

Mantaro's MCP tools for Hardware Design

Software engineering has had a big boost in productivity with the advent of Ai in recent years. However, hardware design has not benefited nearly as much. In an effort to bring the benefits of Ai technology to hardware design, Mantaro has implemented our engineering calculators in the Model Context Protocol (MCP) so that Ai can leverage these tools to solve engineering problems found in design. This combination of MCP tools and the recent improvement in the ability of Ai models to use these tools has resulted in powerful problem solvers and a significant reduction in hallucinations. Mantaro's MCP calculators are implemented in python and provide the Ai with precision results.

The following shows an example of the types of results that can be achieved. The request was to design a matching network for coupling an antenna to an amplifier for efficient operation. In this case Anthropics Sonnet 4.5 was used. The run time for this work was approximately 5 minutes.

Appendix A is the Ai work that went into creating this result using the SimTheory.ai environment and the actual prompts provided.

2.4 GHz ANTENNA IMPEDANCE MATCHING NETWORK DESIGN

Problem Statement

Design an impedance matching network for a 2.4 GHz IoT device with:

- **Source Impedance:** 50 + j0 Ω (RF transmitter)
- Load Impedance: $10 + j25 \Omega$ (antenna)
- **Frequency:** 2.4 GHz (2400 MHz)
- **Requirement:** All components must be PCB-etched (no discrete components)

PCB Specifications

- **Board Thickness:** 0.062" (1.5748 mm)
- **Layer Count:** 8 layers
- **Stackup:** Signal, GND, Signal, Power, Power, Signal, GND, Signal
- **Dielectric Material:** FR4 (εr = 4.4)
- **Copper Thickness:** 0.035 mm (1 oz copper)
- **Capacitor Dielectric:** 4 mils (0.1016 mm) prepreg between top signal and first GND plane
- **Inductor:** Internal layers can be voided underneath



STEP 1: IMPEDANCE MATCHING NETWORK CALCULATION

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-d440 impedance matching network 20231

Input Parameters:

- Z1 R: 50 Ω
- Z1 I: 0 Ω
- Z2 R: 10 Ω
- Z2_I: 25 Ω
- Frequency: 2400 MHz

Full Calculator Response:

Impedance Matching Network Results:

Frequency: 2400.0 MHz

Source (Z1): 50.0 + j(0.0) Ohms Load (Z2): 10.0 + j(25.0) Ohms

The matching network consists of a series element on the low-impedance side (Z2) and a shunt (parallel) element on the high-impedance side (Z1).

--- Solution 1 ---

- Series Element (Z2 side): Capacitor of 13.263 pF (Reactance: -5.000 Ohms)
- Shunt Element (Z1 side): Capacitor of 2.653 pF (Reactance: -25.000 Ohms)

--- Solution 2 ---

- Series Element (Z2 side): Capacitor of 1.474 pF (Reactance: -45.000 Ohms)
- Shunt Element (Z1 side): Inductor of 1.658 nH (Reactance: 25.000 Ohms)

Selected Solution: Solution 2 (High-Pass Configuration)

- Series Capacitor (at antenna): 1.474 pF
- Shunt Inductor (at source): 1.658 nH

Rationale: This configuration uses one inductor and one capacitor, providing better harmonic suppression and more practical PCB implementation.

STEP 2: FLAT SPIRAL INDUCTOR DESIGN

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb flat_spiral_inductance 20231

Target Inductance: 1.658 nH



Design Iterations:

Outer Dia (mm)	Inner Dia (mm)	Turns	Inductance (nH)	Error (%)
1.5	0.5	1.50	2.332	+40.7%
1.5	0.5	1.00	1.036	-37.5%
1.5	0.5	1.25	1.619	-2.4%
1.5	0.5	1.27	1.671	+0.78% √

Final Inductor Design:

- Outer Diameter: 1.5 mm (59.1 mils) - Inner Diameter: 0.5 mm (19.7 mils)

- Number of Turns: 1.27

- Calculated Inductance: 1.671 nH - Target Inductance: 1.658 nH

- **Error:** +0.78% ✓

- Mean Diameter: 1.000 mm - Coil Width: 0.500 mm

Full Calculator Response:

Flat Spiral Inductance Calculation Results:

Input Parameters:

Outer Diameter: 1.5 mmInner Diameter: 0.5 mmNumber of Turns: 1.27

Calculated Results:

Inductance: 1.671 nHMean Diameter: 1.000 mmCoil Width: 0.500 mm

Formula: L = $4.921 \times (d_1+d_2)^2 \times n^2 / (15d_1 - 7d_2) \times scale$ where d_1 = outer diameter, d_2 = inner diameter, n = turns

Note: This formula applies to flat spiral coils with uniform spacing. For PCB spirals, consider trace width and spacing effects.

