

# Evaluating signal integrity with a Vector Network Analyzer

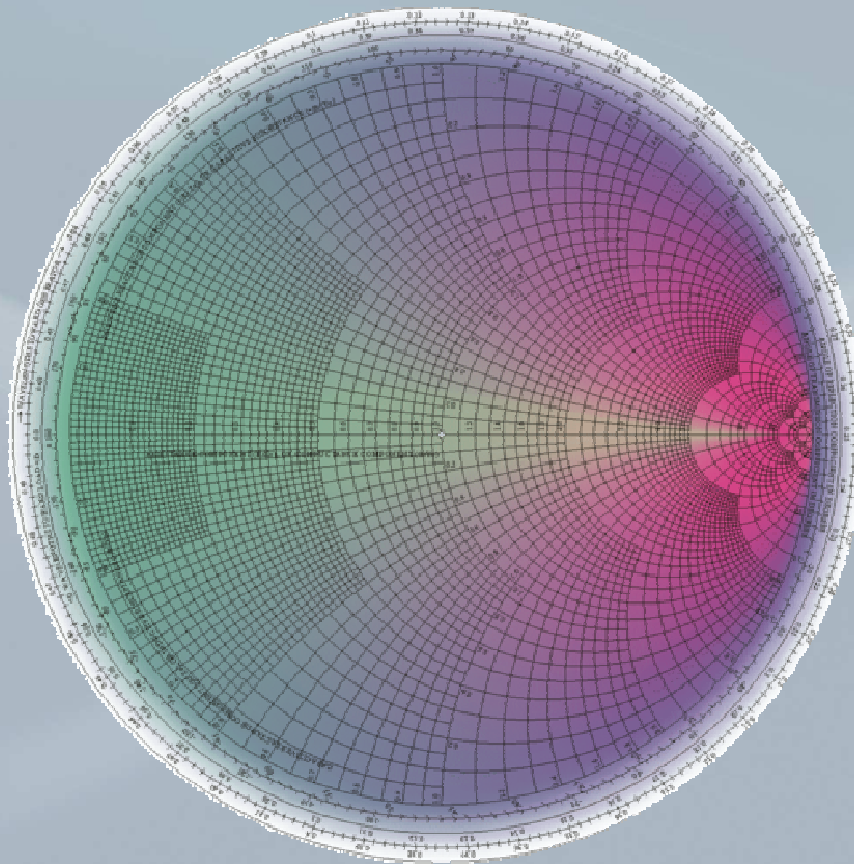


Figure 1: A Smith chart showing the relationship between the normalized impedance and the normalized admittance. The chart is divided into two main regions: the upper half for impedance and the lower half for admittance. The outer scale shows the SWR (Standing Wave Ratio) and the inner scale shows the dBS (decibels) loss. The chart is used to evaluate the signal integrity of a system by measuring the reflection coefficient and the SWR.



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10.11.2014

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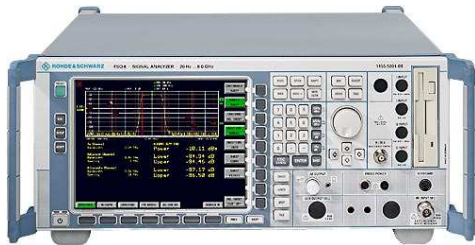
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# Agenda

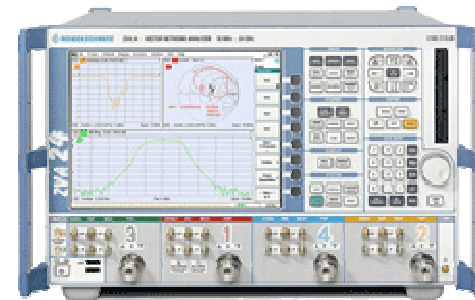
- **Scalar vs. Vector analysis**
  - Uses for each
- **Transmission Lines**
- **S-Parameters**
  - Wave quantities and wave ratios
  - How S-Parameters are derived from wave quantities
- **Network Analyzer Architecture**
  - Block diagram of ZVA
- **Calibration**
  - Importance of calibration
  - Use of calibration manager on the ZVA
- **Signal Integrity measurements**
  - *Time domain*
  - *Balanced devices*



# Spectrum Analyzers vs. Vector Network Analyzers



Measures Signals



Measures Devices

## Spectrum Analyzers:

- Measure signal amplitude characteristics, carrier level, sidebands, harmonics..
- Can demodulate (+ measure) complex signals
- Spec Ans are receivers only (single channel)
- Can be used for scalar component test (no phase) with tracking gen. or external source

## Network Analyzers:

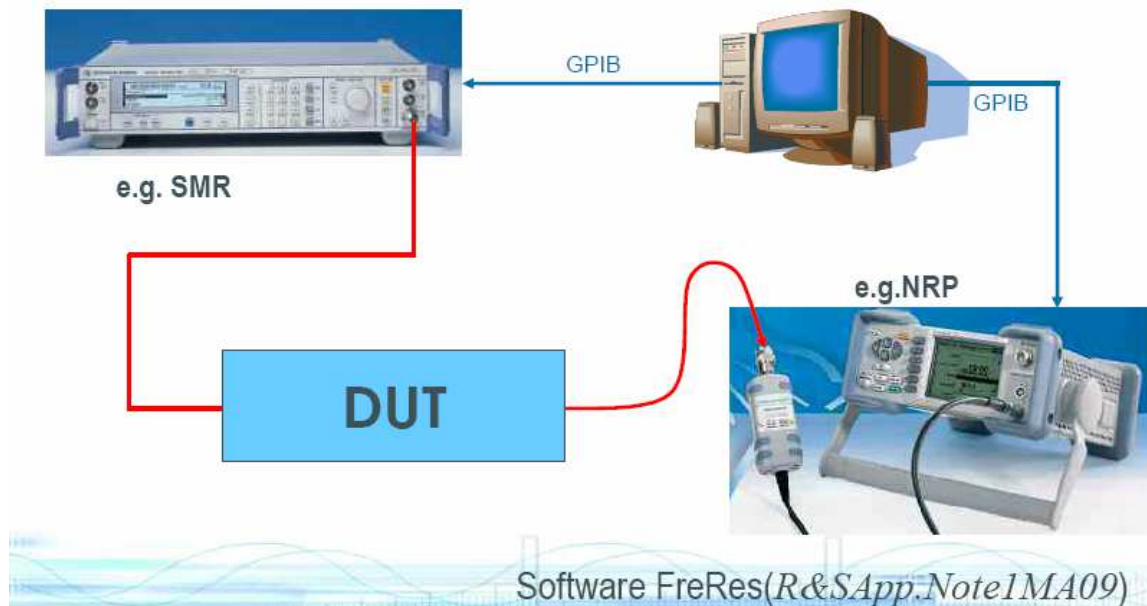
- Measure components, devices, circuits, sub-assemblies
- Contains sources and receivers
- Display ratioed amplitude and phase (frequency, power or time sweeps)
- Offers advanced error correction.



# Scalar Network Analysis

- Basic scalar analyzer can be a signal generator and a power meter
- Drawbacks are speed, dynamic range and no phase information
- Advantage is cost

## Scalar Network Analysis set up with power meter

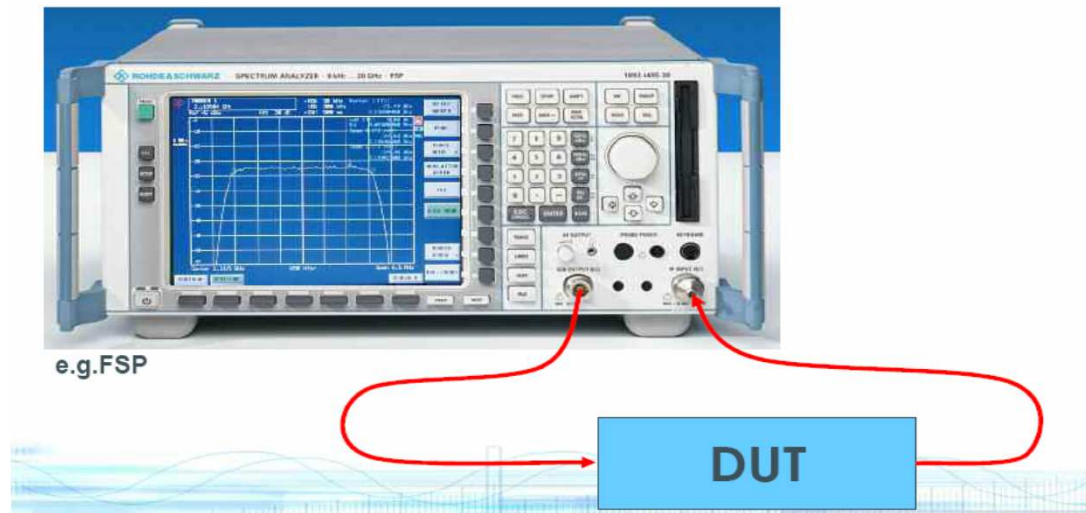


# Scalar Network Analysis

- Basic scalar analysis can be done with a spectrum analyzer, tracking generator or external generator
- Drawback is cost compared to signal generator and sensor
- Still no phase information
- Advantages are speed, dynamic range and spectrum analyzer can be used for other measurements

## Scalar Network Analysis

spectrum analyzer with tracking generator 1



# What Devices do Vector Network Analyzers Test?

**Filters**

**RF Switches**

**Couplers**

**Cables**

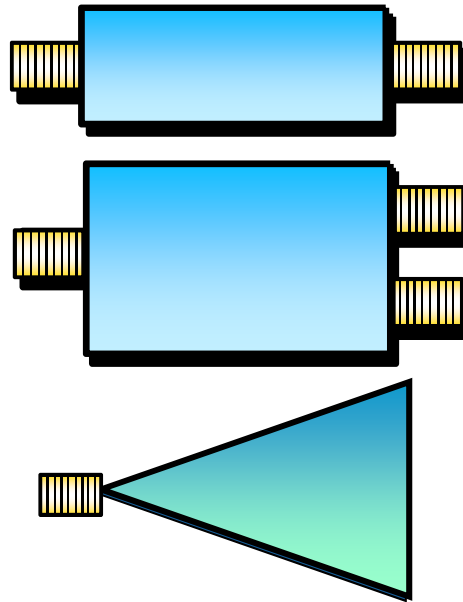
**Amplifiers**

**Antennas**

**Isolators**

**Mixers (upconverters, downconverters, also sometimes referred to as transmitters and receivers)**

***...Most 2 (or more) port devices (and some 1 port devices)***





# Agenda

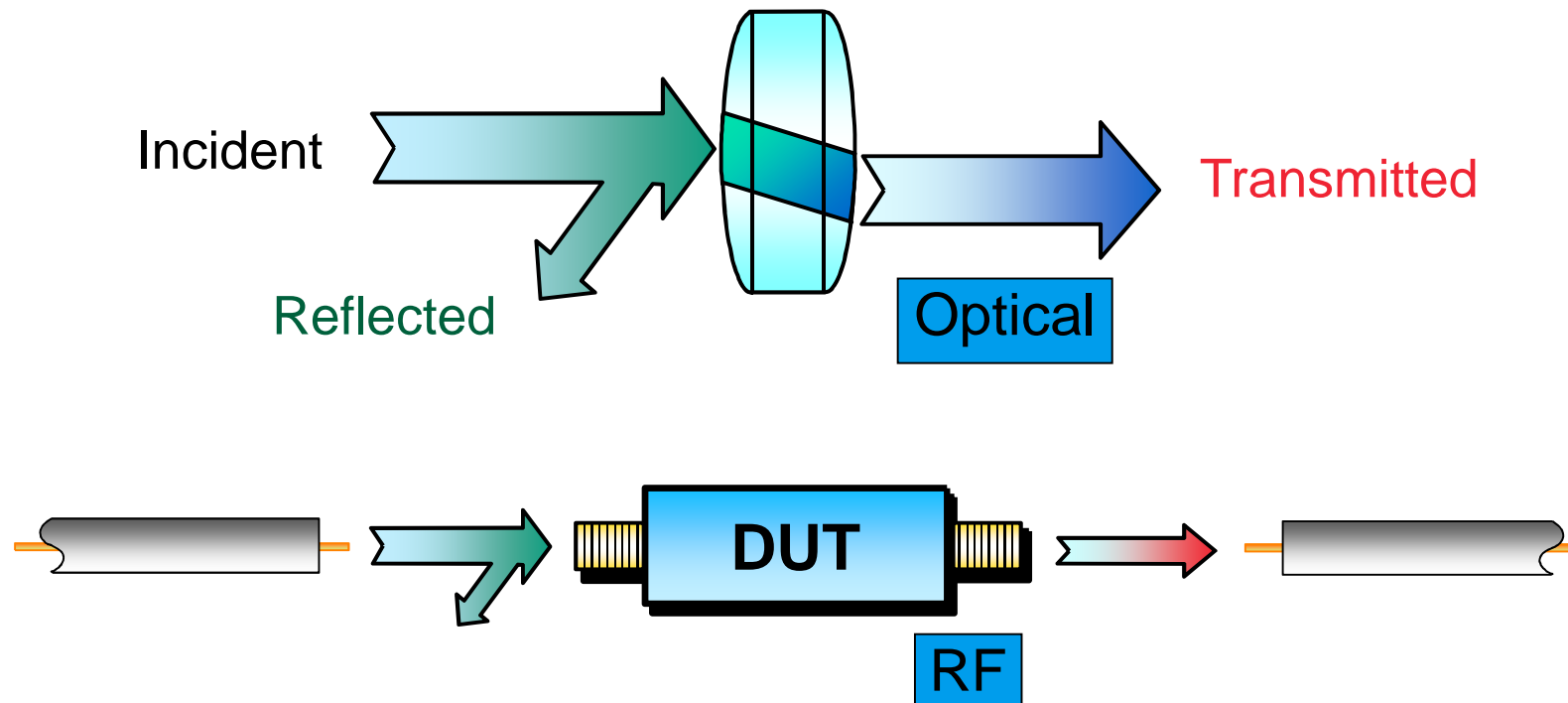
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# Optical Analogy to RF Transmission

- Network analyzers measure transmitted and reflected signals relative to the incident signal
- Scalar analyzers measure magnitude only, vector analyzers measure magnitude and phase of these signals



