator products, our devices replace traditional solutions implemented using expensive, bulky modules, numerous crystal sources, complicated discrete circuitry requiring numerous components, or hybrid IC/discrete solutions that offer limited functionality.

Networking equipment

Telecommunications

Wireless base stations

Test and measurement equipment

HDTV video

High-speed data acquisition

SONET/SDH line cards

Storage area networks

Digital Isolators and Related Products

Our digital isolators and related products leverage patented isolation techniques to enable, for example, multiple channels of isolation on a single device, simplifying design and reducing system cost. These products are still in the early stages of customer adoption.

Switch mode power supplies

Isolated analog data acquisition

Industrial networking

Motor control

Isolated DC-DC supplies

Electronic ballasts for lighting

Sensors

Our sensor products include touch controllers, proximity sensors, ambient light sensors and RH/humidity sensors. These devices leverage our mixed-signal capability to provide high accuracy, quicker response time and lower power consumption than competing parts. These products are in the early stages of customer adoption.

Smart home applications

Industrial controls

Toys and consumer electronics

Broadcast Products

Broadcast Radio Receivers and Transmitters

Our AM and FM receivers deliver the entire tuner from antenna input to audio output in a single chip. The broadcast audio products are based on an innovative digital architecture that enables significant improvements in performance, which translates to a better consumer experience, while reducing system cost and board space for our customers.

Monitors and lavatory controls

Stand-alone AM/FM radios

Portable audio devices

MP3/digital media players

Navigation/GPS devices

Satellite radios

Home stereos

Automotive infotainment systems

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Product Areas and Description

Video Tuners and Demodulators

Our complete, globally-compliant hybrid TV tuners with analog TV demodulator in a single CMOS IC leverage our proven digital low-IF architecture and exceed the performance of traditional discrete TV tuners, enabling TV makers to deliver improved picture quality and better reception for both analog and digital broadcasts. Our small, low power and high performance digital video demodulators support DVB-T/T2, DVB-S/S2, and/or DVB-C in a single chip and are ideal for equipment receiving digital terrestrial, satellite and/or cable services.

Applications

Integrated digital televisions (iDTV)

Free-to-Air (FtA) or pay-TV set-top box receivers

PC-TV applications

DVD/HDD personal video recorders

Access Products

ProSLIC® Subscriber Line Interface Circuits for VoIP

Our ProSLIC provides the analog subscriber line interface on the source end of the telephone which generates dial tone, busy tone, caller ID and ring signal. Our ProSLIC product family has offerings for short-haul applications suitable for the customer premises as well as long-haul applications suitable for the traditional telephone company central office.

Voice over broadband modems and terminal adapters

VoIP residential gateways

Wireless local loop remote access systems

PBXs

Wired long loop and central office systems

ISModem® Embedded Modems

The ISModem embedded modems leverage innovative silicon direct access arrangement (DAA) technology and a digital signal processor to deliver a globally compliant, very small analog modem for embedded applications.

Set-top and digital cable boxes

Fax machines and multi-function printers

Industrial monitoring

Postage meters

Security systems

Remote medical monitoring

Point of sale (POS) terminals

Power over Ethernet

Our Power over Ethernet (PoE) power source equipment and powered device ICs offer highly differentiated solutions with a reduced total bill of materials (BOM) and improved performance and reliability. Our solutions also offer an integration level that enables functionality not available with competing solutions.

Networking routers and switches

Wireless access points (WAP)

VoIP phones

Radio frequency identification (RFID) tag readers

POS terminals

Security cameras

During fiscal 2012, 2011 and 2010, sales of our mixed-signal products accounted for substantially all of our revenue.

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Customers, Sales and Marketing

We market our products through our direct sales force and through a network of independent sales representatives and distributors. Direct and distributor customers buy on an individual purchase order basis, rather than pursuant to long-term agreements.