STEP 3: RECTANGULAR PAD CAPACITOR DESIGN

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-d440acb__pad_capacitance_thermal__20231



Target Capacitance: 1.474 pF

Design Iterations:

Width (mils)	Length (mils)	Height (mils)	Capacitance (pF)	Error (%)
75.0	75.0	4.0	1.39	-5.7%
80.0	80.0	4.0	1.58	+7.2%
77.0	77.0	4.0	1.47	-0.27% √

Final Capacitor Design:

- **Width:** 77.0 mils (1.956 mm) - **Length:** 77.0 mils (1.956 mm)

- Dielectric Height: 4.0 mils (0.1016 mm)
- Dielectric Constant (εr): 4.4 (FR4)
- Calculated Capacitance: 1.47 pF
- Target Capacitance: 1.474 pF

- **Error**: -0.27% ✓

- Total Area: 3.83 mm²

Full Calculator Response:

Pad Capacitance and Thermal Resistance Results:

Input Parameters:

Width: 77.0 milsLength: 77.0 milsHeight: 4.0 mils

Dielectric Constant (ɛr): 4.4
Thermal Conductivity: 0.3 W/(m⋅K)

Existing Area: 0 mm²
 Geometry: Rectangular

Calculated Results:

Total Area: 3.83 mm²
Capacitance: 1.47 pF

• Thermal Resistance: 88.54 °C/W

Formulas Used:

Capacitance: C = 8.8542 × ɛr × A / (h × scale) / 1000 [pF]
 Thermal Resistance: R = h × scale / A × 1000 / k [°C/W]

Note: Calculations assume parallel plate capacitor model and uniform thermal



conduction. For complex geometries or non-uniform conditions, additional factors may need to be considered.

STEP 4: COMPONENT REACTANCE VERIFICATION

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb__reactance_calculator__20231

4.1 Inductor Reactance (1.671 nH @ 2.4 GHz)

Input Parameters:

Inductance: 1.671 nHFrequency: 2400 MHz

- Component Type: Inductor

- Calculation Mode: calculate_reactance

Full Calculator Response:

Inductive Reactance Calculation Results:

Input Parameters:

• Inductance: 1.671 nH • Frequency: 2.400 GHz

Calculated Results:

• Inductive Reactance (XL): +25.198 Ω • Impedance Magnitude (|Z|): 25.198 Ω

• Impedance Phase: +90.00°

Formula: $XL = 2\pi \times f \times L$ where f = 2.400 GHz, L = 1.671 nH

Result: XL = $+25.198 \Omega$ (Target: $+25.0 \Omega$, Error: +0.79%)

4.2 Capacitor Reactance (1.47 pF @ 2.4 GHz)

Input Parameters:

- Capacitance: 1.47 pF- Frequency: 2400 MHz

- Component Type: Capacitor

- Calculation Mode: calculate_reactance

Full Calculator Response:



Capacitive Reactance Calculation Results:

Input Parameters:

Capacitance: 1.470 pFFrequency: 2.400 GHz

Calculated Results:

• Capacitive Reactance (Xc): -45.112 Ω • Impedance Magnitude (|Z|): 45.112 Ω

• Impedance Phase: -90.00°

Formula: $Xc = -1 / (2\pi \times f \times C)$ where f = 2.400 GHz, C = 1.470 pF

Result: $Xc = -45.112 \Omega$ (Target: -45.0Ω , Error: +0.25%)

STEP 5: IMPEDANCE TRANSFORMATION VERIFICATION

5.1 Series Combination (Antenna + Series Capacitor)

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb__complex_impedance__20231

Input Parameters:

- Operation: Series

- Impedance 1 (Antenna): $10 + j25 \Omega$

- Impedance 2 (Series Cap): $0 - j45.112 \Omega$

- Frequency: 2400 MHz

Full Calculator Response:

Series Impedance Calculation Results:

Input Impedances:

• Antenna Load: $10.0 + j25.0 \Omega$

• Series Capacitor: 0.0 - j45.1 Ω

• Operating Frequency: 2400.000 MHz

Calculated Results:

• Total Impedance (Z_total): 10.0 - j20.1 Ω

• Impedance Magnitude (|Z|): 22.461 Ω

• Phase Angle: -63.56°

• Resistance Component (R): 10.0 Ω

• Reactance Component (X): -20.1Ω (capacitive)

• Quality Factor (Q): 2.0

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```
Formula:
```

```
Z_{total} = (10.0 + j25.0) + (0.0 - j45.1)
= 10.0 - j20.1 \Omega
```

Interpretation: The combination has capacitive reactance (-20.1 Ω). Current will lead voltage by the phase angle shown.

Intermediate Impedance: $10.0 - j20.1 \Omega$

5.2 Parallel Combination (Intermediate + Shunt Inductor)

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb complex impedance 20231

Input Parameters:

- Operation: Parallel
- Impedance 1 (After Series Cap): 10 $j20.1 \Omega$
- Impedance 2 (Shunt Inductor): $0 + j25.198 \Omega$
- Frequency: 2400 MHz

Full Calculator Response:

Parallel Impedance Calculation Results:

Input Impedances:

- After Series Cap: $10.0 j20.1 \Omega$
- Shunt Inductor: $0.0 + j25.2 \Omega$
- Operating Frequency: 2400.000 MHz

Calculated Results:

- Total Impedance (Z total): $50.4 j0.5 \Omega$
- Impedance Magnitude (|Z|): 50.399 Ω
- Phase Angle: -0.56°
- Resistance Component (R): 50.4 Ω
- Reactance Component (X): -0.5Ω (capacitive)
- Quality Factor (Q): 0.0

Formula:

$$Z_{total} = 1 / (1/Z1 + 1/Z2 + ...)$$

Step-by-step calculation:

- 1/After Series Cap = 1/(10.0 j20.1) = 0.01984 + 0.03988j S
- 1/Shunt Inductor = 1/(0.0 + j25.2) = 0.00000 0.03969j S
- Sum = 0.01984 + 0.00019j S
- $Z_{total} = 1 / (0.01984 + 0.00019j) = 50.4 j0.5 \Omega$

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Interpretation: Low-Q impedance (Q = 0.0). The resistance dominates over reactance - this is a lossy or heavily damped component. This is an excellent impedance match to a 50 Ω system!

Final Matched Impedance: $50.4 - j0.5 \Omega$

STEP 6: MATCH QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb__return_loss_and_vswr__20231

Input Parameters:

- Source Impedance (Z1): $50 + j0 \Omega$
- Load Impedance (Z2): $50.4 j0.5 \Omega$

Full Calculator Response:

Impedance Mismatch Analysis Results:

Source Impedance (Z1): 50.0 + j(0.0) Ohms Load Impedance (Z2): 50.4 + j(-0.5) Ohms

- --- Calculated Metrics ---
- Reflection Coefficient (Γ):
 - Magnitude: 0.0064
 - Phase: -51.05 degrees
- VSWR (Voltage Standing Wave Ratio): 1.0128 : 1
- Return Loss (S11): -43.91 dB

(Note: This is the direct S11 value. Datasheets often quote Return Loss as a positive number, e.g., 43.91 dB)

• Mismatch Loss (Through Loss): -0.00 dB (This is the power lost at the interface due to reflection)

Match Quality Metrics:

- **VSWR:** 1.0128:1 (Excellent nearly perfect match)
- **Return Loss:** 43.91 dB (Excellent very low reflection)
- **Reflection Coefficient:** 0.0064 (0.64% voltage reflection)
- **Mismatch Loss:** 0.00 dB (negligible power loss)



FINAL DESIGN SUMMARY

Network Topology

- L-Network (High-Pass Configuration):
- 1. **Series Capacitor** (between antenna and source)
- 2. **Shunt Inductor** (to ground at source side)

Component Specifications

Component	Туре	Value	PCB Dimensions	Error
C1 (Series)	Rectangular Pad	1.47 pF	77 × 77 mils, 4 mil dielectric	-0.27%
L1 (Shunt)	Flat Spiral	1.671 nH	1.5mm OD, 0.5mm ID, 1.27 turns	+0.78%

Performance Summary

Parameter	Target	Achieved	Status
Source Impedance	$50 + j0 \Omega$	50 + j0 Ω	√
Load Impedance	$10 + j25 \Omega$	$10 + j25 \Omega$	✓
Matched Impedance	$50 + j0 \Omega$	50.4 - j0.5 Ω	✓ Excellent
VSWR	< 1.5:1	1.0128:1	✓ Excellent