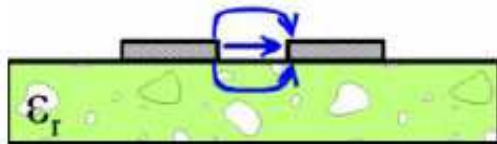
# Transmission Lines



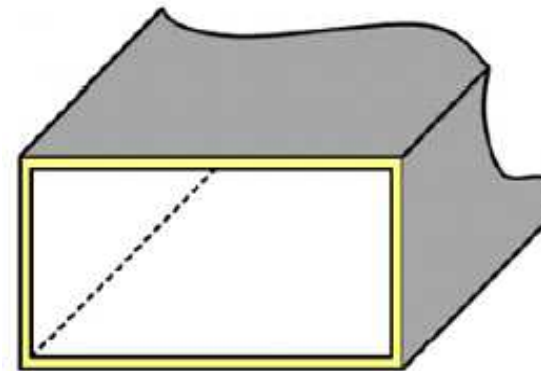
Parallel Lines



Coax Cable

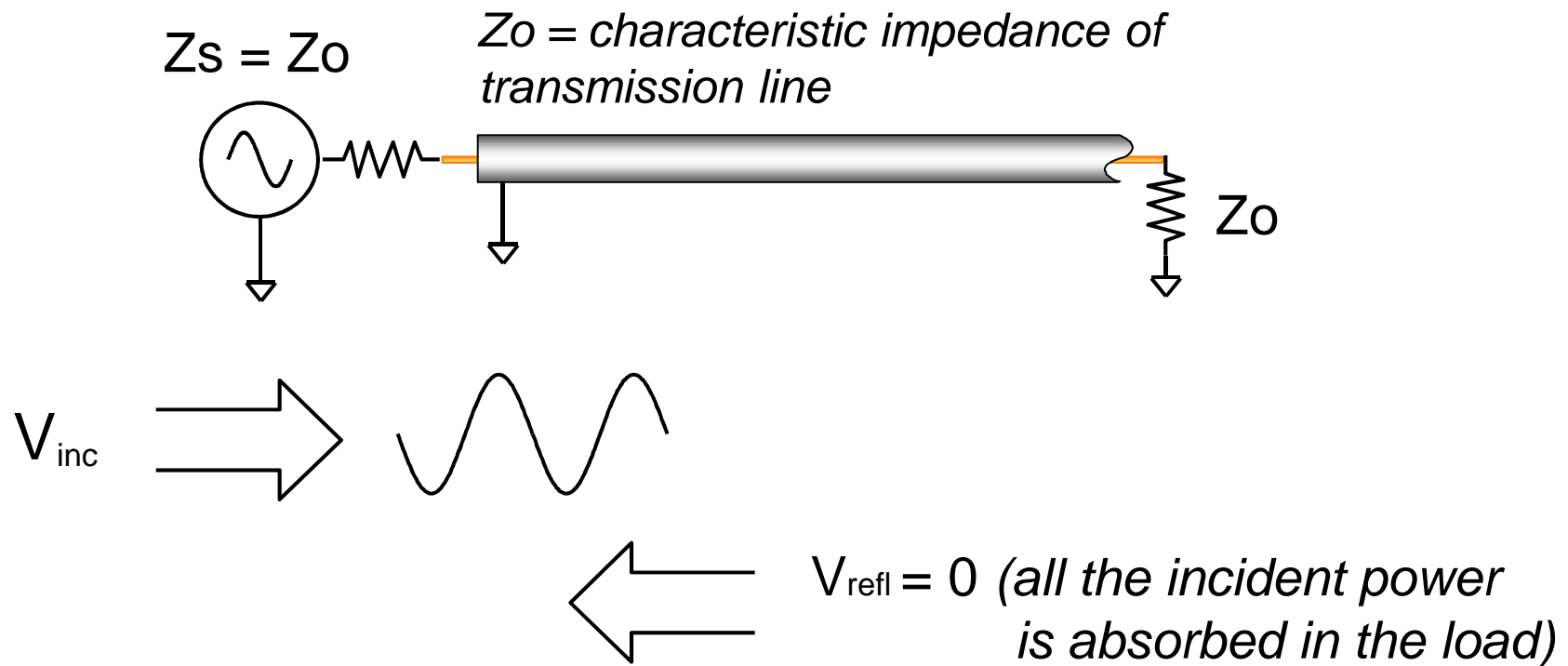


Microstrip Line



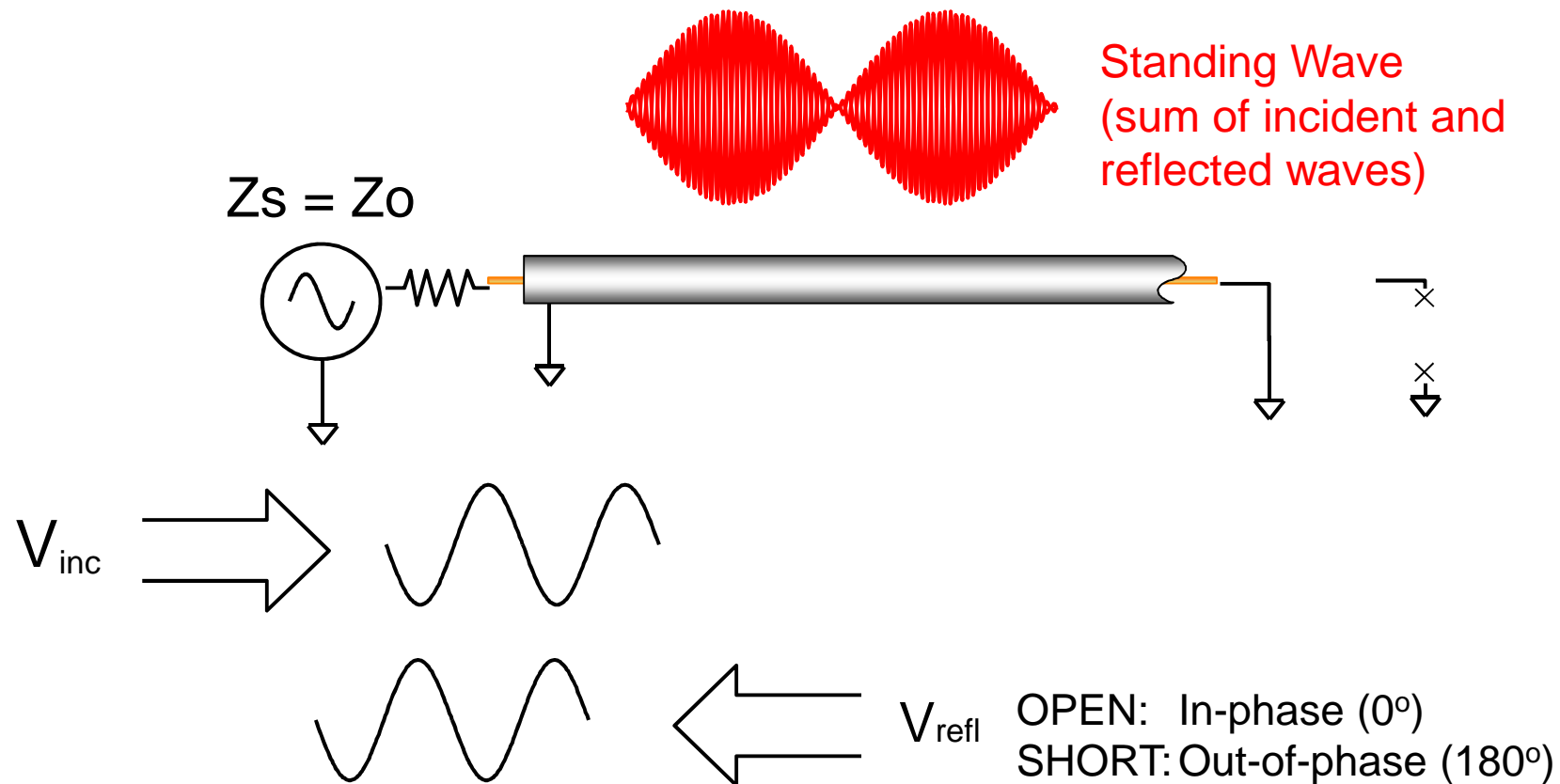
Waveguide

# Transmission Line Terminated with $Z_0$



**A transmission line terminated in  $Z_0$  behaves like an infinitely long transmission line**

# Transmission Line Terminated with Short, Open



**A transmission line terminated in a short or open reflects all power back to source**

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- Transmission Lines

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- Calibration

- Importance of calibration

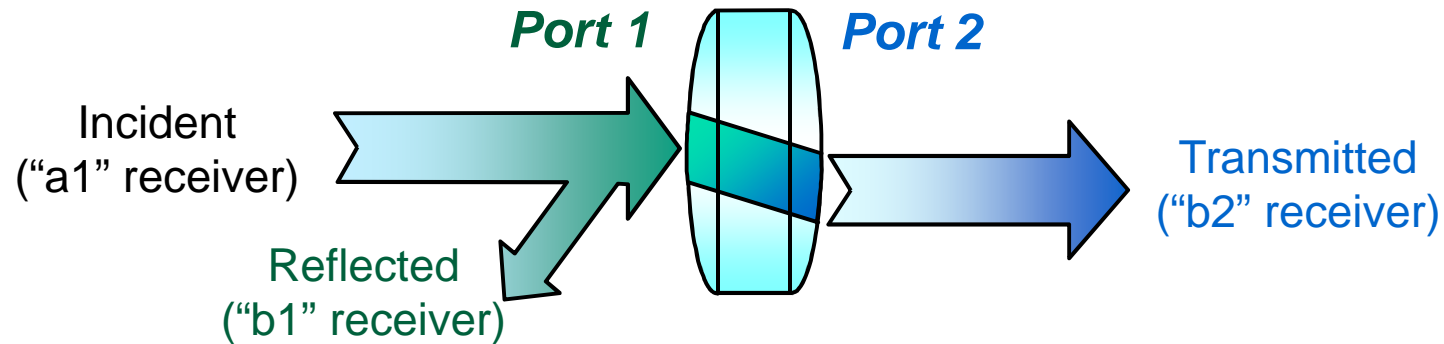
- Signal Integrity measurements

- *Time domain*

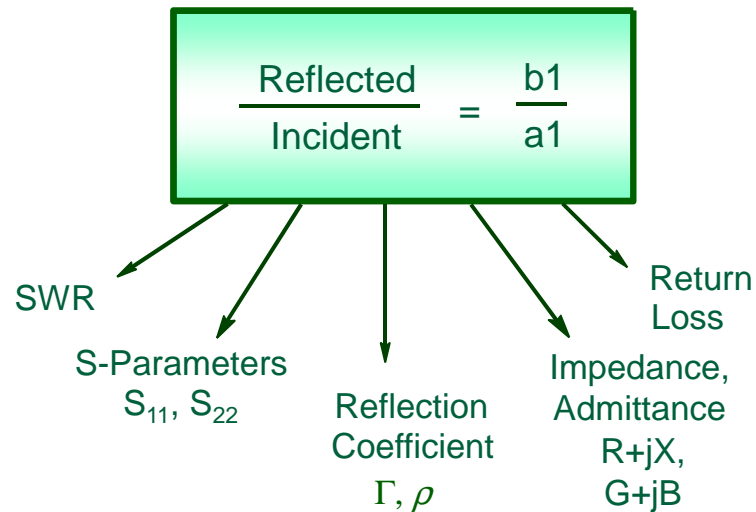
- *Balanced devices*



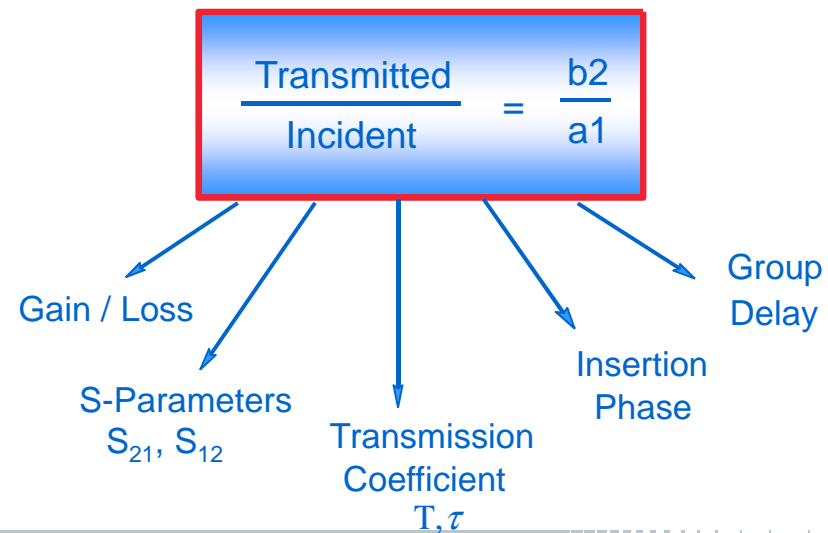
# High-Frequency Device Characterization



## REFLECTION

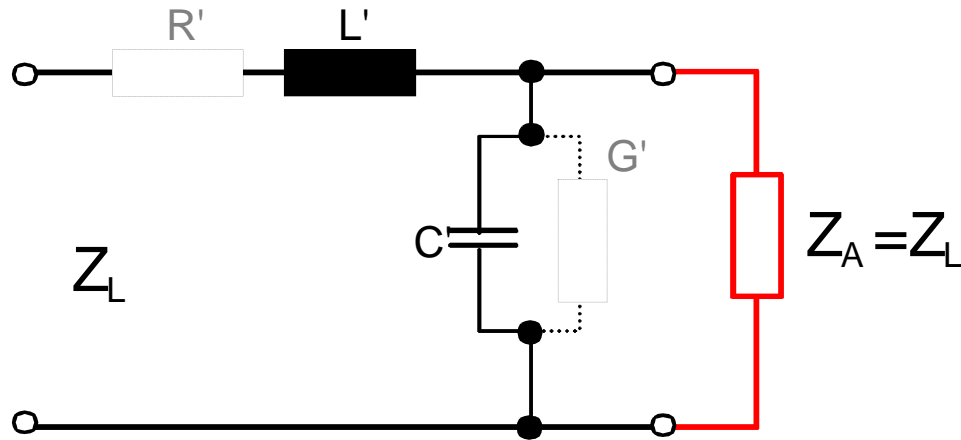


## TRANSMISSION

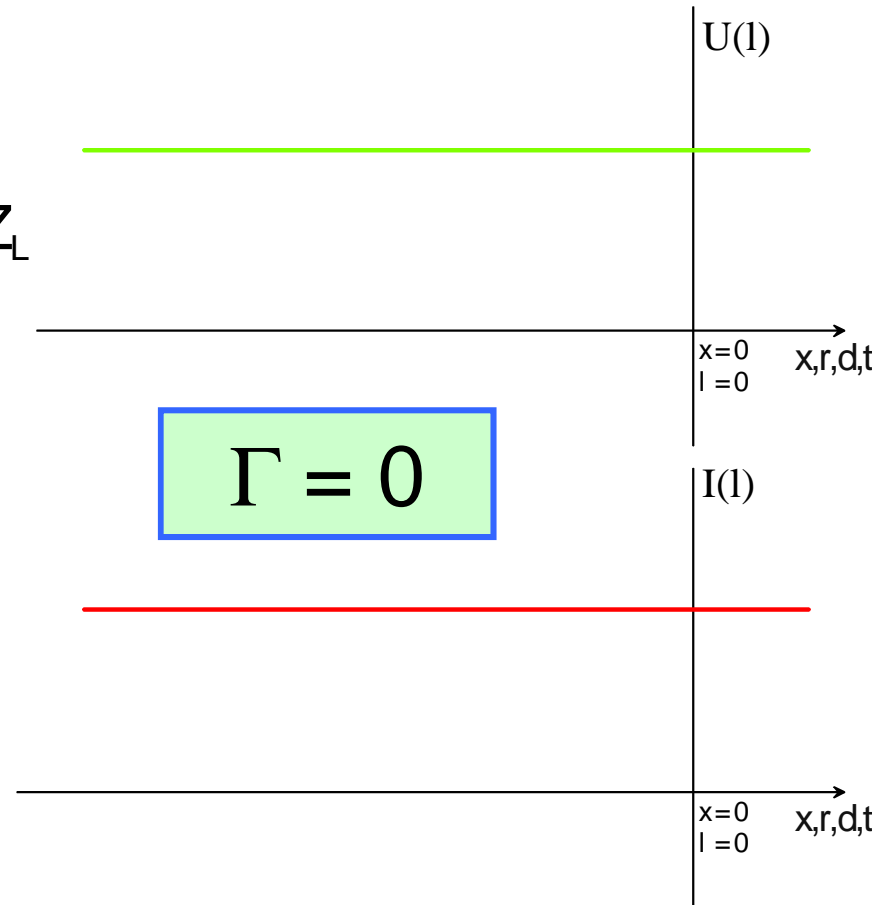


# Reflection and transmission

Termination with line impedance (MATCH)



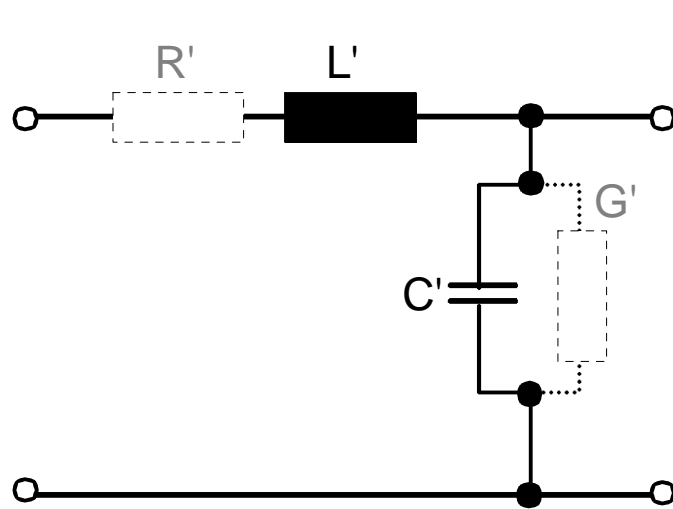
- Current and voltage in phase
- Perfect traveling wave
- No space dependence
- Perfect power transmission from source to drain



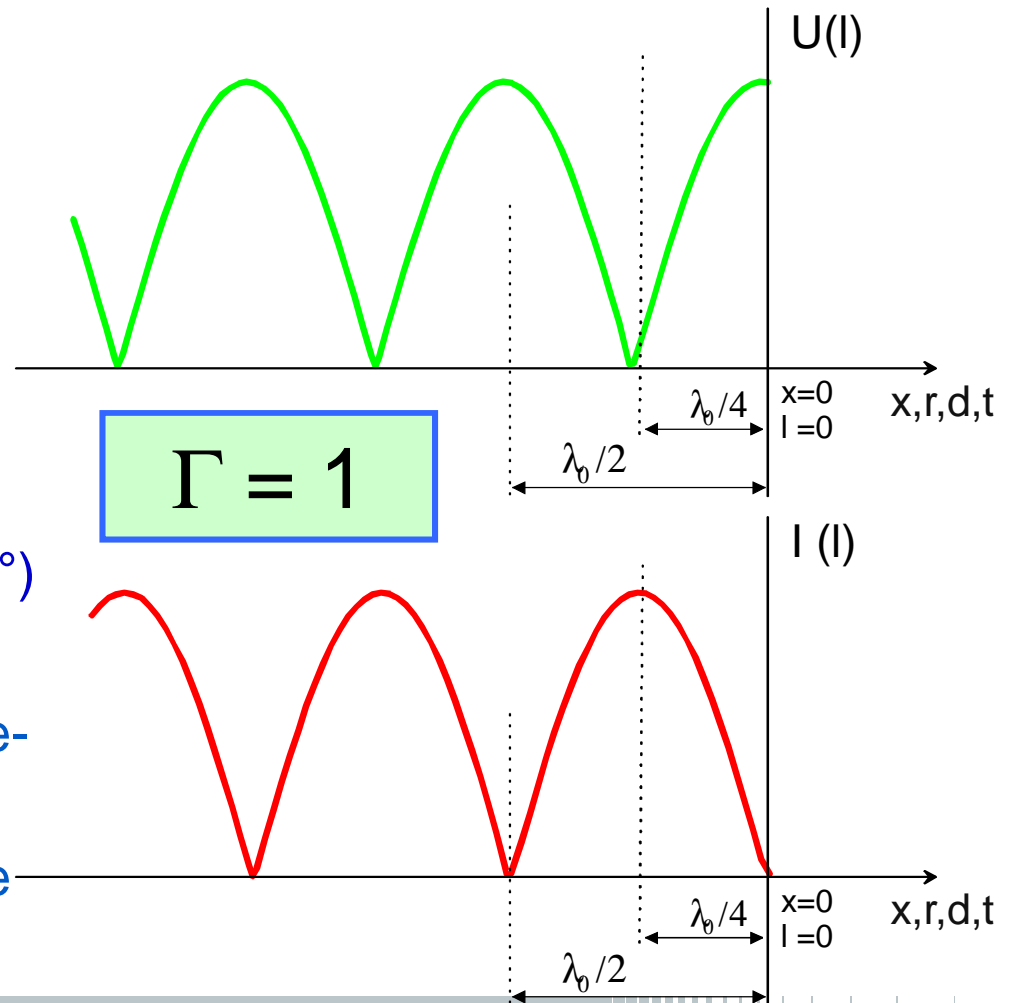


# Reflection and transmission

Open line: (OPEN)  $Z_a = \infty$

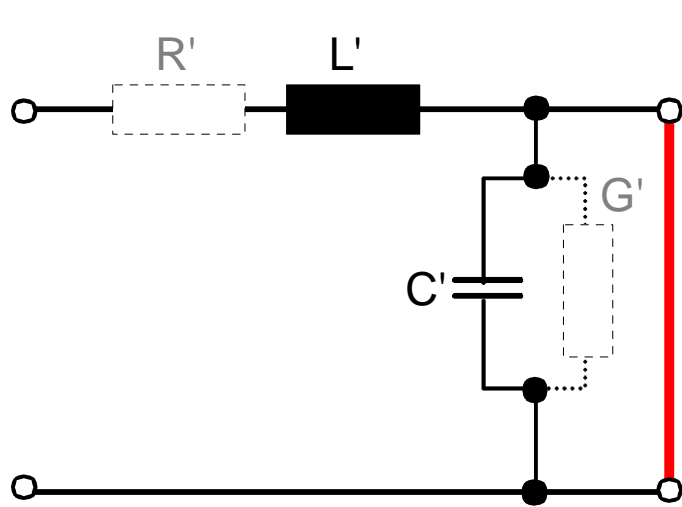


- Reactive behavior ( $\Delta\phi_{U,I} = -90^\circ$ )
- Standing wave
- Current and voltage are space-dependent
- Power oscillates along the line