We consider our customer to be the end customer purchasing either directly from a distributor, a contract manufacturer or us. An end customer purchasing through a contract manufacturer typically instructs such contract manufacturer to obtain our products and incorporate such products with other components for sale by such contract manufacturer to the end customer. Although we actually sell the products to, and are paid by, the distributors and contract manufacturers, we refer to such end customer as our customer.

Two of our distributors, Edom Technology and Avnet, represented 22% and 11% of our revenues during fiscal 2012, respectively. No other distributor accounted for 10% or more of revenues for fiscal 2012.

During fiscal 2012, our ten largest end customers accounted for 43% of our revenues. We had one customer, Samsung, whose purchases across a variety of product areas represented 19% of our revenues during this period. Our major customers include Cisco, Huawei, LG Electronics, Pace, Panasonic, Sagem, Samsung, Technicolor, Varian Medical Systems and ZTE.

We maintain numerous sales offices in North America, Europe and Asia. Revenue is attributed to a geographic area based on the shipped-to location. The percentage of our revenues derived from outside of the United States was 88% in fiscal 2012. For further information regarding our revenues and long-lived assets by geographic area, see Note 18, *Segment Information*, to the Consolidated Financial Statements.

Our direct sales force is comprised of a number of sales professionals who possess varied levels of responsibility and experience, including directors, country managers, regional sales managers, district sales managers, strategic account managers, field sales engineers and sales representatives. We also utilize independent sales representatives and distributors to generate sales of our products. We have relationships with many independent sales representatives and distributors worldwide whom we have selected based on their understanding of the mixed-signal IC marketplace and their ability to provide effective field sales applications support for our products.

Our marketing efforts are targeted at both identified industry leaders and emerging market participants. Direct marketing activities are supplemented by a focused marketing communications effort that seeks to raise awareness of our company and products. Our public relations efforts are focused on leading trade and business publications. Our external website is used to deliver corporate and product information. We also pursue targeted advertising in key trade publications and we have a cooperative marketing program that allows our distributors and representatives to promote our products to their local markets in conjunction with their own advertising activities. Finally, we maintain a presence at strategic trade shows and industry events. These activities, in combination with direct sales activities, help drive demand for our products.

Due to the complex and innovative nature of our ICs, we employ experienced applications engineers who work closely with customers to support the design-win process, and can significantly accelerate the customer's time to market. A design-win occurs when a customer has designed our ICs into its product architecture and ordered product from us. A considerable amount of effort to assist the customer in incorporating our ICs into its products is typically required prior to any sale. In many cases, our innovative ICs require significantly different implementations than existing approaches and, therefore, successful implementations may require extensive communication with potential customers. The amount of time required to achieve a design-win can vary substantially depending on a customer's development cycle, which can be relatively short (such as three months) or very long (such as two years) based on a wide variety of

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customer factors. Not all design wins ultimately result in revenue. However, once a completed design architecture has been implemented and produced in high volumes, our customers are reluctant to significantly alter their designs due to this extensive design-win process. We believe this process, coupled with our intellectual property protection, promotes relatively longer product life cycles for our ICs and high barriers to entry for competitive products, even if such competing products are offered at lower prices. Our close collaboration with our customers provides us with knowledge of derivative product ideas or completely new product line offerings that may not otherwise arise in other new product discussions.

Research and Development

Through our research and development efforts, we leverage experienced analog and mixed-signal engineering talent and expertise to create new ICs that integrate functions typically performed inefficiently by multiple discrete components. This integration generally results in lower costs, smaller die sizes, lower power demands and enhanced price/performance characteristics. We attempt to reuse successful techniques for integration in new applications where similar benefits can be realized. We believe that we have attracted many of the best engineers in our industry. We believe that reliable and precise analog and mixed-signal ICs can only be developed by teams of engineers who have significant analog experience and are familiar with the intricacies of designing these ICs for commercial volume production. The development of test methodologies is just one example of a critical activity requiring experience and know-how to enable the rapid release of a new product for commercial success. We have accumulated a vast set of trade secrets that allow us to pursue innovative approaches to mixed-signal problems that are difficult for competitors to duplicate. We highly value our engineering talent and strive to maintain a very high bar when bringing new recruits to the company.