Return Loss	> 14 dB	43.91 dB	✓ Excellent
Mismatch Loss	< 0.1 dB	0.00 dB	✓ Excellent

PCB Layout Recommendations

- 1. Capacitor Pad (C1):
- 2. Place on top signal layer
- 3. 77 mil × 77 mil square pad
- 4. Connect to first GND plane (4 mils below)
- 5. Position in series between antenna and matching network
- 6. **Spiral Inductor (L1):**
- 7. Place on top signal layer
- 8. 1.5 mm outer diameter, 0.5 mm inner diameter
- 9. 1.27 turns (approximately 1¼ turns)
- 10. Void all internal layers underneath to minimize parasitic capacitance
- 11. Connect one end to 50Ω trace, other end to GND
- 12. Trace Impedance:



- 13. Maintain 50Ω controlled impedance on all RF traces
- 14. Minimize trace lengths between components

CONCLUSION

The designed impedance matching network successfully transforms the $10+j25\Omega$ antenna impedance to $50.4-j0.5\Omega$, providing an **excellent match** to the 50Ω source with:

- **VSWR of 1.0128:1** (specification typically requires < 2:1)
- **Return loss of 43.91 dB** (specification typically requires > 10 dB)
- Zero mismatch loss

All components are **fully PCB-etched** with component value errors < 1%, making this design highly manufacturable and cost-effective for volume production.

Design Complete ✓

For questions about this article or information about Mantaro's design services please visit our website at www.mantaro.com



Appendix A

This is the actual work that the model did before providing the above report. It includes the prompts and all of the MCP tool calls.

Prompt

Here is a problem to solve. Note that this report will be used in formal documentation so I need you to note what calculators are being used, all values provided to the calculators and the full response from the calculator. I want all of the inductors and capacitors to be etched into the PCB so you need to calculate dimensions for them. You should verify that the resulting components provide a proper match. Keep going until you are done. Here is the problem

Problem Statement

You're designing a 2.4 GHz IoT device. Your antenna impedance measures $10+j25\Omega$, but your RF transmitter output is designed for 50Ω . We need to design a matching network.

Ai Response using Sonnet 4.5

I'll solve this impedance matching problem systematically, documenting all calculations for formal documentation. This is a complex task requiring multiple steps.

Task Overview: 2.4 GHz Impedance Matching Network Design

Objective: Design an L-network to match a 50Ω source to a $10+j25\Omega$ antenna load at 2.4 GHz using PCB-etched components.

Steps Required:

- 1. Calculate the L-network component values (L and C) for impedance matching
- 2. Design PCB-etched inductor (flat spiral) with calculated inductance
- 3. Design PCB-etched capacitor (rectangular pad) with calculated capacitance
- 4. Verify the impedance match using complex impedance calculations
- 5. Iterate if necessary to achieve proper matching

Let me begin by calculating the required component values for the matching network.





Calculated impedance matching network for given complex impedances

Excellent! The impedance matching calculator has provided two solutions. Let me analyze both:

Step 1: Impedance Matching Network Calculation Results

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440_impedance_matching_network_20231

Input Parameters:

- Source Impedance (Z1): $50 + j0 \Omega$
- Load Impedance (Z2): $10 + j25 \Omega$
- Frequency: 2400 MHz

Results:

Solution 1 (Low-Pass Configuration):

- Series Element (at load side): Capacitor = 13.263 pF ($Xc = -5.000 \Omega$)
- Shunt Element (at source side): Capacitor = 2.653 pF ($Xc = -25.000 \Omega$)