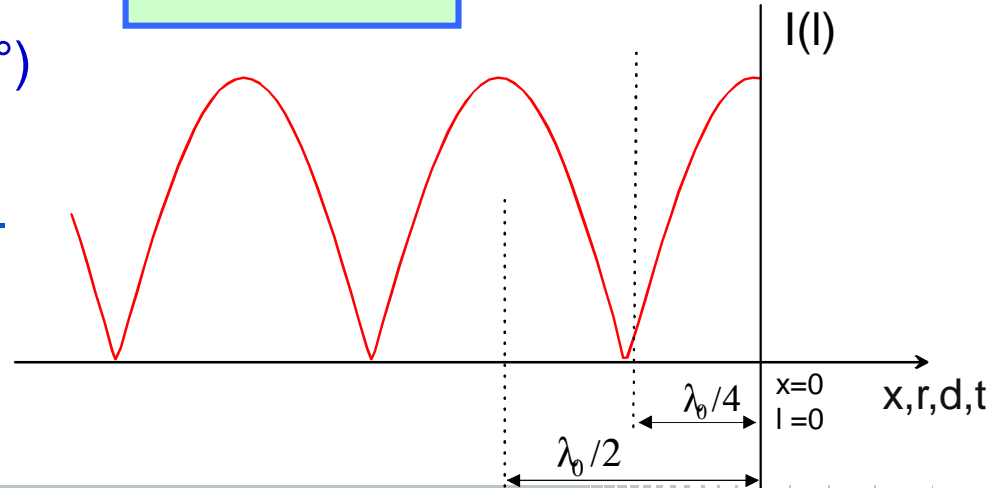
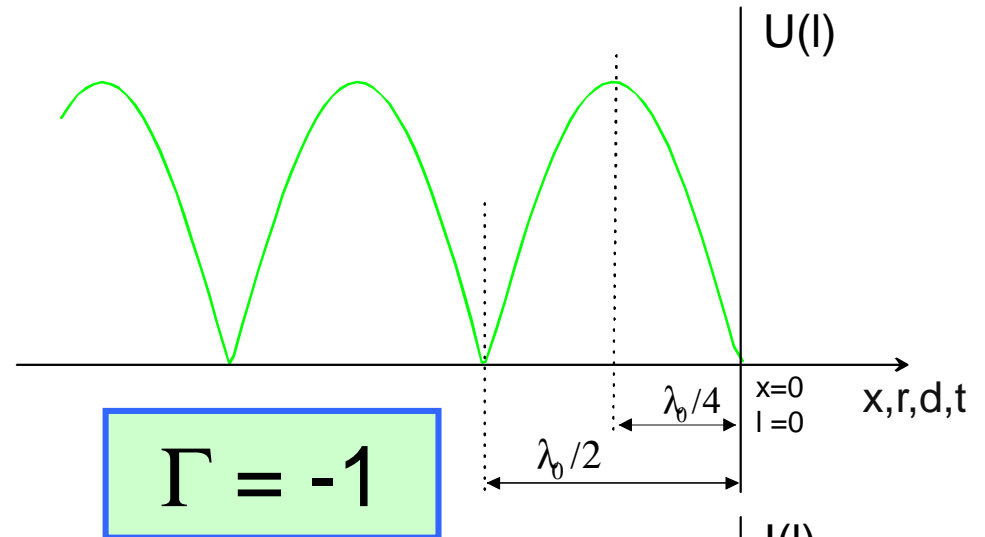


# Reflection and transmission

short-circuited line: (SHORT)  $Z_a = 0$

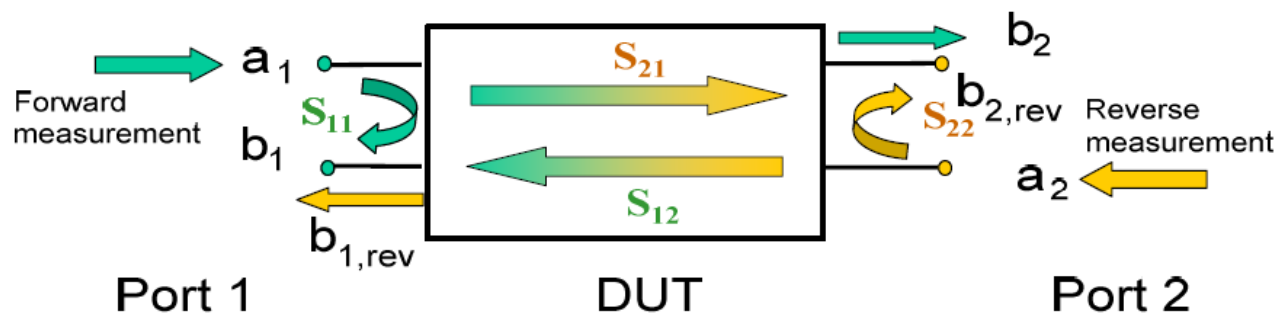


- Reactive behavior ( $\Delta\phi_{U,I} = +90^\circ$ )
- Standing wave
- Current and voltage are space-dependent
- Power oscillates along the line



# S-Parameters, wave quantities and their relationship

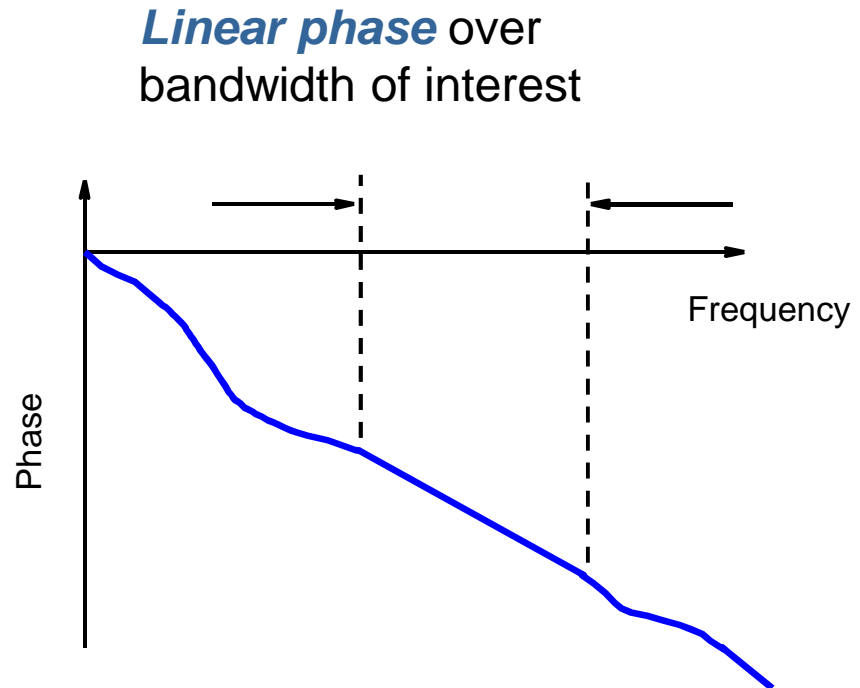
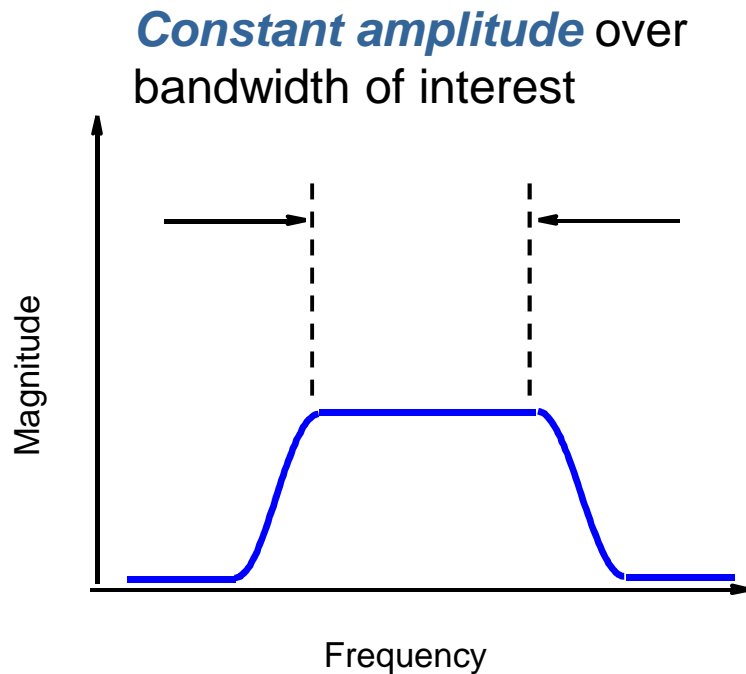
S-parameters are the basic measured quantities of a network analyzer. They describe how the DUT modifies a signal that is transmitted or reflected in forward or reverse direction. For a 2-port measurement the signal flow is as follows:



- $S_{11}$  is the input reflection coefficient, defined as the ratio of the wave quantities  $b_1/a_1$ , measured at PORT 1 (forward measurement with matched output and  $a_2 = 0$ ).
- $S_{21}$  is the forward transmission coefficient, defined as the ratio of the wave quantities  $b_2/a_1$  (forward measurement with matched output and  $a_2 = 0$ ).
- $S_{12}$  is the reverse transmission coefficient, defined as the ratio of the wave quantities  $b_1$  (reverse measurement with matched input,  $b_{1,rev}$  in the figure above and  $a_1 = 0$ ) to  $a_2$ .
- $S_{22}$  is the output reflection coefficient, defined as the ratio of the wave quantities  $b_2$  (reverse measurement with matched input,  $b_{2,rev}$  in the figure above and  $a_1 = 0$ ) to  $a_2$ , measured at PORT 2.

See page 59 of the ZVA user manual

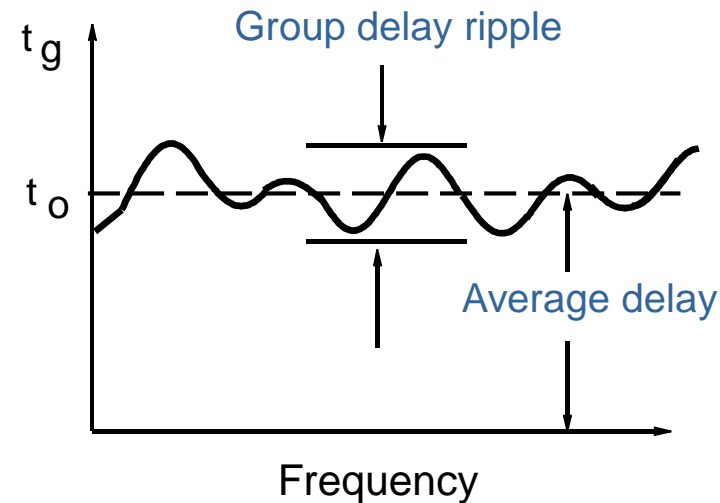
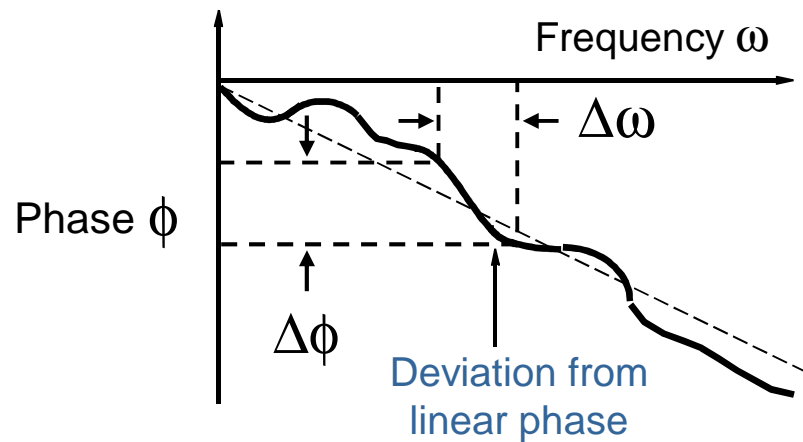
# Criteria for Distortionless Transmission



**Distortion is indicated by:**

- Deviation from constant amplitude
- Deviation from linear phase (or stated another way...)
- Non-constant group delay

# Group Delay



Group Delay =

$$\frac{-d\phi}{d\omega} = \frac{-1}{360^\circ} * \frac{d\phi}{df}$$

$\phi$  in radians

$\omega$  in radians/sec

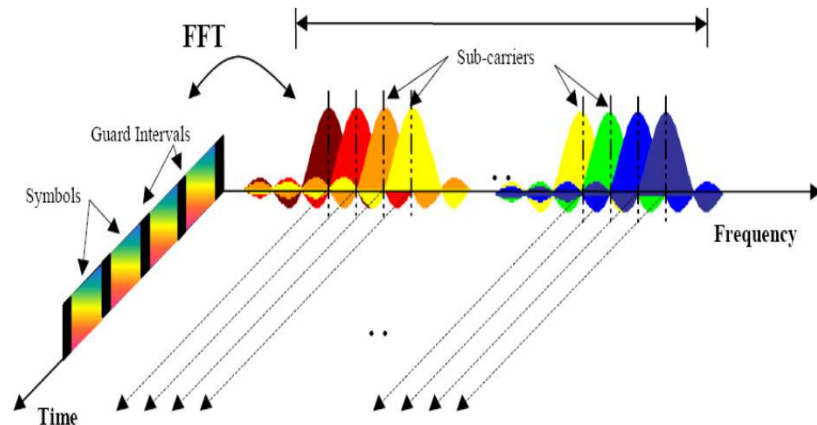
$\phi$  in degrees

$f$  in Hertz ( $\omega = 2\pi f$ )

- VNAs calculate group delay from phase measurement across frequency
- Group-delay ripple indicates phase distortion (deviation from linear phase)
- Average delay indicates electrical length of DUT
- Aperture of group delay measurement is very important

# Real world example of distortion: OFDMA and EVM

- Consider an OFDMA signal that is 20 MHz wide, 1201 sub-carriers
- With “nearly flat” amplitude and phase response...
- **EVM is ~ 55 dBc; a fairly low value.**



# Real world example of distortion: OFDMA and EVM

- Introduce “linear” amplitude and phase distortion via a channel filter, which primarily impacts the band edges...