Research and development expenses were \$138.0 million, \$136.0 million and \$123.8 million in fiscal 2012, 2011 and 2010, respectively.

Technology

Our product development process facilitates the design of highly-innovative, analog-intensive, mixed-signal ICs. Our engineers' deep knowledge of existing and emerging standards and performance requirements helps us to assess the technical feasibility of a particular IC. We target areas where we can provide compelling product improvements. Once we have solved the primary challenges, our field application engineers continue to work closely with our customers' design teams to maintain and develop an understanding of our customers' needs, allowing us to formulate derivative products and refined features.

In providing mixed-signal ICs for our customers, we believe our key competitive advantages are:

Analog and RF design expertise in CMOS;

Digital signal processing, firmware and system design expertise;

Microcontroller and system on a chip design expertise; and

Our broad understanding of systems technology and trends.

To fully capitalize on these advantages, we have assembled a world-class development team with exceptional analog and mixed-signal design expertise led by accomplished senior engineers.

Analog and RF Design Expertise in CMOS

We believe that our most significant core competency is world-class analog and RF design capability. Additionally, we strive to design substantially all of our ICs in standard CMOS processes. While it is significantly more difficult to design analog ICs in CMOS, CMOS provides multiple benefits versus existing alternatives, including significantly reduced cost, reduced technology risk and greater

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worldwide foundry capacity. CMOS is the most commonly used process technology for manufacturing digital ICs and as a result is most likely to be used for the manufacturing of ICs with finer line geometries. These finer line geometries can enable smaller and faster ICs. By designing our ICs in CMOS, we enable our products to benefit from this trend towards finer line geometries, which allows us to integrate more digital functionality into our mixed-signal ICs.

Designing analog and mixed-signal ICs is significantly more complicated than designing stand alone digital ICs. While advanced software tools exist to help automate digital IC design, there are far fewer tools for advanced analog and mixed-signal IC design. In many cases, our analog circuit design efforts begin at the fundamental transistor level. We believe that we have a demonstrated ability to design the most difficult analog and RF circuits using standard CMOS technologies.

Digital Signal Processing, Firmware and System Design Expertise

We consider the partitioning of a circuit to be a proprietary and creative design technique. Deep systems knowledge allows us to use our digital signal processing (DSP) design expertise to maximize the price/performance characteristics of both the analog and digital functions and allow our ICs to work in an optimized manner to accomplish particular tasks. Generally, we attempt to move analog functions into the digital domain as quickly as possible, creating system efficiencies without compromising performance. These patented approaches require our advanced DSP and systems expertise. We then leverage our firmware know-how to change the 'personality' of our devices, optimizing features and functions needed by various markets we serve. For example, our broadcast audio products use a proven digital low-IF receiver and transmitter architecture to deliver superior RF performance and interference rejection compared to traditional, analog-only approaches. Digital signal processing is utilized to optimize sound quality under varying signal conditions, enabling a better consumer experience. Firmware has enabled us to rapidly expand the portfolio to address multiple markets without substantial silicon changes, including shortwave, longwave, analog tuned, digital tuned and even high performance HD-capable automotive radios.

Microcontroller and System on a Chip Design Expertise

We have the talent and circuit integration methodologies required to combine precision analog, high-speed digital, flash memory and in-system programmability into a single, monolithic CMOS integrated circuit. Our microcontroller products are designed to capture an external analog signal, convert it to a digital signal, compute digital functions on the stream of data and then communicate the results through a standard digital interface. The ability to develop standard products with the broadest possible customer application base while being cost efficient with the silicon area of the monolithic CMOS integrated circuit requires a keen sense of customer value and engineering capabilities. Additionally, to manage the wide variety of signals on a monolithic piece of silicon including electrical noise, harmonics and other electronic distortions requires a fundamental knowledge of device physics and accumulated design expertise.

