POWER BOOSTER APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION NOTE 14

POWER OPERATIONAL AMPLIFIER

HTTP://WWW.APEXMICROTECH.COM (800) 546-APEX (800) 546-2739

The Apex PB series of power booster amplifiers, PB50 and PB58, are high performance, yet economical and flexible, solutions to a wide variety of applications. Their voltage and current ratings of up to 200 volts at 2 amps for the PB50, and 300 volts at 1.5 amps for the PB58, satisfy most high voltage and high current requirements. In addition, the PB series is fast. The 100 V/µs slew rate these boosters offer is matched or exceeded by only a few expensive power or high voltage op amps. If accuracy, in the form of low offset, drift, and/or bias current, is the system requirement, the PB series, with the proper choice of driver amplifier, can deliver high voltage performance with accuracy equal to the best small-signal op amps available on the market, and do it economically.

DESIGNING WITH BOOSTER AMPLIFIERS: BASIC CONNECTIONS

Power supply requirements for the PB50 dictate that the negative supply rail must be at least 30 Volts below the COMMON terminal (pin 5), setting the minimum supply voltage at +/-30 V. The PB58 can operate from supplies as low as +/-15 volts.

The INPUT terminal of the PB series devices is a low impedance input typically on the order of 50 KΩ. Maximum safe input voltage range must be limited to less than +/-15 volts. These power boosters will always have an offset of typically .75 volts as a result of the common base bipolar input stage. When used with a driver amplifier, this offset will subtract from the swing available from the driver. For example, a driver op amp that is required to swing 20 volts peak-to-peak will actually swing -10.75 and +9.25 volts. This offset has no effect on offset of the total driver and booster circuit since this offset is effectively reduced by the open loop gain of the driver amplifier. Remember that this offset will always be apparent when used without a driver amplifier.

The COMMON terminal provides a ground reference for the internal input and feedback circuitry. It might be noted that it is possible to use this “ground” terminal as an input; however, the PB series has not been characterized for such usage. The ground terminal would appear as a low impedance inverting input which must be driven from a low impedance source such as an op amp output.

The GAIN terminal allows the connection of additional resistance in series with the built-in feedback resistor of the PB series. The compensation capacitor connected to COMP, pin 8, is in parallel with the feedback resistor. Designers can predict the frequency response of the PB series amplifiers for any compensation by simply calculating the pole frequency of the parallel connection of feedback resistor, R_G, and compensation capacitor. The pole frequency is given by:

$$FP = \frac{1}{2\pi\,(R_G + 6.2K)\,C_C}$$

Where: R_G = EXTERNAL FEEDB ACK RESISTANCE
C_C = EXTERNAL COMPENSATION CAPACITOR

For example, a 22 pF compensation capacitor across the 6.2 K ohm feedback resistor results in a pole frequency of 1.2 MHz. This corresponds with the Closed Loop Small Signal Response graph on the PB50 data sheet. A gain of 10 will require placing a 22 K ohm resistor in series with the built-in 6.2 K ohm internal feedback for a total feedback resistance of approximately 28 K ohm. In this case a 22 pF compensation capacitor produces a rolloff at 260 kHz, again corresponding to the PB50 small signal response graph.

COMPOSITE AMPLIFIER STABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The PB series data sheets provide 4 guidelines for insuring the stability of circuits designed with these boosters. Use of these guidelines can be complemented by the use of standard techniques such as plotting the overall gain response of the driver/booster combination and superimposing the feedback network response.

An example for determining the Aol (open loop gain) response of the composite amplifier is illustrated in Figure 1. At any given point on the frequency response, the overall gain is the sum of the gains (in dB) of the two amplifiers.

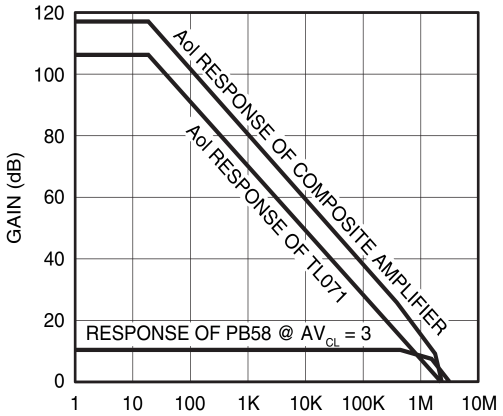


FIGURE 1. PLOTTING Aol FOR THE COMPOSITE AMPLIFIER

Figure 2 shows an example of such a plot for the deflection amplifier described in this application note. As a general rule, the intersection of the feedback response and open loop response should equate to a slope of no greater than 20 dB/decade to insure stability.