- ◆ Approximately 0.5 dB of amplitude response

- ◆ Approximately 2.5 nS of group delay response

- ❖ EVM is now 35 dBc at the band edges
- ❖ Poor EVM can result in lost data, which means retransmission of data, which means lost \$\$\$\$





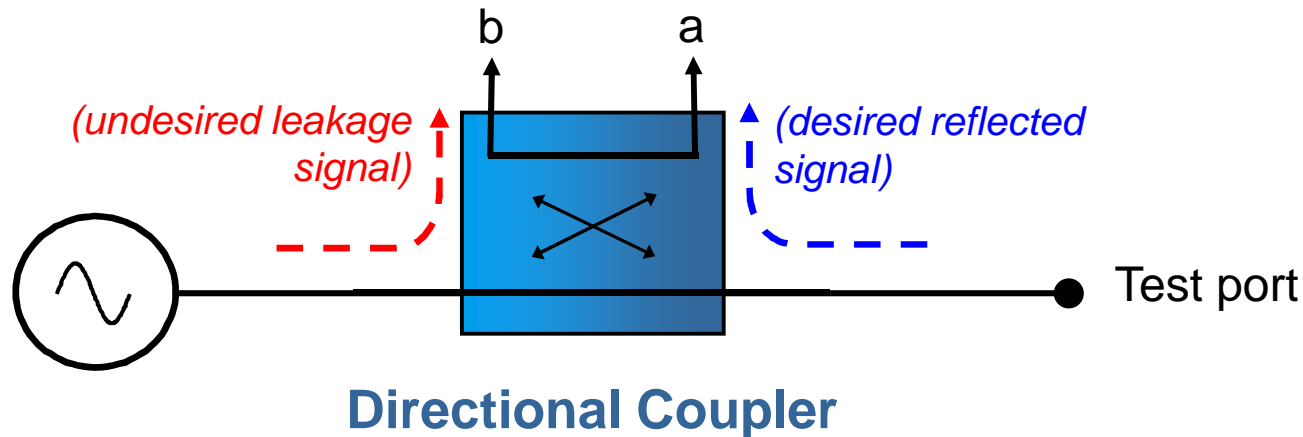
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  - **Direct receiver access**
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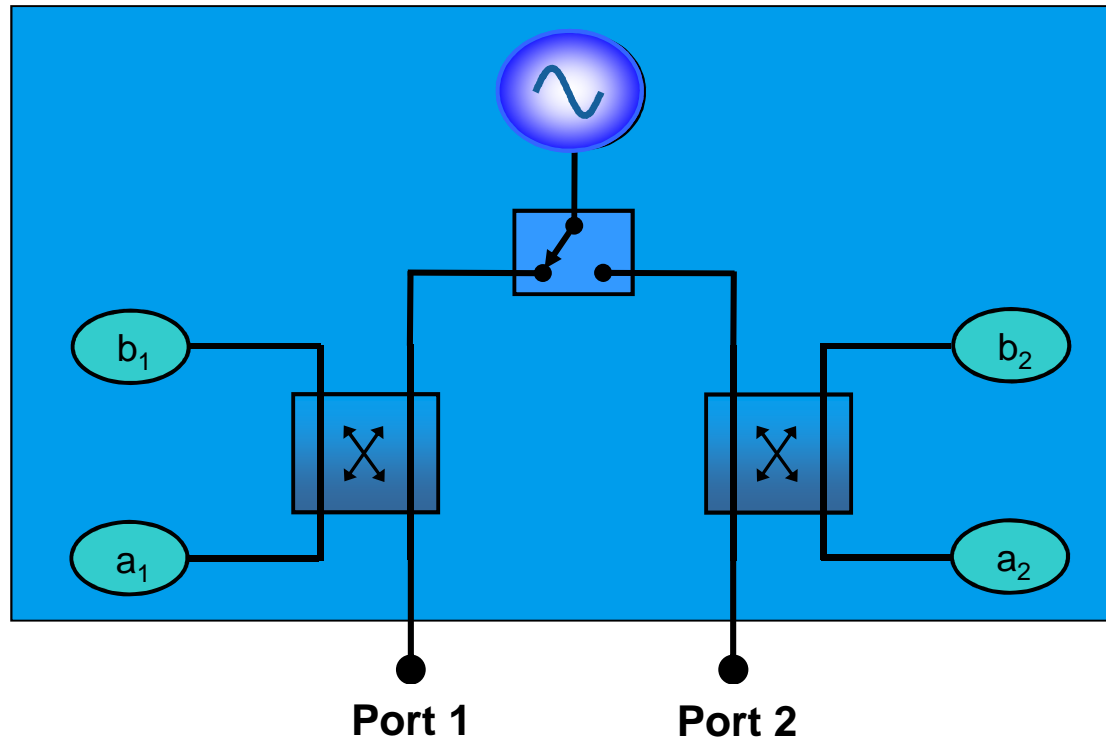


# Directional Coupler – Directivity

- Directivity is a measure of how well a coupler can separate signals moving in opposite directions
- A termination at the test port should result in no signal at the b receiver
- The difference between the coupled signal and the leakage signal is the directivity of the coupler (typical values: 15-25dB)



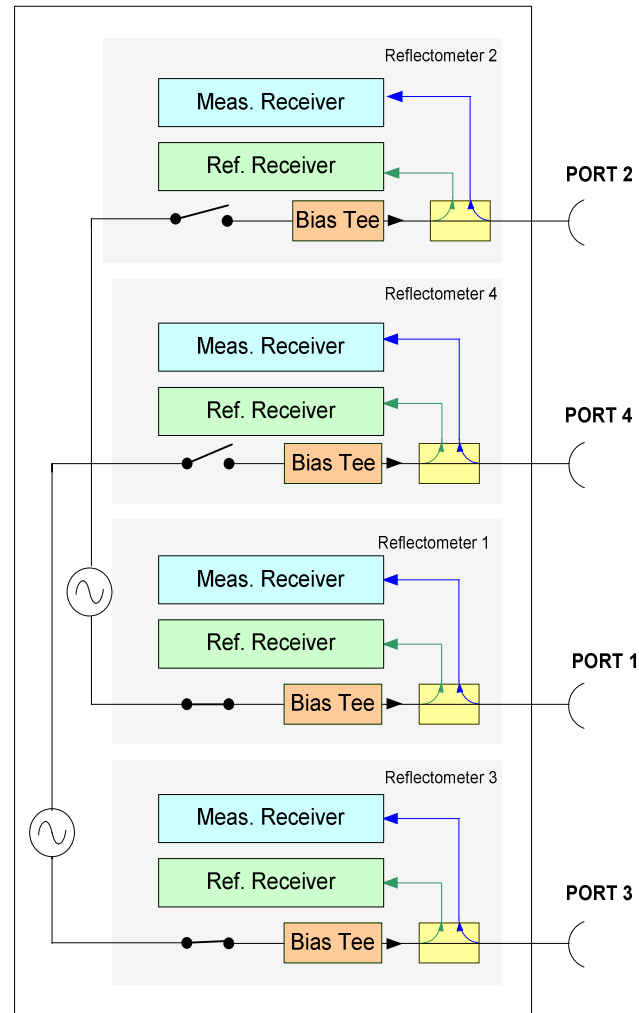
# Vector Network Analyzer Block Diagram



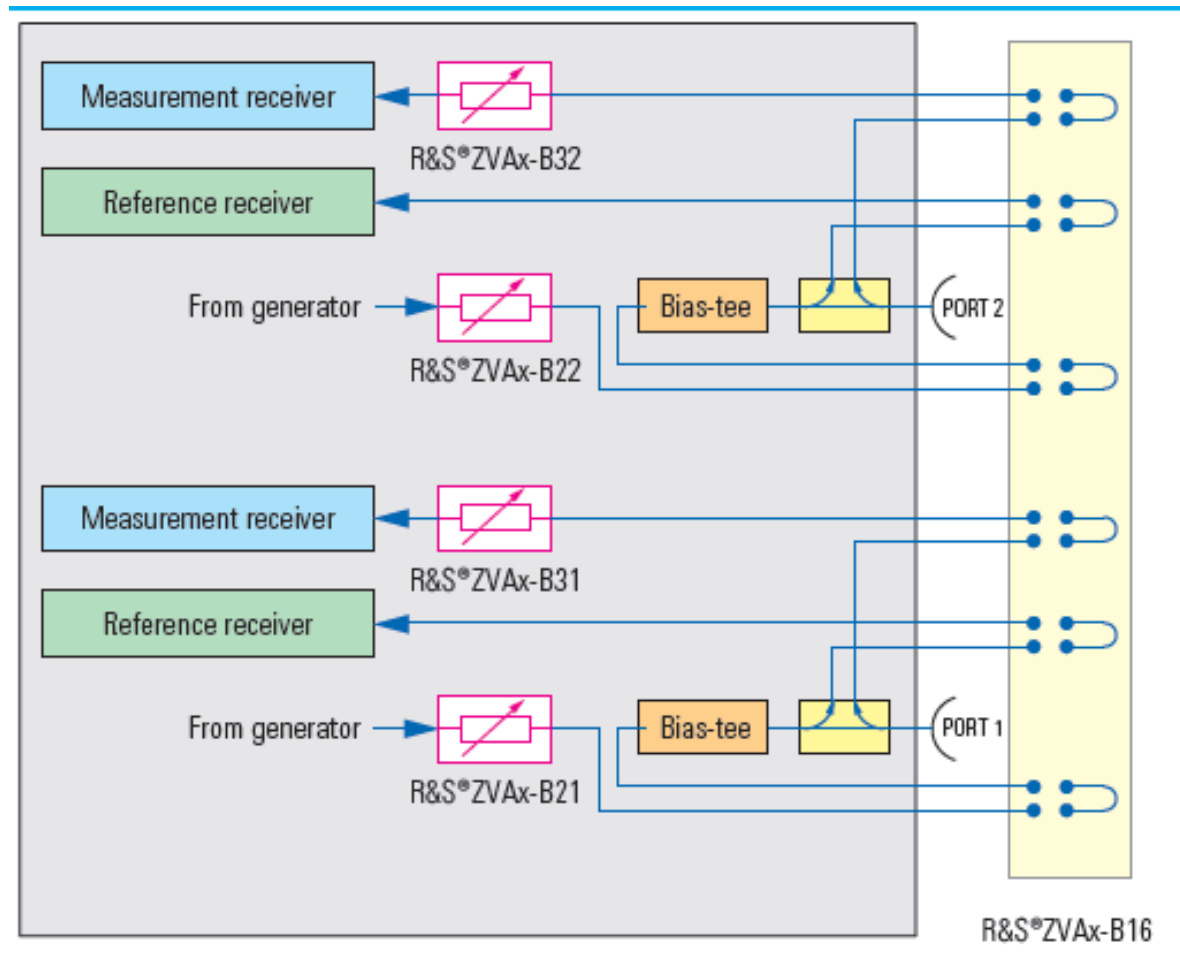
“a” receiver is also known as reference receiver

“b” receiver is also known as measure receiver

# ZVA 4-Port Test Set



# ZVA 2-Port Test Set with direct receiver access (B16)



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# Measurement Errors (Calibration)

## Drift Errors

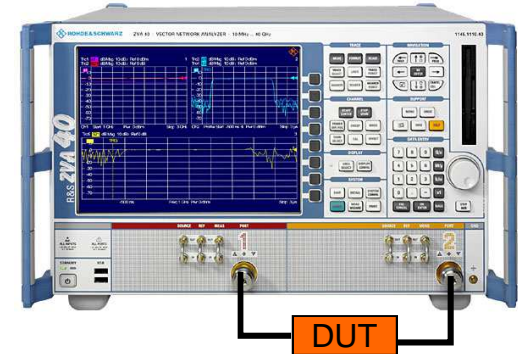
- Caused by changes in environment after calibration (temperature, humidity)
- Minimized by controlling test environment

## Random Errors

- Caused by instrument noise, switch and connector repeatability
- Not repeatable
- Minimized by high quality equipment and **good measurement practices**

## Systematic Errors

- Due to non-ideal components in the VNA and test setup
- Assumed to be repeatable
- **Calibration** is used to correct for these errors
- Residual error limited by quality of calibration standards



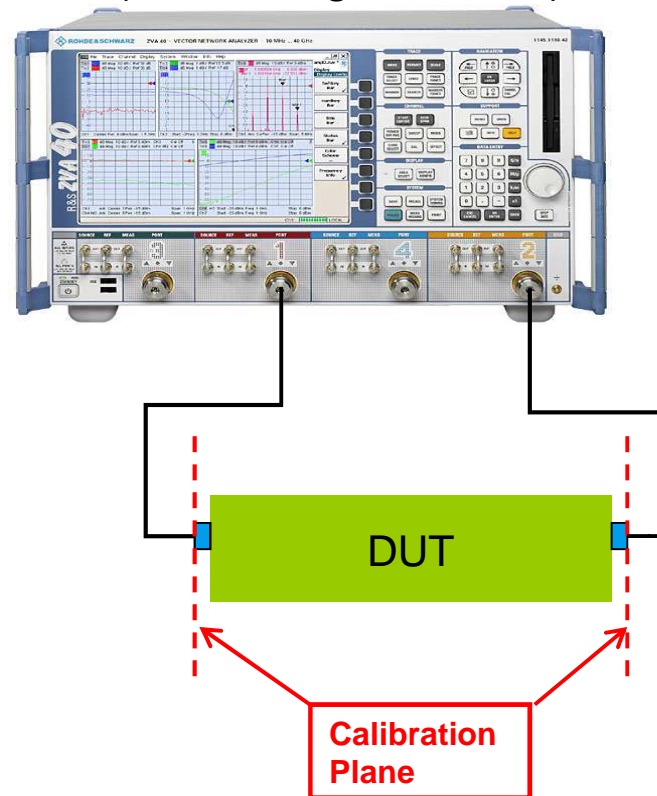
cannot be  
removed –  
only minimized

removed (nearly)  
with calibration



# Calibration

- We only want to measure our DUT (device under test) and nothing else!
- Need to remove the phase and amplitude response of our test setup
- Connect known standard (something we know) to the “calibration plane”



# Types of Error Correction

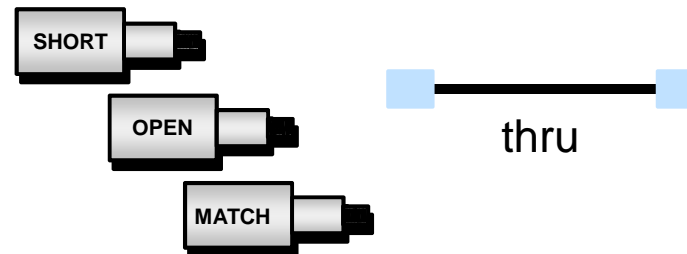
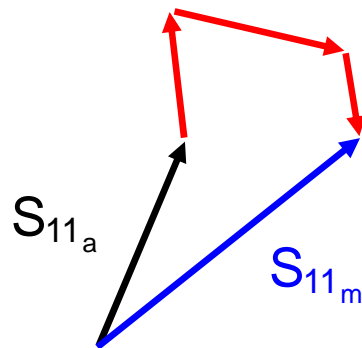
- **Response (normalization)**

- simple to perform
- only corrects for tracking errors
- stores reference trace in memory, then does data divided by memory



- **Vector**

- requires more standards
- requires an analyzer that can measure phase
- accounts for all major sources of systematic error



# Vector Error Correction

- Process of characterizing systematic error terms
  - Measure **known** standards
  - Remove effects from subsequent measurements
- 1-port calibration (*reflection measurements*)
  - Only 3 systematic error terms measured
  - Directivity, source match, and reflection tracking
- Full 2-port calibration (*reflection and transmission measurements*)
  - 10 systematic error terms measured (crosstalk assumed to be zero)
  - Usually requires 7 measurements on four known standards (TOSM)
  - Thru need not be characterized (unknown thru calibration)
- Standards defined in cal kit definition file
  - Network analyzer contains standard cal kit definitions
  - **CAL KIT DEFINITION MUST MATCH ACTUAL CAL KIT USED!**
  - User-built standards must be characterized and entered into user cal kit



# Improvement from a One-Port Calibration

Measurement of match at the end of a 2ft cable



# Methods of De-embedding

- Simple delay (port extension)
  - Simply moves reference plane (mathematically)
  - Assumes fixture is ideal transmission line with fixed delay
  - Simple loss model can optionally be included
  - Delay can be entered explicitly or measured with an open or short
- Fixture Compensation
  - Models fixture vs. frequency (delay and loss)
  - Does not assume fixture is simple ideal transmission line
  - Compensation can be measured with open, short, or both
  - AFR can also be done
- De-Embedding
  - Models fixture as lumped element network or...
  - Uses measured S-parameters of fixture to de-embed
  - Most accurate, but S-parameters can be difficult to measure for some fixtures



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# Introduction – Signal Integrity

- Signal Integrity is a set of measures of the quality of an electrical signal
- Two Key Aspects of SI:
  - **Timing** which can be quantified as Jitter
  - **Signal Quality** which can be described with parameters such as ringing, crosstalk, etc.
- Jitter can be measured directly in the time-domain using an oscilloscope or in the frequency-domain using a phase noise analyzer
- Signal Quality can be measured in the time-domain using a high-speed TDR technique or in the frequency-domain using a vector network analyzer (s-parameters).
- IEEE P802.3ap Task Force uses S-parameters as test cases for proposed solutions to the problem of 10 Gbit/s ethernet over backplanes.