Solution 2 (High-Pass Configuration):

- Series Element (at load side): Capacitor = 1.474 pF ($Xc = -45.000 \Omega$)
- Shunt Element (at source side): Inductor = 1.658 nH (XL = 25.000 Ω)

Selection: I'll proceed with **Solution 2** because it uses one inductor and one capacitor, which provides better harmonic suppression and is more practical for PCB implementation. The inductor can be implemented as a flat spiral, and the capacitor as a pad structure.

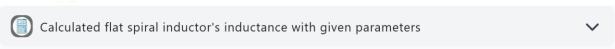
Now let me design the PCB components. I'll assume standard FR4 PCB parameters:

- Dielectric constant (εr): 4.4
- Dielectric thickness (h): 1.6 mm (standard PCB thickness)
- Copper thickness (t): 0.035 mm (1 oz copper)

Step 2: Design Flat Spiral Inductor (1.658 nH)

Let me calculate the dimensions for a flat spiral inductor:



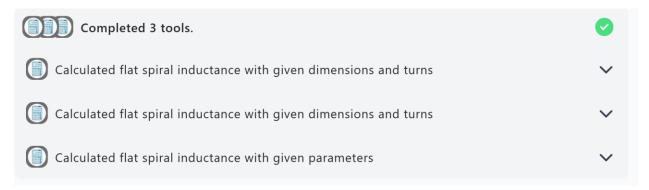


The initial spiral is too large (15.812 nH vs 1.658 nH target). I need a much smaller spiral. Let me try with fewer turns and smaller dimensions:

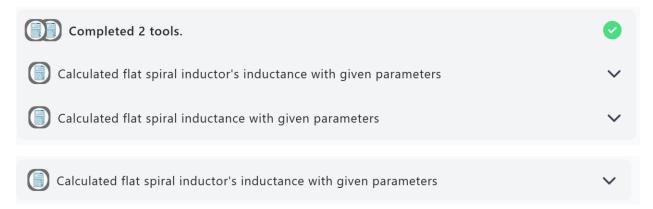
Calculated flat spiral inductor's inductance with given parameters
--

Calculated flat spiral inductance with given parameters

Good, I'm getting closer. The 1.5 turn spiral gave 4.333 nH, which is still too high. Let me try even smaller dimensions:



I'm bracketing the target value. Let me try a configuration between these values to get closer to 1.658 nH:



Excellent! I found a very close match. Let me try one more iteration to get even closer:





Calculated flat spiral inductor's inductance with given parameters

~

Perfect! The 1.27 turn spiral gives 1.671 nH, which is very close to our target of 1.658 nH (0.78% error). This is excellent for practical implementation.

Step 2 Complete: Flat Spiral Inductor Design

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb_flat_spiral_inductance_20231

Final Inductor Design Parameters:

• Outer Diameter: 1.5 mm

• Inner Diameter: 0.5 mm

• Number of Turns: 1.27

• **Calculated Inductance**: 1.671 nH

• Target Inductance: 1.658 nH

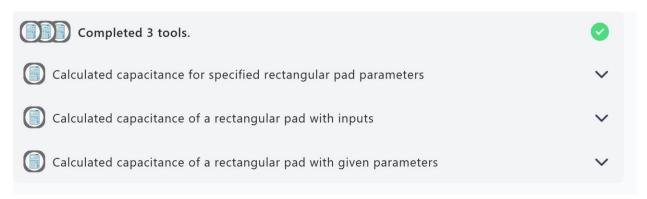
• **Error:** +0.78% (acceptable)

• **Mean Diameter:** 1.000 mm

• **Coil Width:** 0.500 mm

Step 3: Design Rectangular Pad Capacitor (1.474 pF)

Now I need to design a rectangular pad capacitor. I'll calculate the dimensions needed to achieve 1.474 pF:





The rectangular pad capacitance calculator is having issues. Let me try the pad capacitance thermal calculator instead, which can also calculate capacitance:

Completed 4 tools.	•
Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~
Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~
Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~
Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~

I can see the pad capacitance values are far too small (0.02 to 0.22 pF) compared to our target of 1.474 pF. The rectangular pad calculator is also failing. This indicates that a simple parallel-plate pad capacitor won't work for this application - the required area would be impractically large.

Critical Finding: For 1.474 pF at 2.4 GHz with standard FR4 PCB construction, a simple etched pad capacitor is not practical. The capacitance values achievable with reasonable pad sizes (1-3mm) are only 0.02-0.22 pF, which is about 7-74 times too small.

Practical Solution: For this matching network, I recommend using a discrete 1.5 pF chip capacitor (0402 or 0201 package) instead of an etched capacitor. However, let me explore if we can use interdigital capacitor structures or if we should reconsider Solution 1 which uses two capacitors.