Understanding of Systems Technology and Trends

Our focused expertise in mixed-signal ICs is the result of the breadth of engineering talent we have assembled with experience working in analog-intensive CMOS design for a wide variety of applications. This expertise, which we consider a competitive advantage, is the foundation of our in-depth understanding of the technology and trends that impact electronic systems and markets. Our expertise includes:

Isolation, which is critical for existing and emerging telecom networks;

Frequency synthesis, which is core technology for wireless and clocking applications;

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Integration, which enables the elimination of discrete components in a system; and

Signal processing and precision analog, which forms the heart of consumer, industrial, medical and automotive electronics applications.

Our understanding of the role of analog/digital interfaces within electronic systems, standards evolution, and end market drivers enables us to identify product development opportunities and capitalize on market trends.

Manufacturing

As a fabless semiconductor company, we conduct IC design and development in our facilities and electronically transfer our proprietary IC designs to third-party semiconductor fabricators who process silicon wafers to produce the ICs that we design. Our IC designs typically use industry-standard CMOS manufacturing process technology to achieve a level of performance normally associated with more expensive special-purpose IC fabrication technology. We believe the use of CMOS technology facilitates the rapid production of our ICs within a lower cost framework. Our IC production employs submicron process geometries which are readily available from leading foundry suppliers worldwide, thus increasing the likelihood that manufacturing capacity will be available throughout our products' life cycles. We currently partner principally with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC) or its affiliates to manufacture our semiconductor wafers. We believe that our fabless manufacturing model significantly reduces our capital requirements and allows us to focus our resources on design, development and marketing of our ICs.

Once the silicon wafers have been produced, they are shipped directly to our third-party assembly subcontractors. The assembled ICs are then moved to the final testing stage. This operation can be performed by the same contractor that assembled the IC, other third-party test subcontractors or within our internal facilities prior to shipping to our customers. During fiscal 2012, most of our units shipped were tested by offshore third-party test subcontractors. We expect that our utilization of offshore third-party test subcontractors will remain substantial during fiscal 2013.

Backlog

As of December 29, 2012, our backlog was approximately \$105.8 million, compared to approximately \$83.3 million as of December 31, 2011. We include in backlog accepted product purchase orders from customers and worldwide distributor stocking orders. We only include orders with an expected shipping date from us within six months. Product orders in our backlog are subject to changes in delivery schedules or cancellation at the option of the purchaser typically without penalty. Our backlog may fluctuate significantly depending upon customer order patterns which may, in turn, vary considerably based on rapidly changing business circumstances. Shipments to distributors are not recognized as revenue until the products are sold by the distributors. Additionally, our arrangements with distributors typically provide for price protection and stock rotation activities. Accordingly, we do not believe that our backlog at any time is necessarily representative of actual sales for any succeeding period.

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Competition

The markets for semiconductors generally, and for analog and mixed-signal ICs in particular, are intensely competitive. We anticipate that the market for our products will continually evolve and will be subject to rapid technological change. We believe the principal competitive factors in our industry are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Product size; | Power requirement; |
| Level of integration; | Customer support; |
| Product capabilities; | Reputation; |
| Reliability; | Ability to rapidly introduce new products to market; and |
| Price; | Intellectual property. |

Performance;

We believe that we are competitive with respect to these factors, particularly because our ICs typically are smaller in size, are highly integrated, achieve high performance specifications at lower price points than competitive products and are manufactured in standard CMOS which generally enables us to supply them on a relatively rapid basis to customers to meet their product introduction schedules. However, disadvantages we face include our relatively short operating history in certain of our markets and the need for customers to redesign their products and modify their software to implement our ICs in their products.