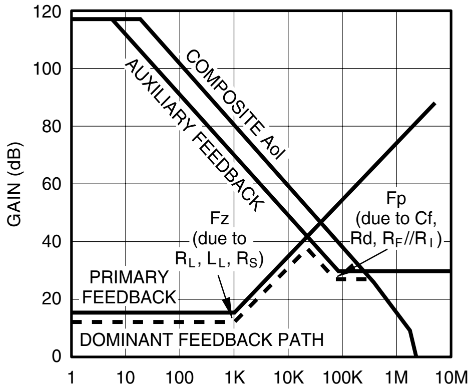


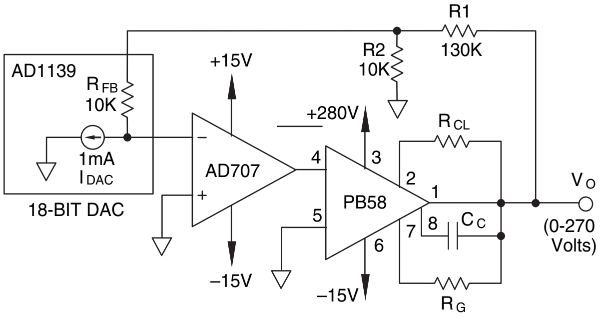
FIGURE 2. DEFLECTION AMPLIFIER FEEDBACK (I/ß)

The particular deflection amplifier described in this application note is a testament to the ease with which the PB series devices can be designed into circuits where stability is usually a problem. The magnetic deflection circuit, which is a current source with an inductive load inside the feedback loop, is inherently unstable. The composite amplifier responded quite well to standard techniques used to stabilize deflection amplifiers (see AN #5, **"Precision Magnetic Deflection"**) and presented no special stability problems.

The designer who may be apprehensive about using a booster (buffer with gain) need have no reservations when using PB50 or PB58.

APPLICATION EXAMPLES: PROGRAMMABLE POWER SUPPLIES

The programmable power supply (PPS) application is useful to demonstrate the versatility of the PB series boosters. Along with the need to supply high voltages and currents, programmable power supplies often need high accuracy and low drift, while at other times they may need to be fast-responding. The PB series allows the designer to optimize the circuit for these choices. Figure 3 is an example of a high accuracy PPS. An AD707 is selected as the driver amplifier to provide the extremely low offset required to obtain best possible performance from a high accuracy 18-bit DAC. The divider network on the output, R1 and R2, scale the output swing down to the full-scale range of the DAC. Accuracy will be affected by this divider, necessitating the use of high quality, low temperature coefficient (TC) resistors. If a packaged network can be used, then absolute TC is not nearly as important as TC ratio between R1 and R2. The use of this divider is preferable to the alternative technique of using an external DAC feedback resistor, since using the internal DAC feedback resistor insures the best possible temperature drift performance of the DAC itself. Most DAC's can exhibit up to 300 ppm/°C drift with external feedback resistors.



$$V_O = I_{DAC}\left\{\frac{R_{FB}\ R2 + R2\ R1 + R1\ R_{FB}}{R2}\right\} = I_{DAC}\ (270K)$$

FIGURE 3. HIGH ACCURACY PPS

APPLICATIONS AT LESS THAN FULL VOLTAGE AND CURRENT

The PB series do not have to be used at high voltages to realize all their performance benefits. Presently, only a few expensive IC power amplifiers can match these parts for slew rate and power bandwidth. Magnetic deflection applications require amplifiers with good speed performance at current levels often within those that the PB series can supply. While these applications don't always require high supply voltages, the high voltage capability of the PB series is useful when fast transitions are required with high inductance yokes, necessitating high supply voltages as a result of the yoke energy requirement:

$$V = L\frac{dI}{dt}$$

The basic techniques of magnetic deflection amplifier design are detailed in AN#5, **"Precision Magnetic Deflection."** Figure 4 is an example of these techniques put to use in the design of a magnetic deflection amplifier using the PB58. This circuit forces a yoke current proportional to input voltage by including the yoke within a current sensing feedback loop. In this example, the feedback resistors R_F and R_I are configured for a minimum gain of 5 to compensate for the added booster gain, thereby easing stability considerations. The auxiliary feedback network Cf and Rd act to bypass the 90° phase shift of the yoke/sense resistor feedback at higher frequencies ensuring stability with best transition times. The fastest transition time in any magnetic deflection amplifier is determined by the available voltage swing and yoke inductance. In the circuit of Figure 4, nearly 140 volts could be made available for the 200 microhenry yoke, resulting in a minimum possible transition time of 2 microseconds. The TL071 and PB58 combination can slew at 40 V/microsecond which means the amplifier requires an additional 4 microseconds to provide full voltage swing. The end result is a circuit that can deliver total transition times of less than 6 microseconds, equating to sweep speeds of 83 kHz.