# Measurement Techniques for Balanced Devices

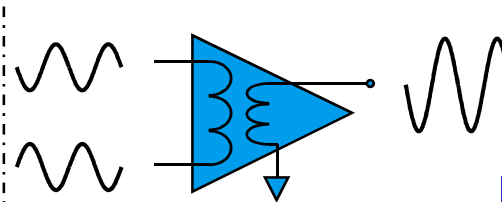


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# Balanced Devices

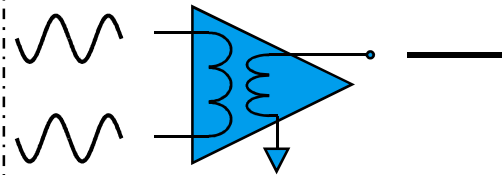
**Ideal device responds to differential input signals and rejects common-mode input signals**

**Differential-mode signal**

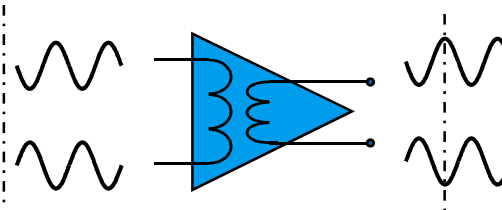


Balanced to single-ended

**Common-mode signal  
(EMI or ground noise)**

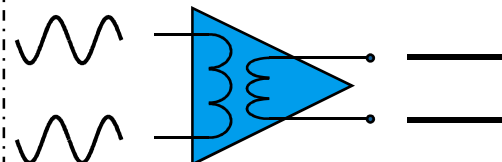


**Differential-mode signal**

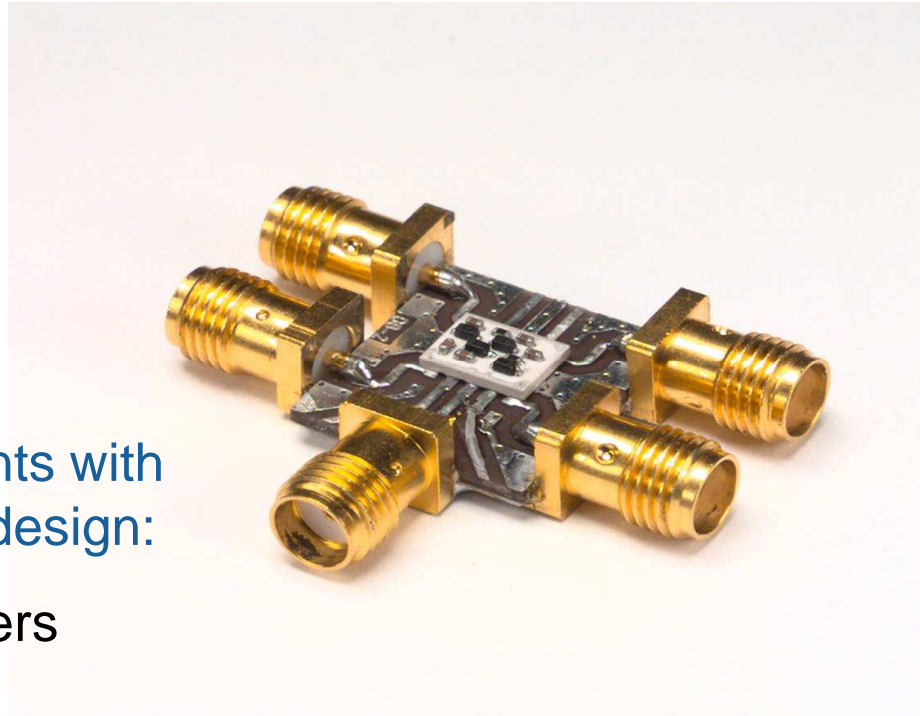


Fully balanced

**Common-mode signal  
(EMI or ground noise)**



# Balanced devices – Why Balanced Design?



## Components with balanced design:

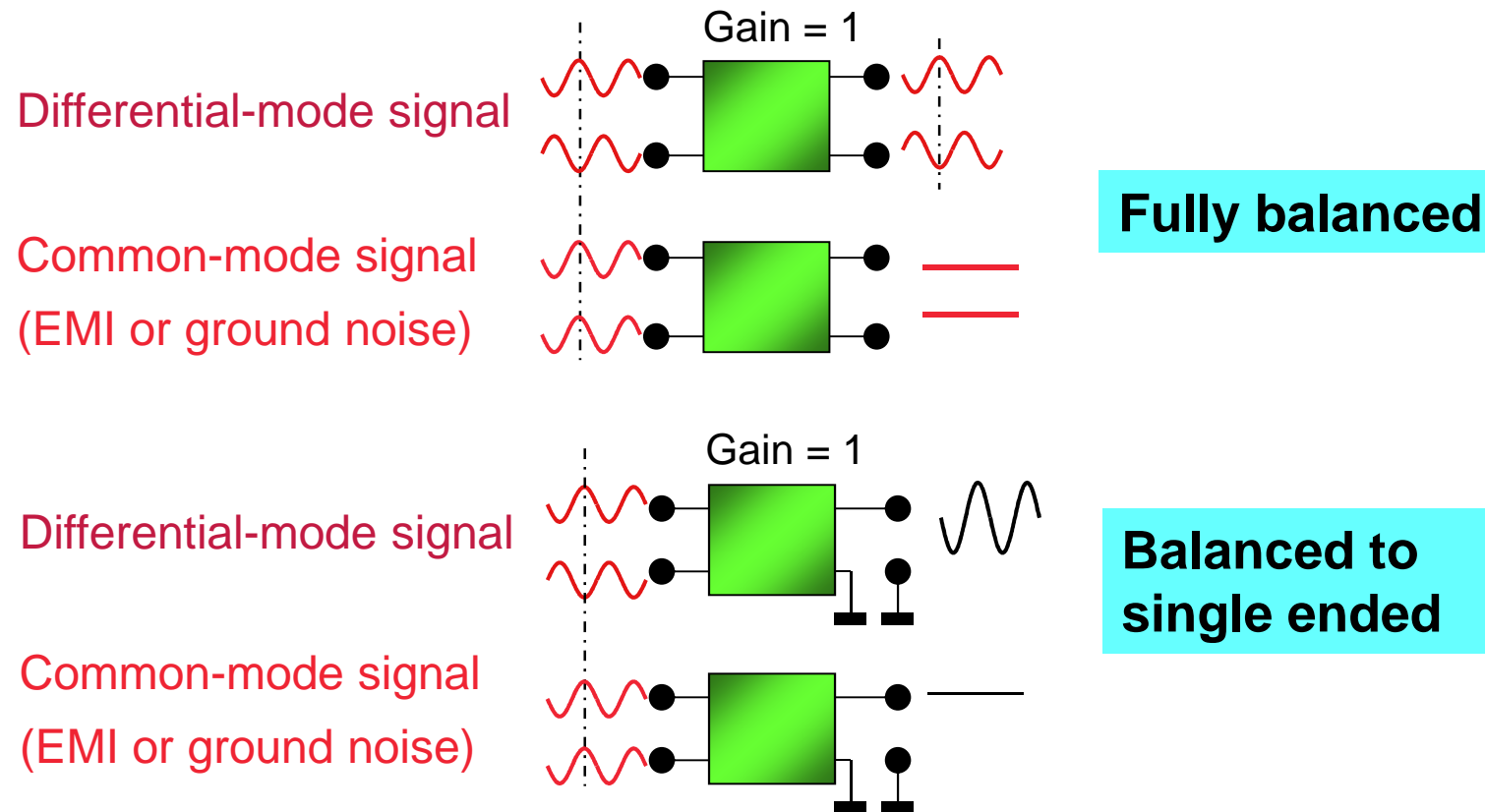
- Amplifiers
- Mixers
- Filters (e.g. SAW filters)
- PCB layout in mobile phones
- LAN adapters, converters, filters
- PC components (HDD control, etc)
- Almost all signals high-speed serial data signals

## ■ Advantages:

- High noise immunity
  - Minimizes Power and ground plane noise
  - Minimizes EMI susceptibility
  - Minimizes Cross talk
- Low radiated noise
- High integration density
- Lower power consumption



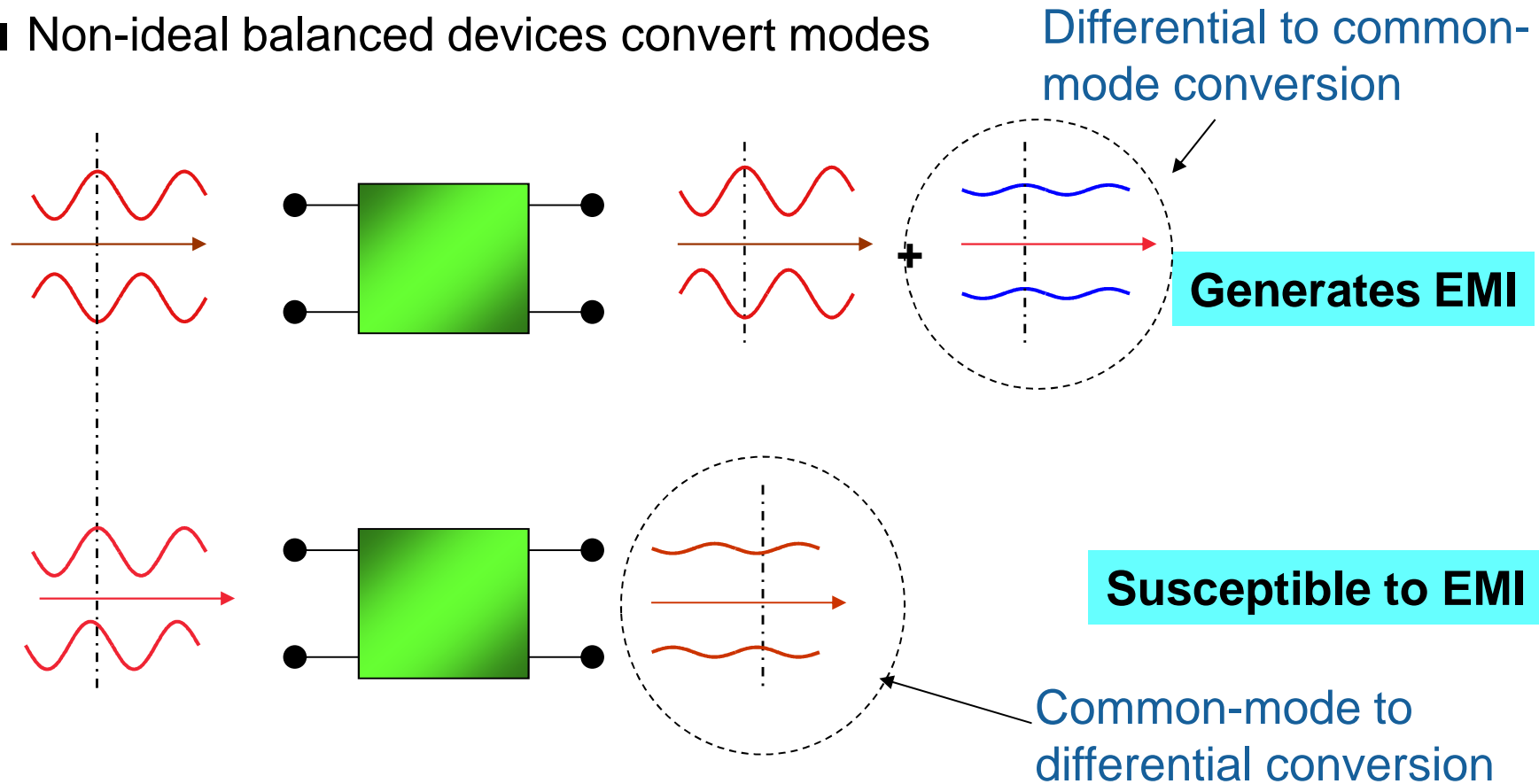
# Ideal Balanced Device Characteristics



Ideally, balanced devices transmit differential and reject common-mode signals

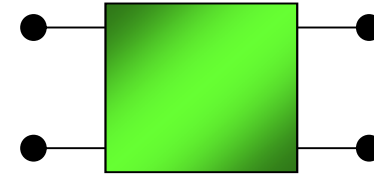
# Non-Ideal Balanced Device Characteristics

- Non-ideal balanced devices convert modes



# Parameters to Test for a Balanced Device

- Performance in pure differential mode
- Performance in pure common mode
- Conversion from differential mode to common mode (in both directions)
- Conversion from common mode to differential mode (in both directions)



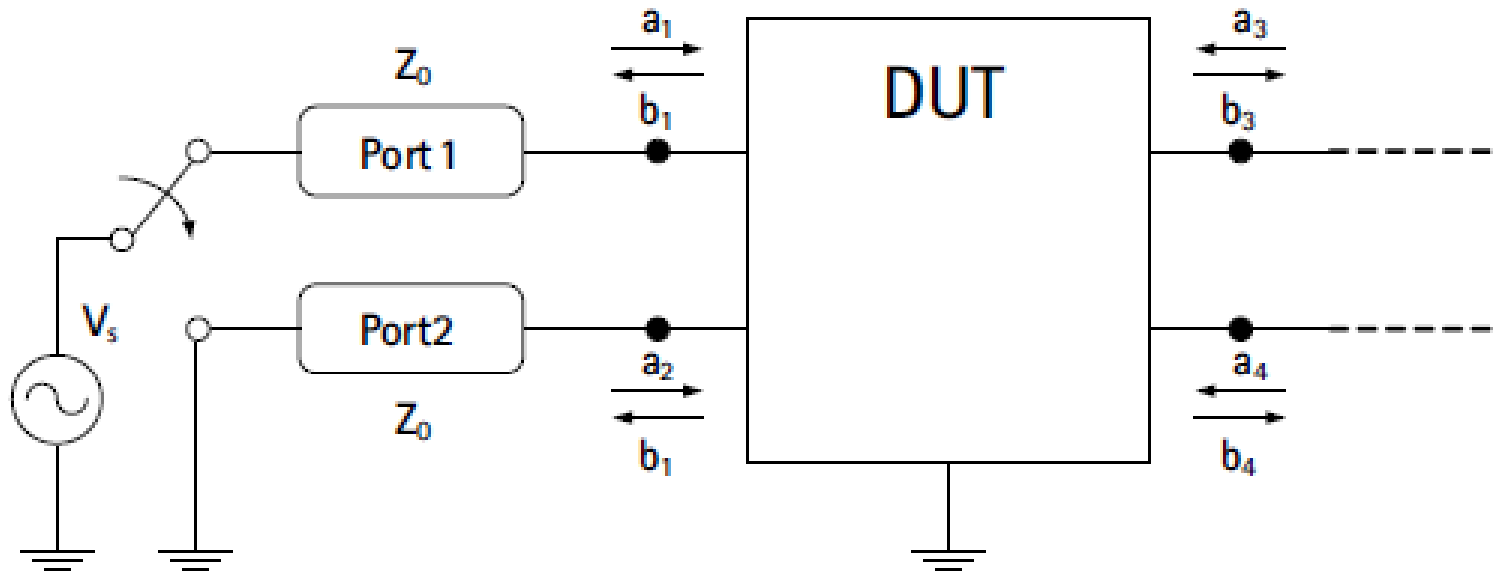
# Basic Architecture: Definition of Differential Measurements

## Measurement Principle

- VirDi = Virtual differential Mode
  - Characterization of balanced DUT as single ended DUT with mathematical calculation of mixed-mode S-Parameters from single ended S-Parameters
- TruDi = True differential Mode
  - Stimulation of DUT with true differential and common mode signals with calculation of mixed-mode S-Parameters from error corrected mixed mode wave quantities



# Virtual Differential Measurement



- Single ended measurements with post processing using linear superposition
- Applicable for all passive devices and active devices operating in their linear region
- Large deviations compared to True Differential in large signal operation, especially in terms of compression curve characteristics
  - Nonlinear behavior of the DUT prohibits linear superposition



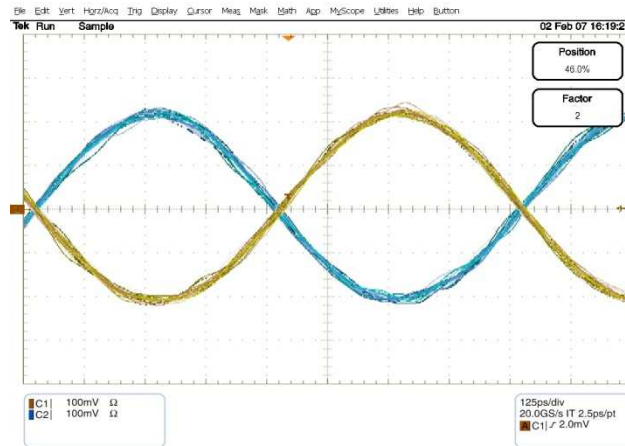
# ZVA – True Differential Mode

- Coherent sources
  - Generation of true differential and common mode stimulus signals
  - At least one signal output can be adjusted in amplitude and phase with respect to the other
- Simultaneous measurement of two reference signals (a waves) and two measurement signals (b waves)
- Four-port calibration in the reference plane
  - Vector-corrected measurement of single ended waves or voltages
- Calculation of true differential S-Parameters from vector corrected wave quantities

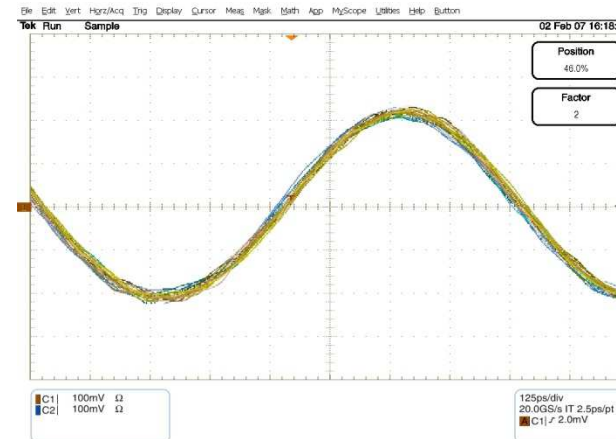


# Sweep modes (R&S ZVA-K6)

differential mode  $180^\circ$



common mode  $0^\circ$



## Coherent signals of arbitrary phase and amplitude imbalance are possible

- Sweep Modes:
  - Frequency
  - Phase (Phase of the stimulating signal can be swept from  $0^\circ$  to  $180^\circ$  )
  - Magnitude (Variation of the relative magnitude of the differential signals)
  - “Classical” VNA calibration techniques sufficient (full two port)
    - ⇒ Investigation of the DUT under real conditions