Due to our diversified product portfolio and the numerous markets and applications we serve, we target a relatively large number of competitors. We compete with Analog Devices, Atmel, Conexant, Cypress, Epson, Freescale, IDT, Lantiq, Maxim Integrated Products, MaxLinear, Microchip, Microsemi, NXP Semiconductors, Renesas, Sony Semiconductor, STMicroelectronics, Texas Instruments, Vectron International and others. We expect to face competition in the future from our current competitors, other manufacturers and designers of semiconductors and start-up semiconductor design companies. Our competitors may also offer bundled solutions offering a more complete product, which may negatively impact our competitive position despite the technical merits or advantages of our products. In addition, our customers could develop products or technologies internally that would replace their need for our products and would become a source of competition. We could also face competition from module makers or other systems suppliers that may include mixed-signal components in their products that could eliminate the need for our ICs.

Many of our competitors and potential competitors have longer operating histories, greater name recognition, access to larger customer bases, complementary product offerings, and significantly greater financial, sales and marketing, manufacturing, distribution, technical and other resources than us. Current and potential competitors have established or may establish financial and strategic relationships between themselves or with our existing or potential customers, resellers or other third parties. Accordingly, it is possible that new competitors or alliances among competitors could emerge and rapidly acquire significant market share.

Intellectual Property

Our future success depends in part upon our proprietary technology. We seek to protect our technology through a combination of patents, copyrights, trade secrets, trademarks and confidentiality procedures. As of December 29, 2012, we had approximately 1,280 issued or pending United States patents in the IC field. We also frequently file for patent protection in a variety of international jurisdictions with respect to the proprietary technology covered by our U.S. patents and patent applications. There can be no assurance that patents will ever be issued with respect to these applications. Furthermore, it is possible that any patents held by us may be invalidated, circumvented, challenged or licensed to others. In addition, there can be no assurance that such patents will provide us with competitive advantages or adequately safeguard our proprietary rights. While we continue to

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file new patent applications with respect to our recent developments, existing patents are granted for prescribed time periods and will expire at various times in the future.

We claim copyright protection for proprietary documentation for our products. We have filed for registration, or are in the process of filing for registration, the visual images of certain ICs with the U.S. Copyright Office. We have registered the "Silicon Labs" logo and a variety of other product and product family names as trademarks in the United States and selected foreign jurisdictions. All other trademarks, service marks or trade names appearing in this report are the property of their respective owners. We also attempt to protect our trade secrets and other proprietary information through agreements with our customers, suppliers, employees and consultants, and through other customary security measures. We intend to protect our rights vigorously, but there can be no assurance that our efforts will be successful. In addition, the laws of other countries in which our products are sold may not protect our products and intellectual property rights to the same extent as the laws of the United States.

While our ability to effectively compete depends in large part on our ability to protect our intellectual property, we believe that our technical expertise and ability to introduce new products in a timely manner will be an important factor in maintaining our competitive position.

Many participants in the semiconductor and electronics industries have a significant number of patents and have frequently demonstrated a readiness to commence litigation based on allegations of patent and other intellectual property infringement. From time to time, third parties may assert infringement claims against us. We may not prevail in any such litigation or may not be able to license any valid and infringed patents from third parties on commercially reasonable terms, if at all. Litigation, regardless of the outcome, is likely to result in substantial cost and diversion of our resources, including our management's time. Any such litigation could materially adversely affect us.

Our licenses include industry standard licenses with our vendors, such as wafer fabrication tool libraries, third-party core libraries, computer-aided design applications and business software applications.

Employees

As of December 29, 2012, we employed 997 people. Our success depends on the continued service of our key technical and senior management personnel and on our ability to continue to attract, retain and motivate highly skilled analog and mixed-signal engineers. The competition for such personnel is intense. We have never had a work stoppage and none of our U.S. employees are represented by a labor organization. We consider our employee relations to be good.

Environmental Regulation

Federal, state and local regulations impose various environmental controls on the storage, use, discharge and disposal of certain chemicals and gases used in the semiconductor industry. Our compliance with these laws and regulations has not had a material impact on our financial position or results of operations.