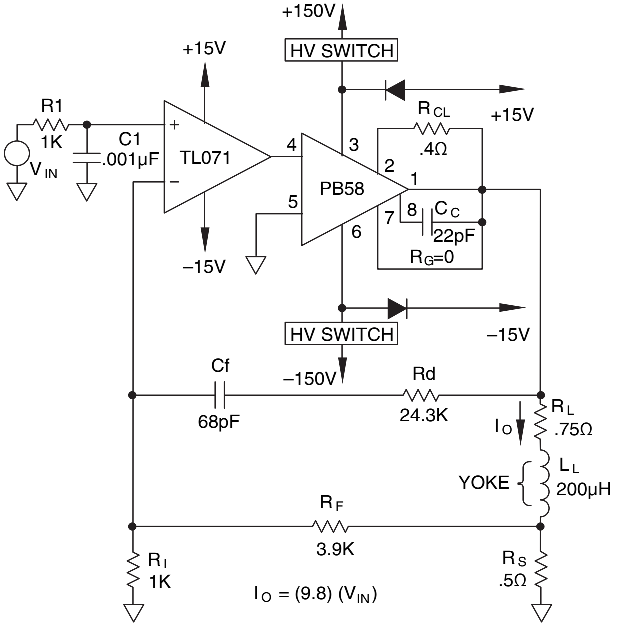


FIGURE 4. ELECTROMAGNETIC DEFLECTION AMPLIFIER

An important advantage of a separate booster amplifier in deflection applications is the ability to swing the output stage supply rails to improve efficiency. Slower sweep speeds can use lower power supply voltages than higher speeds. In addition, during a high speed sweep the high voltage is only needed for a short period of time until yoke current builds and can then be switched to a lower value. Using the lower supply voltages whenever possible improves efficiency and reduces dissipation. In applications where the supply rails will be "flexed" in this manner, only the rails connected to the power booster need to be flexed. The constant supply available at the driver amplifier enhances the driver amplifier's ability to maintain overall loop control by preventing the coupling of supply switching transients into the input section of the amplifier.

Figure 4 provides a general idea of the circuitry involved in switching the supply rails. The actual implementation could take on many forms that are beyond the scope of this application note.

A final performance consideration in magnetic deflection amplifiers is avoidance of slew rate overload (or any condition which could result in input overload). This problem actually occurs during the rapid retrace transition, but shows up during the trace interval. The evidence of input overload is ringing during the trace interval. To eliminate this problem, reduce the transition time of the retrace portion of the input waveform to a rate which is within the slew rate specification of the amplifier. Slower transition times do not necessarily reduce circuit performance since the amplifier was overloaded to begin with, and eliminating ringing is actually an improvement on settling time when returning to the trace interval. Controlling input slew rate can be accomplished in many ways. If the actual risetime of the input signal itself cannot be controlled, a simple lowpass R-C filter at the input of the amplifier will suffice. In the example shown in Figure 4., R1 and C1 provide a filter which limits the slew rate of any input signal rise time to within the amplifier's slew rate.

Selection of the correct filter time constant takes into account both amplifier slew rate and gain of the circuit. In the case of a magnetic deflection amplifier, the appropriate value for gain would be the effective gain of the alternate feedback path Cf and Rd.

$$t = \frac{V_{IN}Av}{SR}$$

Where: V_{IN} = PEAK TO PEAK INPUT VOLTAGE
Av = COMPOSITE AMPLIFIER CLOSED LOOP GAIN
SR = RATED SLEW RATE OF THE AMPLIFIER

BOOSTER WITH NO DRIVER

It is entirely possible to use power boosters without an external driver. This could be done for simplicity or economy. It also provides the best slew rate and bandwidth performance possible with the PB series. All of this is made possible due to the boosters' self-contained internal feedback loop.

When used without a driver, the PB50 will have an inherent offset of typically 750 millivolts. Harmonic distortion remains under 0.5% at up to 30 kHz. Input impedance will be 25 K ohms minimum. Power bandwidth will typically be the full 320 kHz at the 100 Volts P-P output the PB50 is capable of.

The ground terminal on pin 5 of the PB50 presents possibilities as an additional input. Some improvement in bandwidth would be noted if this terminal were used as an input with the actual input terminal grounded. This forces the input transistor into a cascode connection. It is possible to utilize the booster as if it had true op amp type inverting and non-inverting inputs.