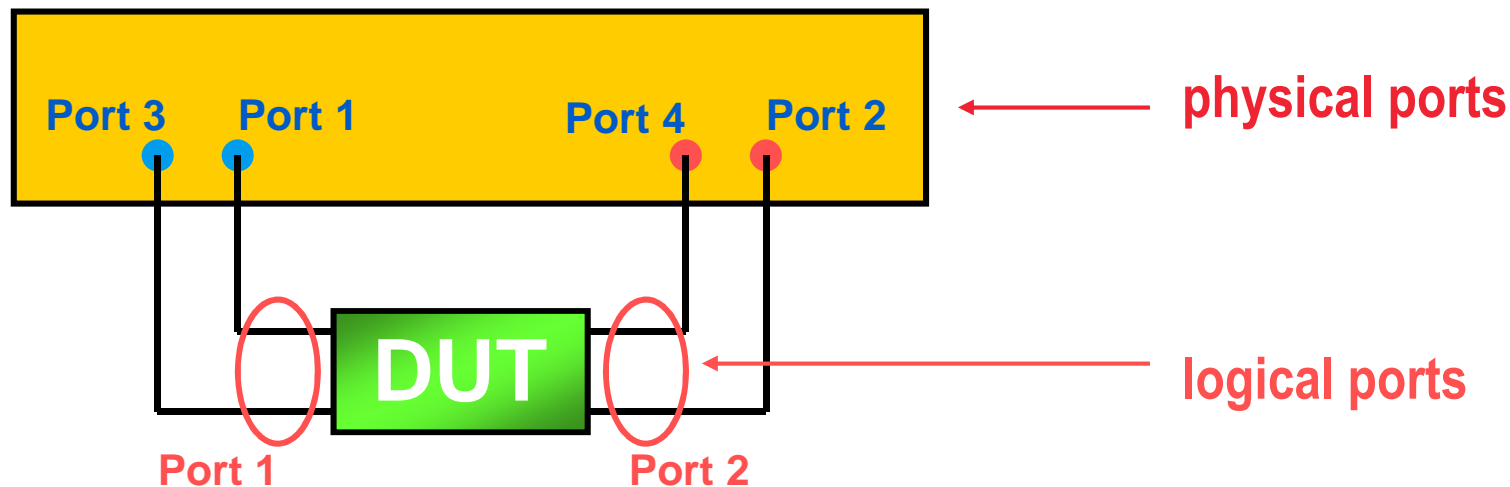
# Typical measurements quality parameters

- Differential and common mode insertion loss
- Differential and common mode return loss
- NEXT-Measurements (Near End Crosstalk)
- FEXT-Measurements (Far End Crosstalk)
- Amplitude-Imbalance
- Phase-Imbalance
- Common-Mode Rejection Ratio (CMRR)



# Port Configurations for Differential DUT

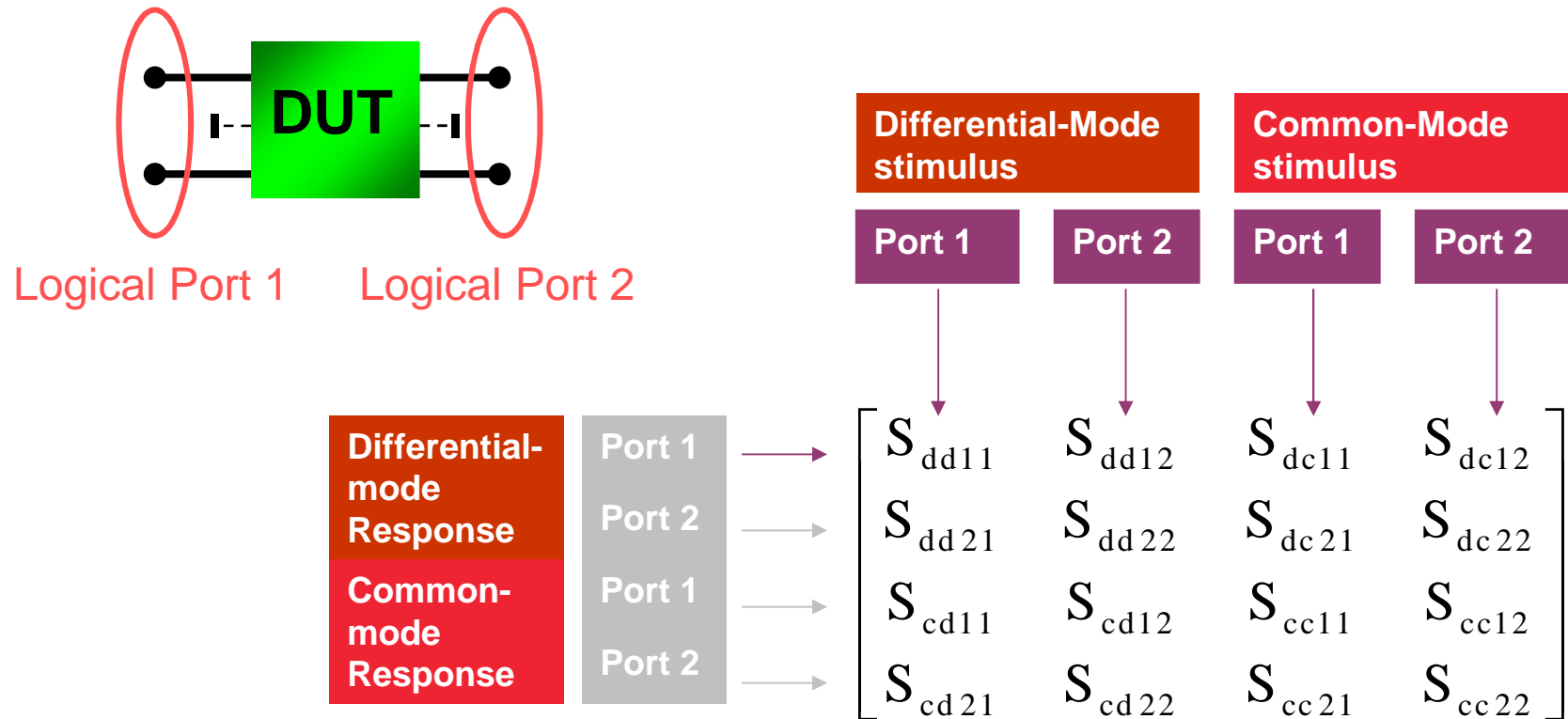
- Physical single ending ports → logical balanced ports



- Different impedances for common-mode and differential-mode
  - differential-mode (ideally matched) →  $100\ \Omega$  ( $= 2 \cdot Z_0$ )
  - common-mode (ideally matched) →  $25\ \Omega$  ( $= 1/2 \cdot Z_0$ )

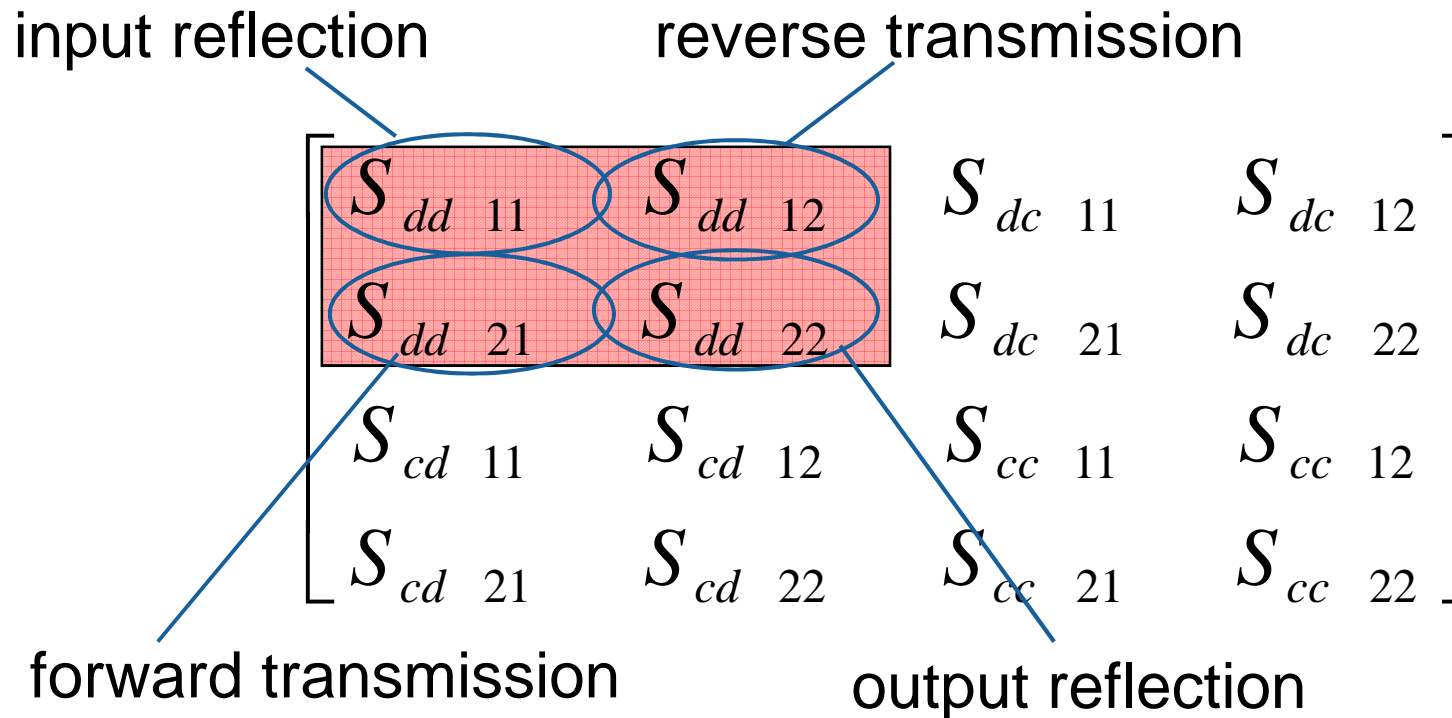
# Modal Decomposition Method

## Mixed Mode S-Parameter Matrix



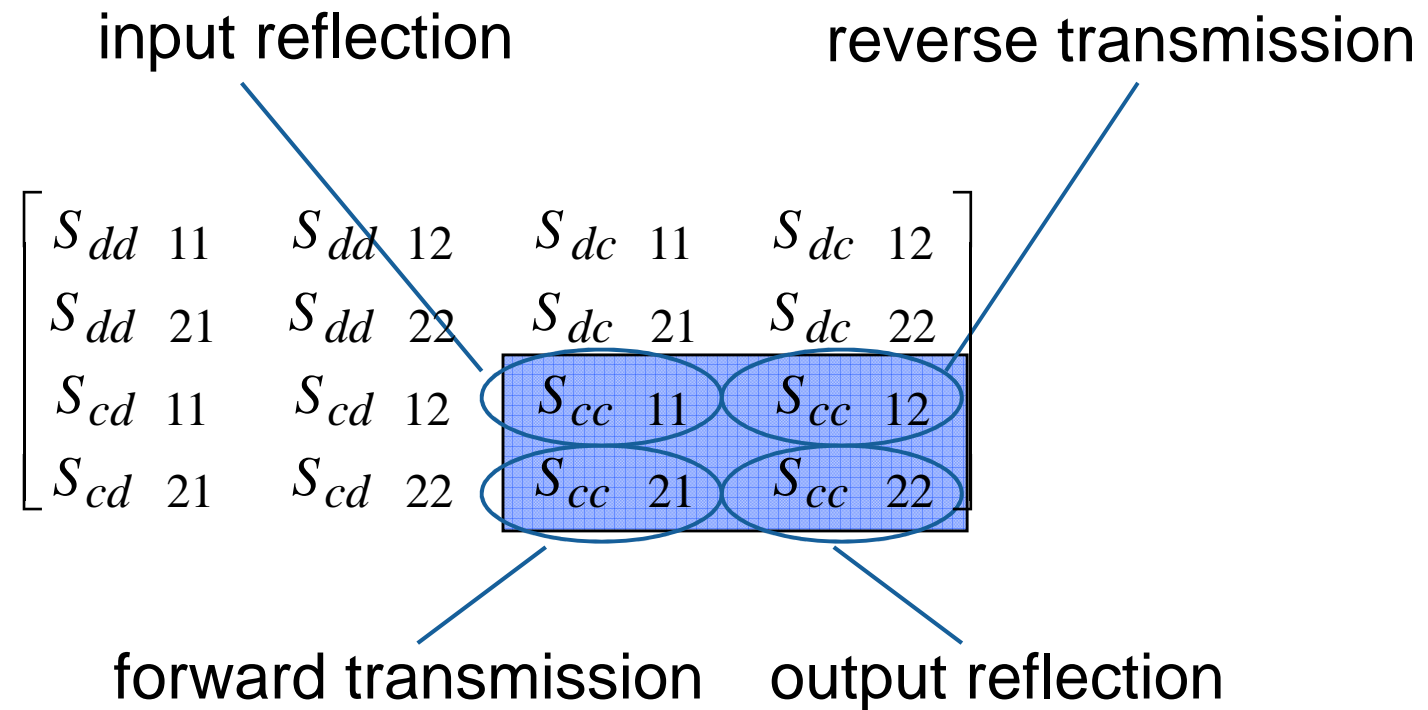
**Naming Convention:**  $S_{mode\ meas., mode\ stim., port\ meas., port\ stim.}$

# Mixed Mode S-Matrix: DD Quadrant



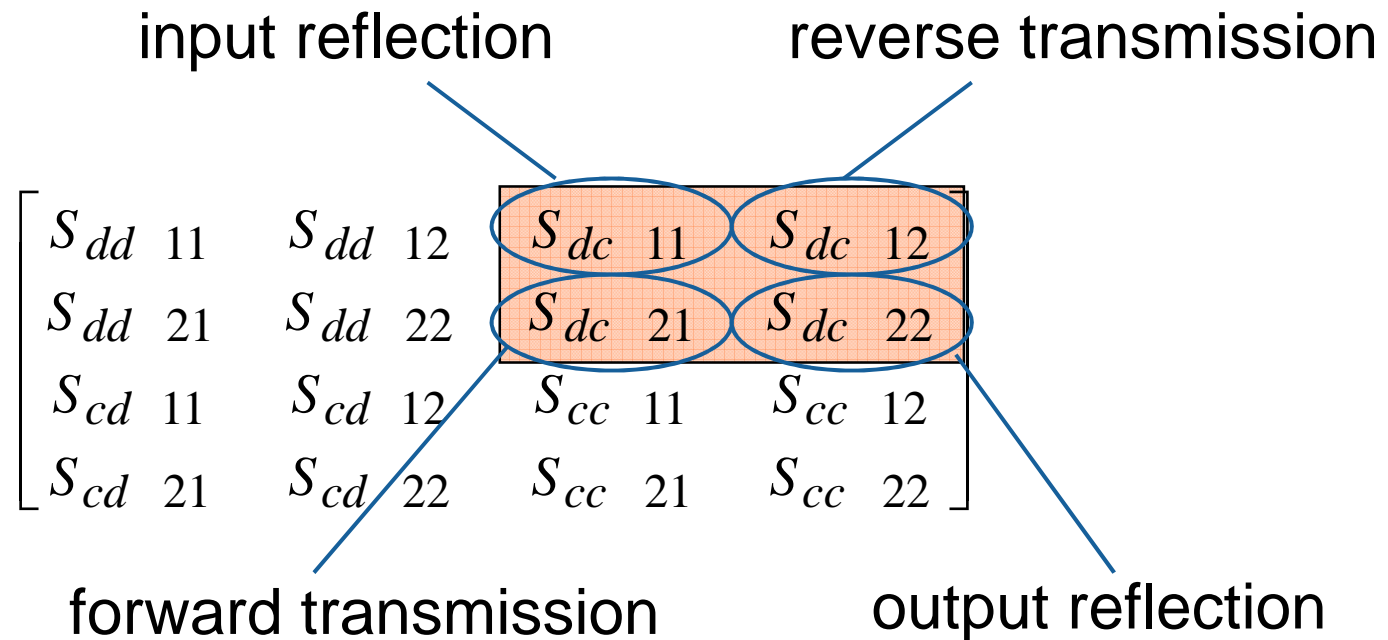
- Describes fundamental performance in pure differential-mode operation

# Mixed Mode S-Matrix: CC Quadrant



- Describes fundamental performance in pure common-mode operation

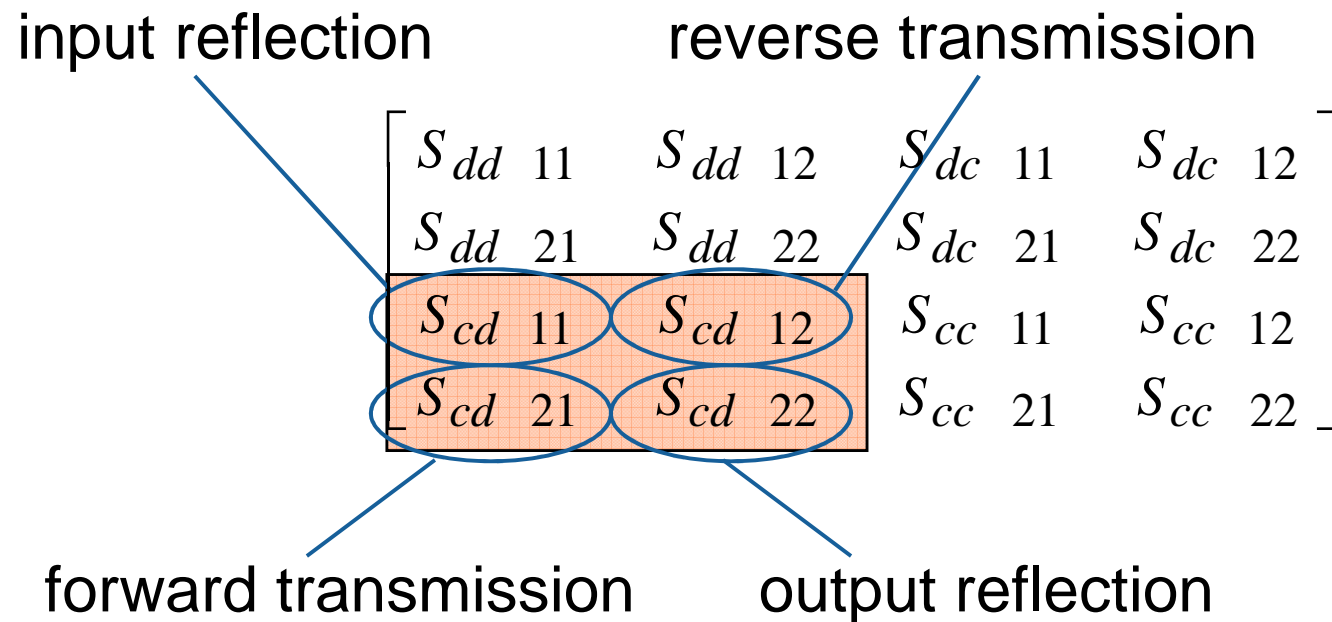
# Mixed Mode S-Matrix: DC Quadrant



- Describes conversion of a common-mode stimulus to a differential-mode response
- Terms are ideally equal to zero with perfect symmetry
- Related to the generation to EMI