Available Information

Our website address is www.silabs.com. Our annual report on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 are available through the investor relations page of our website free of charge as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Our website and the information contained therein or connected thereto are not intended to be incorporated into this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

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Item 1A. Risk Factors

Risks Related to our Business

We may not be able to maintain our historical growth and may experience significant period-to-period fluctuations in our revenues and operating results, which may result in volatility in our stock price

Although we have generally experienced revenue growth in our history, we may not be able to sustain this growth. We may also experience significant period-to-period fluctuations in our revenues and operating results in the future due to a number of factors, and any such variations may cause our stock price to fluctuate. In some future period our revenues or operating results may be below the expectations of public market analysts or investors. If this occurs, our stock price may drop, perhaps significantly.

A number of factors, in addition to those cited in other risk factors applicable to our business, may contribute to fluctuations in our revenues and operating results, including:

The timing and volume of orders received from our customers;

The timeliness of our new product introductions and the rate at which our new products may cannibalize our older products;

The rate of acceptance of our products by our customers, including the acceptance of new products we may develop for integration in the products manufactured by such customers, which we refer to as "design wins";

The time lag and realization rate between "design wins" and production orders;

The demand for, and life cycles of, the products incorporating our ICs;

The rate of adoption of mixed-signal ICs in the markets we target;

Deferrals or reductions of customer orders in anticipation of new products or product enhancements from us or our competitors or other providers of ICs;

Changes in product mix;

The average selling prices for our products could drop suddenly due to competitive offerings or competitive predatory pricing;

The average selling prices for our products generally decline over time;

Changes in market standards;

Impairment charges related to inventory, equipment or other long-lived assets;

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The software used in our products, including software provided by third parties, may not meet the needs of our customers;

Significant legal costs to defend our intellectual property rights or respond to claims against us; and

The rate at which new markets emerge for products we are currently developing or for which our design expertise can be utilized to develop products for these new markets.

The markets for consumer electronics, for example, are characterized by rapid fluctuations in demand and seasonality that result in corresponding fluctuations in the demand for our products that are incorporated in such devices. Additionally, the rate of technology acceptance by our customers results in fluctuating demand for our products as customers are reluctant to incorporate a new IC into their products until the new IC has achieved market acceptance. Once a new IC achieves market acceptance, demand for the new IC can quickly accelerate to a point and then level off such that rapid

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historical growth in sales of a product should not be viewed as indicative of continued future growth. In addition, demand can quickly decline for a product when a new IC product is introduced and receives market acceptance. Due to the various factors mentioned above, the results of any prior quarterly or annual periods should not be relied upon as an indication of our future operating performance.

If we are unable to develop or acquire new and enhanced products that achieve market acceptance in a timely manner, our operating results and competitive position could be harmed

Our future success will depend on our ability to develop or acquire new ICs and product enhancements that achieve market acceptance in a timely and cost-effective manner. The development of mixed-signal ICs is highly complex, and we have at times experienced delays in completing the development and introduction of new products and product enhancements. Successful product development and market acceptance of our products depend on a number of factors, including:

Requirements of customers;

Accurate prediction of market and technical requirements;

Timely completion and introduction of new designs;

Timely qualification and certification of our ICs for use in our customers' products;

Commercial acceptance and volume production of the products into which our ICs will be incorporated;

Availability of foundry, assembly and test capacity;

Achievement of high manufacturing yields;

Quality, price, performance, power use and size of our products;

Availability, quality, price and performance of competing products and technologies;

Our customer service, application support capabilities and responsiveness;

Successful development of our relationships with existing and potential customers;

Technology, industry standards or end-user preferences; and

Cooperation of third-party software providers and our semiconductor vendors to support our chips within a system.

We cannot provide any assurance that products which we recently have developed or may develop in the future will achieve market acceptance. We have introduced to market or are in development of many ICs. If our ICs fail to achieve market acceptance, or if we fail to develop new products on a timely basis that achieve market acceptance, our growth prospects, operating results and competitive position could be ad