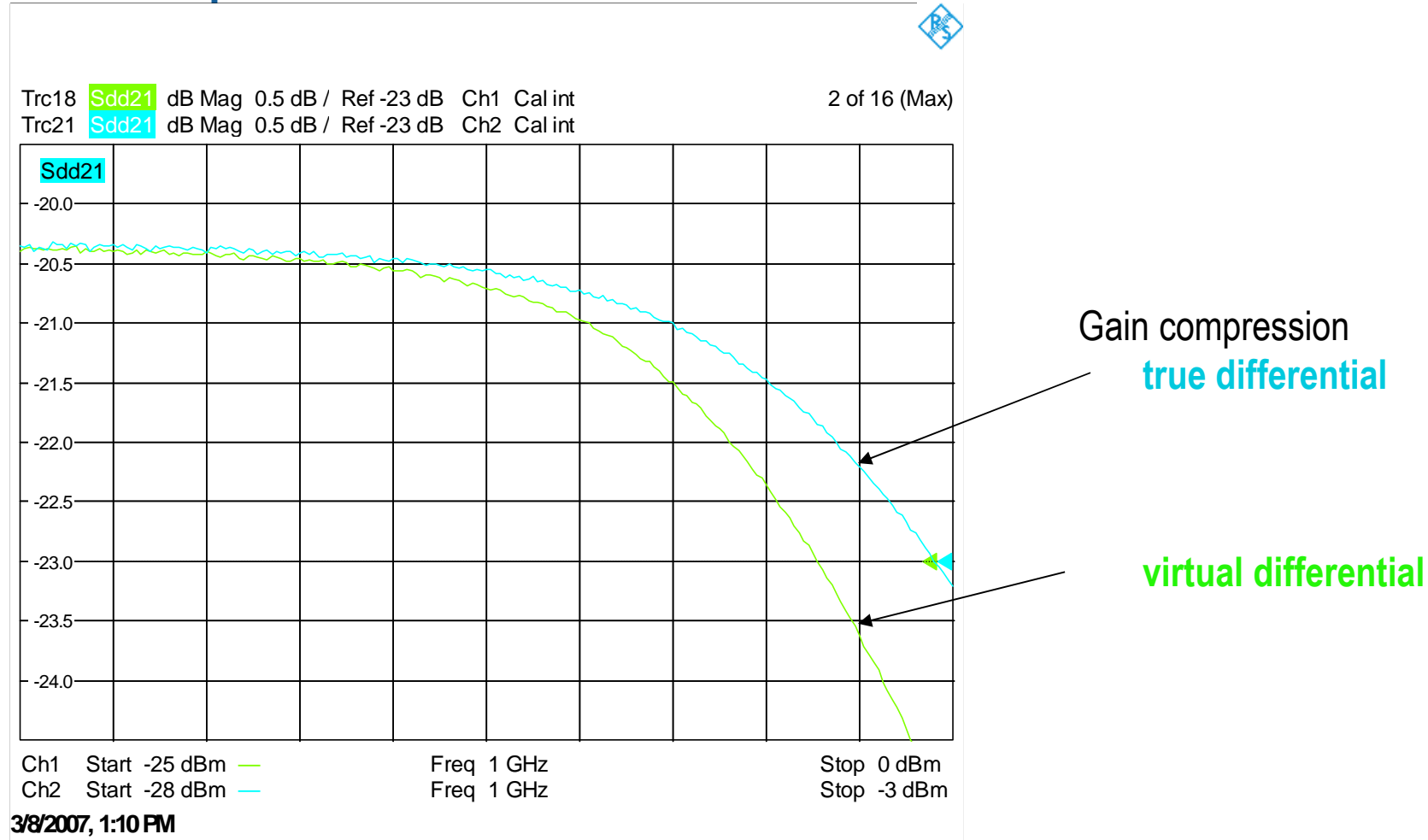


# Mixed Mode S-Matrix: CD Quadrant



- Describes conversion of a differential-mode stimulus to a common-mode response
- Terms are ideally equal to zero with perfect symmetry
- Related to the susceptibility of EMI

# Example 1: Tunable Active Filter



True differential power axis has been shifted by -3 dB to equalize voltage amplitudes

# Summary: TruDi vs. VirDi

- Passive Devices/Linear operation
  - TruDi and VirDi give exactly the same results
- Active Devices/Non-linear operation
  - Significant difference between TruDi and VirDi
  - TruDi represents the real operating conditions of a device
- TruDi Measurements
  - Requires two phase coherent sources
  - Ability to set amplitude and phase independently
  - Relative phase stability of VNA sources is crucial for reproducible results



# Measurement Techniques for TDR



**ROHDE & SCHWARZ**

# Applications of TDR

## ■ Localization of Faults in Transmission Lines

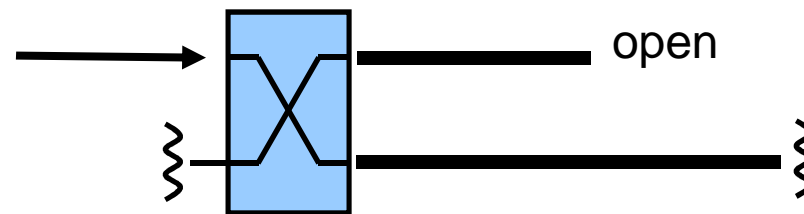
- This is the 1<sup>st</sup> application that I think of for TDR measurements
- Examples include localizing a fault on an underground cable or a cable running up a tower
- Test to see if an antenna is properly connected
- Check if an amplifier or filter is presenting the expected impedance



# Applications of TDR

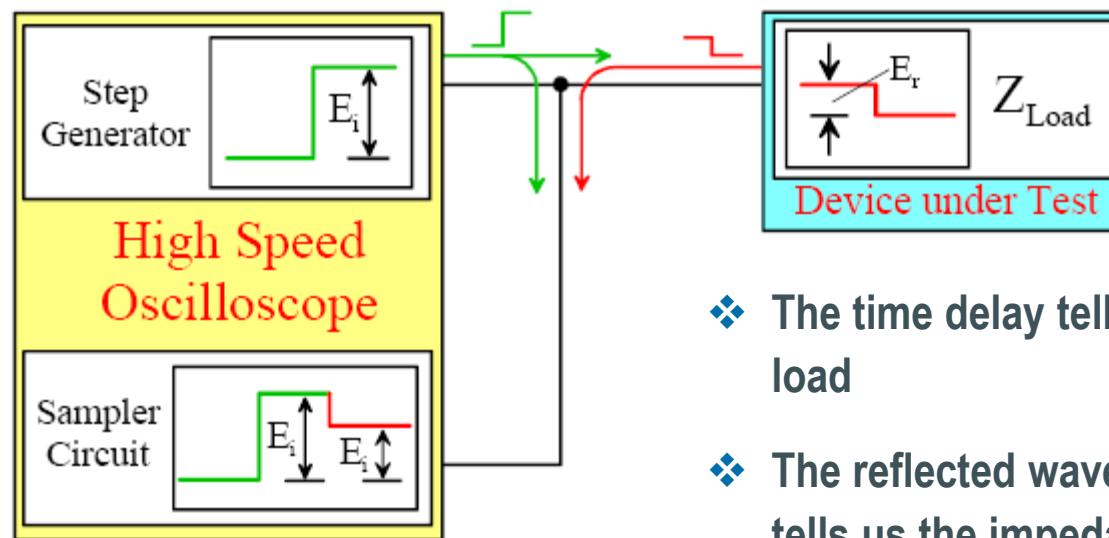
## ■ Moving the Reference Plane of RL measurements

- This is the second most common use for TDR
- In the frequency domain we see “all” the reflected signals. By separating the results in the time domain, we can determine the source of the reflections.



# But what is a TDR measurement?

- In a TDR measurement, we send a pulse down a transmission line, and then we record (in time) the reflections that come back out of the transmission line.
- This can be done with a “fast” power supply and a “fast” oscilloscope.
- The goal is to measure the transient traveling waves on the transmission line leading to the device under test



- ❖ The time delay tells us the distance to the load
- ❖ The reflected wave (magnitude and phase) tells us the impedance of the load

# And what are the challenges

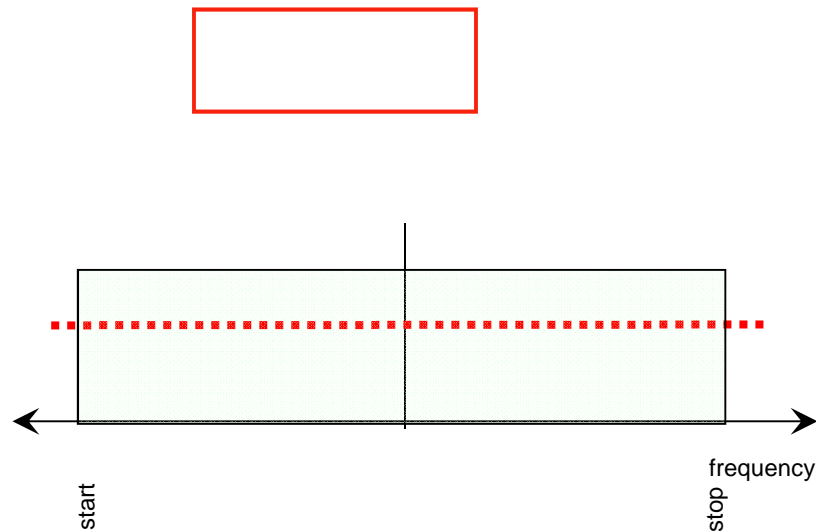
- Generating a very clean and fast pulse
  1. **A stepped pulse in the time domain generates \*all\* frequencies in the frequency domain.**
  2. **The pulse generator needs to be matched to the transmission line. Mismatches need to be “calibrated” out of the measurement.**
  3. **The oscilloscope needs to sample at a very high frequency. These pulses are traveling at the speed of light if the transmission line has an air dielectric.**
  4. **The oscilloscope also needs to be matched to the transmission line.**
- These challenges match up well with the features of modern vector network analyzers.



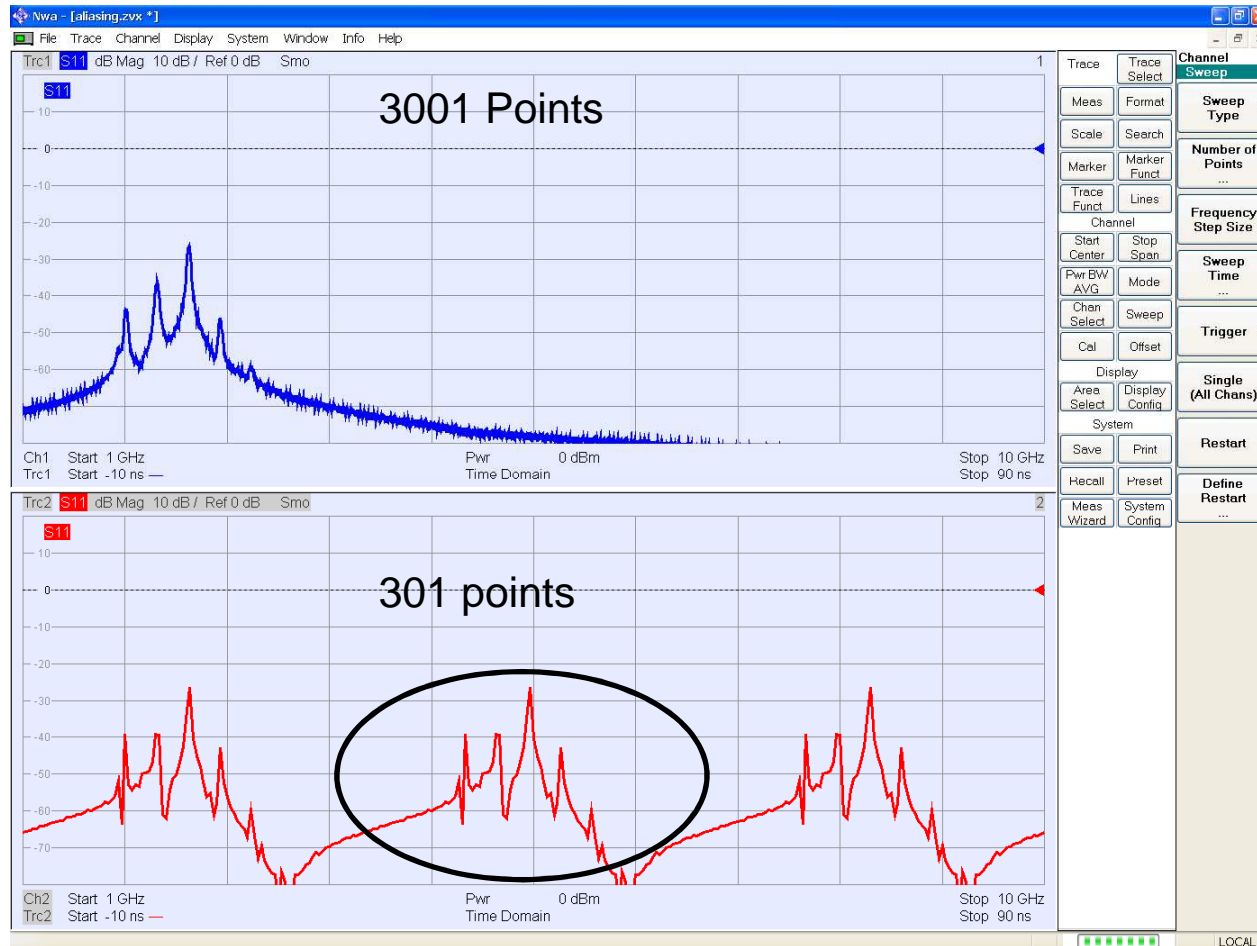


# Aliasing in the time domain

- Aliasing results from the fact that the Network Analyzer measures the spectrum at a finite number of discrete measurement points
- In the time domain, this results in the time response being copied at regular intervals (Fourier transform of a comb spectrum is a comb spectrum)
- Ambiguity range:  $\Delta t = 1 / \Delta f$   
where  $\Delta f$  = spacing of measurement points



# Aliasing in the time domain



# Tradeoffs and settings

- We need to pick a frequency span and number of points
  - We will end up with an alias free range, and a time resolution.
  - A spreadsheet can help us with this.
- We then pick a window function in the frequency domain
  - We end up with a minimum pulse width, and a certain amount of side lobe suppression or ringing.
  - What are we trying to measure, high dynamic range, or a high amount of precision on the distance or time axis.

Microsoft Excel - ZVX TDR Measurement Utility.xls

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Type a question for help

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Reply with Changes... End Review...

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**ROHDE & SCHWARZ**

Utility for Time Domain Reflectometry (TDR) Measurements with RS ZVX

**INPUTS**

Span (Hz)	3.00E+09
# of Points	4101
Dielectric Constant of Cable	2.3
Speed of Light (m/s)	3.00E+08
Meters to Feet Conversion	3.28

**RESULTS**

Max Measurable Cable Length (ft)	986.34
Max Measurable Time (s)	1.37E-06
Distance Resolution (in)	0.791
Time Resolution (s)	6.59E-02

**Background:**

When setting up a TDR measurement, the two key setup parameters of the Network Analyzer are the Span and the Number of Points. The way that modern Network Analyzers make TDR measurements is by directly measuring the response of the device in the frequency domain, and then calculating the Time Domain Impulse Response by performing an Inverse Fourier Transform (IFT).

Ideally, the time domain response would be from a single, infinitely narrow impulse (Dirac Delta function). The frequency transform of the ideal Dirac Impulse is an infinite spectrum that is completely continuous. However, we know when measuring with a Network Analyzer, we are measuring a Finite Spectrum (Span) at Discrete Points (# of Points). The consequences of this are two-fold:

- 1) Due to the Finite Spectrum Measured, the calculated Impulse in the Time Domain is not infinitely Narrow.
- 2) Due to the Discrete Measurement Points (instead of Continuous points), the period of the impulse in the time domain is not infinity, i.e. the impulse will be replicated at regular time intervals, called the Pulse Repetition Frequency (PRF).

Due to consequence 1), we know that the resolution in the time domain is limited. Consequence 2) means that there is a limit to the unambiguous measurement time period. This is because there will be replications of the pulse in the time domain that are resulting from the Network Analyzer's calculation and not from the DUT itself (Spurious Results). The time period is known as the **Alias-Free Range**.

Setting up the Network Analyzer:

- The time resolution (and thus distance resolution), can be calculated directly from the Span: **Time Resolution = 1 / Span (Hz)**
- The Alias Free Range can be calculated by the formula: **Alias Free Range = 1 / (Span / # of Points)**
- (The Alias Free Range is denoted in the spreadsheet above by the parameter "Max Measurable Time (s)"
- To get either of the above parameters into distance, simply multiply by the Speed of Light, and divide by SQRT(Dielectric Constant)

Using Spreadsheet above:

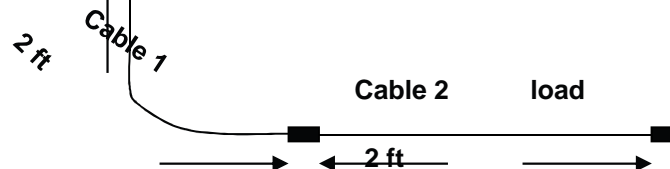
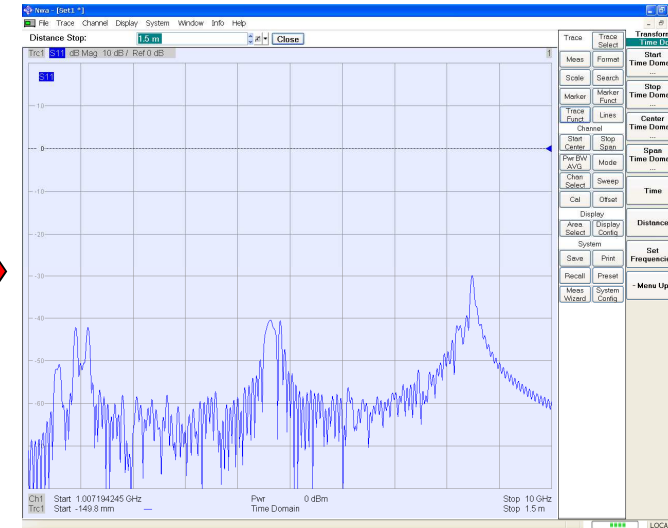
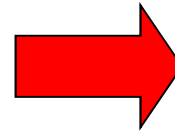
The goal is to achieve the desired measurement resolution and Max Measurable cable length simultaneously. Additionally, it is desired to use the minimum number of points to achieve this, since the fewer the measured points, the faster the measurement speed. The maximum number of points that can be set on the Rohde & Schwarz ZVX is 20,001.

Sheet1/

Draw AutoShapes

Ready NUM

# Example: Distance to Fault (DTF)



## SETTINGS and CONSTANTS

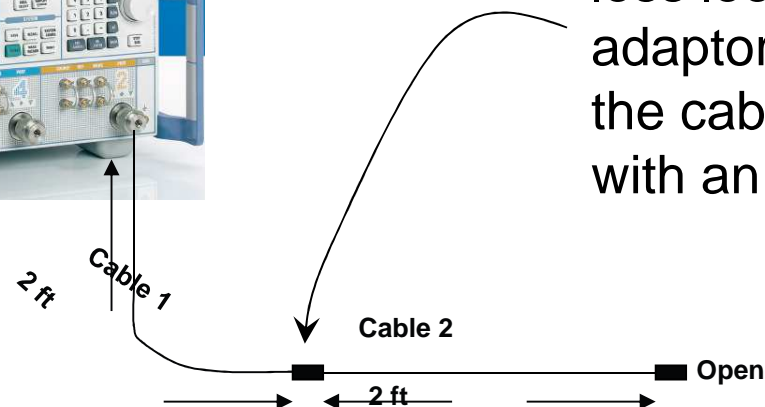
Span (Hz)	9.99E+09
# of Points	1001
Dielectric Constant of Cable	2
Lowpass Mode=2, Bandpass Mode = 1	1
Speed of Light (m/s)	3.00E+08
Meters to Feet Conversion	3.28

## LIMITATIONS

Max Measurable Cable Length (ft)	69.72
Max Measurable Time (s)	1.00E-07
Distance Resolution (in)	0.255
Time Resolution (s)	4.25E-02

# Time Gating

- Time Gating opens up a whole new range of applications for the Time Domain option of a Network Analyzer
- Typical application is to filter out certain parts of the response and display back into the Frequency Domain.

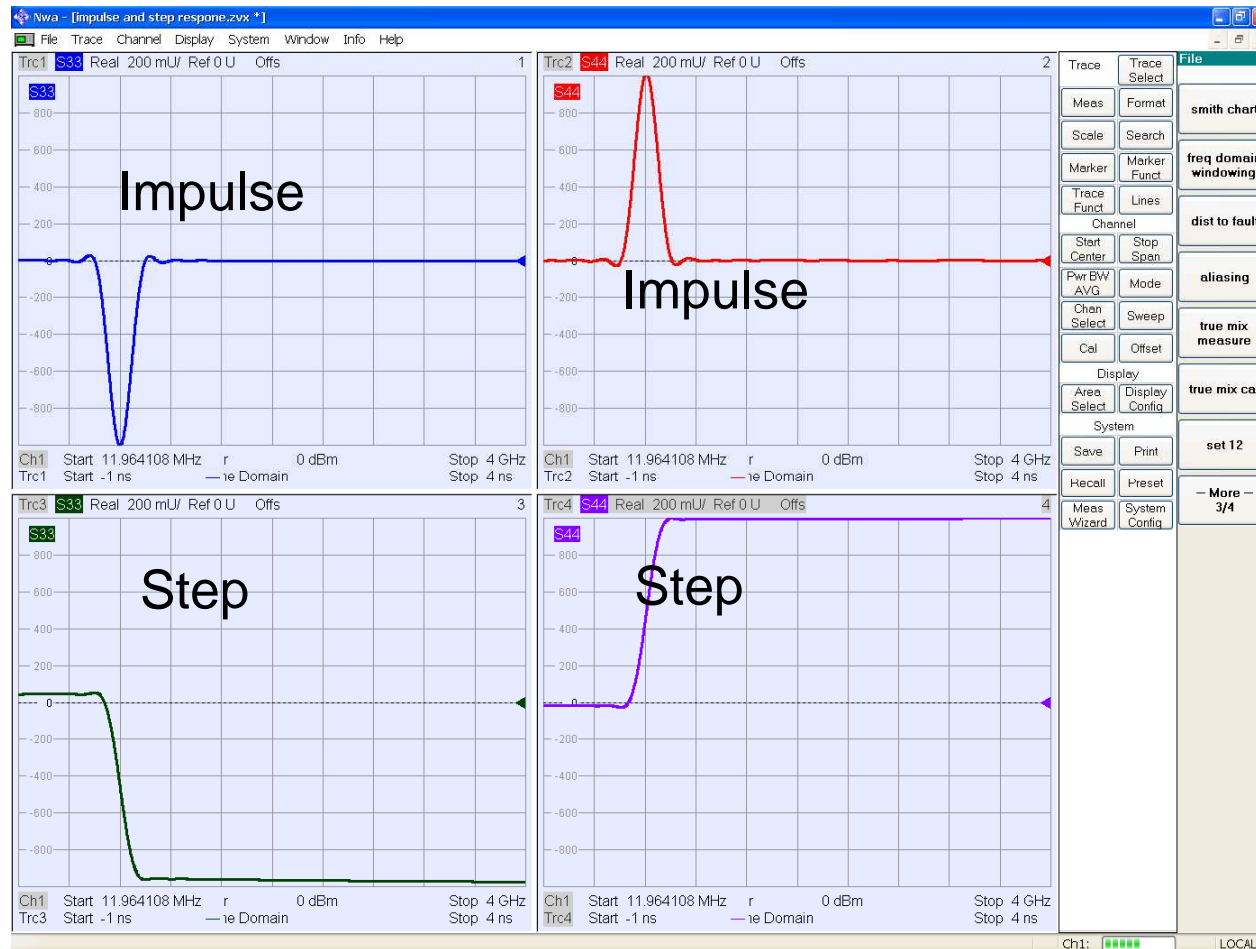


Measure the return loss looking into this adaptor, even though the cable is terminated with an open circuit.

# Impulse and Step Response Examples

SHORT

OPEN

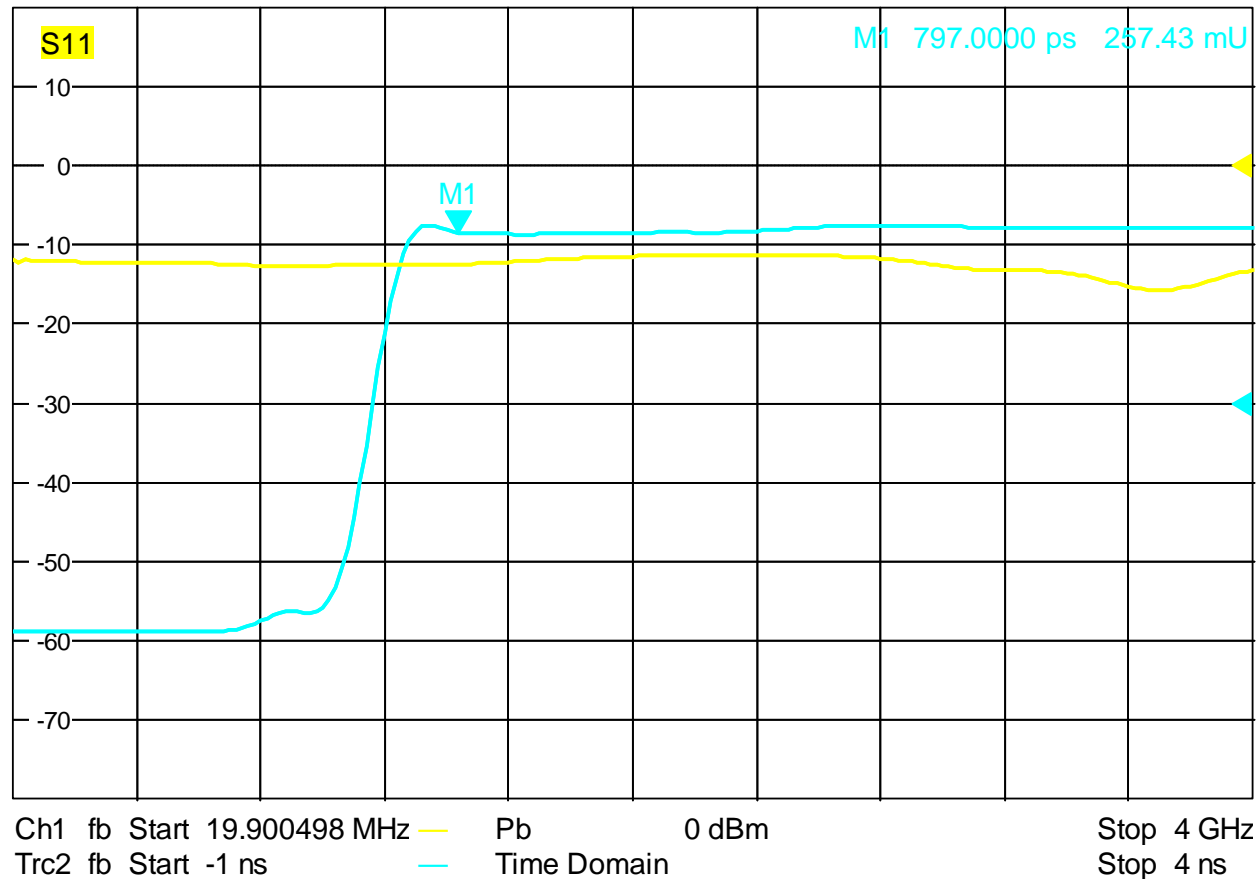


# S11 measurement with no gating



Trc1 **S11** dB Mag 10 dB / Ref 0 dB  
Trc2 **S11** Real 50 mU / Ref 150 mU

1



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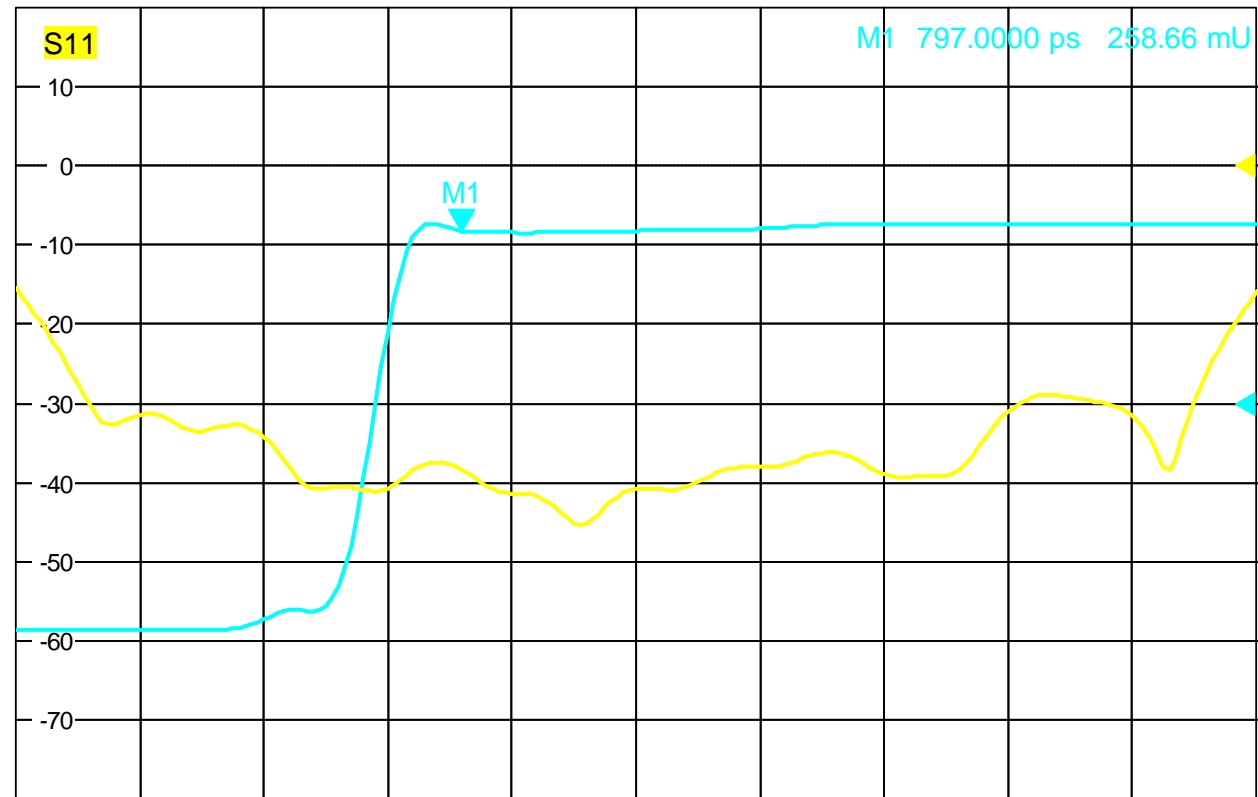


# S11 measurement with gating



Trc1 **S11** dB Mag 10 dB / Ref 0 dB Gat  
Trc2 **S11** Real 50 mU/ Ref 150 mU

1



Ch1 fb Start 19.900498 MHz — Pb 0 dBm Stop 4 GHz  
Trc2 fb Start -1 ns — Time Domain Stop 4 ns

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# Summary of VNA Settings

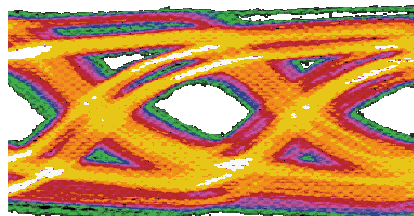
- The **Span** determines the *Time Resolution* as follows:  
When in **Bandpass Mode**                      Resolution =  $2 / \text{Span}$   
When in **Lowpass Mode**                      Resolution =  $1 / \text{Span}$
- The **# of Points** and **Span** determine the *Ambiguity Range* by the following relation:                      Range =  $1 / \Delta f = 1 / (\text{Span} / \# \text{ of points})$
- Use **Lowpass Mode** if the sign of the Real Part of  $\Gamma$  is important (e.g. for a Short Circuit Response). **Bandpass Mode** can be used when only concerned with Magnitude measurements.
- **Frequency Windowing** affects the shape of the main and side lobe responses in the Time Domain.
- Use **Time Gating** to filter out undesired discontinuities of the DUT.
- **Time Gate Windowing** affects the shape of the main and side lobe responses in the Frequency Domain.



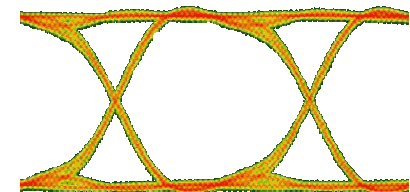
# What is the Measurement Frequency?

- The max frequency for the VNA can be calculated from the required rise time of the data.

<b>ZNB8</b>	<b>8.5 GHz</b>	<b>59 ps</b>
<b>ZVA24</b>	<b>24 GHz</b>	<b>21 ps</b>
<b>ZVA40</b>	<b>40GHz</b>	<b>13 ps</b>
<b>ZVA50</b>	<b>50 GHz</b>	<b>10 ps</b>
<b>ZVA67</b>	<b>67 GHz</b>	<b>7.5 ps</b>
<b>ZVA110</b>	<b>110GHz</b>	<b>4.5 ps</b>



+



# Thank you!