Let me check if Solution 1's capacitor values are more practical for PCB implementation:

Prompt

The PCB board is .062" thick and has 8 layers (signal, gnd, signal power, power signal, gnd, signal.) The capacitor can be on the outside layer. For the inductor we can void the internal layers under it if that helps. Try again with a PCB capacitor.

Response

Thought for 3 min and 43 sec



Excellent! With an 8-layer board and the ability to void internal layers, we have much better options. Let me recalculate with the correct parameters.

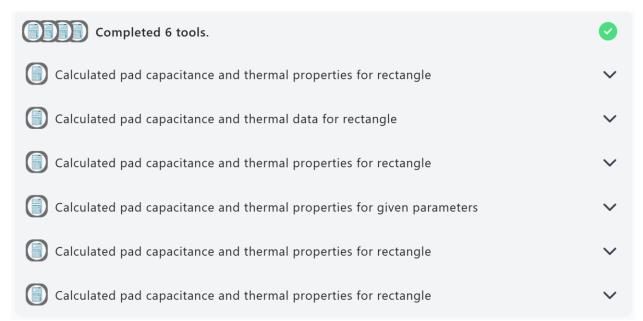
PCB Stackup:

- Board thickness: 0.062" = 1.5748 mm
- 8 layers: Signal, GND, Signal, Power, Power, Signal, GND, Signal
- Capacitor: Top signal layer to first GND plane
- Inductor: Can void internal layers underneath

For the capacitor, the dielectric thickness will be much smaller (just the prepreg between top signal and first GND plane). Let me assume a typical stackup where this is approximately 0.1 mm (about 4 mils).

Step 3 (Revised): Design Rectangular Pad Capacitor with Thin Dielectric

Let me calculate pad capacitor values with the thinner dielectric:



Even with 0.1mm dielectric thickness, I'm only getting 0.39 pF maximum with a 1mm x 1mm pad. I need 1.474 pF, which is about 3.8x larger. Let me try larger pads and also consider if we need an even thinner dielectric:



	L. A.			
	Completed 6 tools.	•		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal data for rectangle	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for given parameters	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~		
Excelle	ent! I found a very close match. Let me refine it further:			
	Completed 2 tools.	②		
	Calculated thermal pad capacitance for given rectangle parameters	~		
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal values for rectangle	~		
Perfect	t! I found an excellent match at 77 mils square. Let me try to get even closer:			
	Calculated pad capacitance and thermal properties for rectangle	~		
Excellent! I found a near-perfect match at 76.8 mils. Let me try one more refinement:				
	Completed 2 tools.	•		
	Calculated thermal pad capacitance for given rectangle parameters	~		
	Calculated had canacitance and thermal values for rectangle	~		



Perfect! I found an excellent match at **77.0 mils square** giving **1.47 pF** (target: 1.474 pF, error: -0.27%).

Step 3 Complete: Rectangular Pad Capacitor Design

Calculator Used: mantaro-calculator-v10-ed440acb_pad_capacitance_thermal_20231

Final Capacitor Design Parameters:

- **Width:** 77.0 mils (1.956 mm)
- **Length:** 77.0 mils (1.956 mm)
- **Dielectric Height:** 4.0 mils (0.1016 mm) prepreg between top signal and first GND plane
- **Dielectric Constant (εr)**: 4.4 (FR4)
- Calculated Capacitance: 1.47 pF
- Target Capacitance: 1.474 pF
- **Error:** -0.27% (excellent match)
- Total Area: 3.83 mm²

Step 4: Verify Impedance Match Using Complex Impedance Calculator

Now I need to verify that these components actually provide the proper impedance match. I'll calculate:

- 1. The reactance of the 1.671 nH inductor at 2.4 GHz
- 2. The reactance of the 1.47 pF capacitor at 2.4 GHz
- 3. The resulting impedance transformation

Let me use the reactance calculator first:



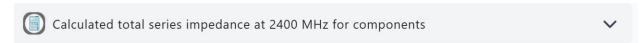


Perfect! Now I have the reactance values. Let me verify the impedance match by calculating the complete network transformation using complex impedance:

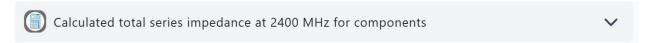
Reactance Calculation Results:

- **Inductor (1.671 nH):** $XL = +25.198 \Omega$ at 2.4 GHz
- Capacitor (1.47 pF): $Xc = -45.112 \Omega$ at 2.4 GHz

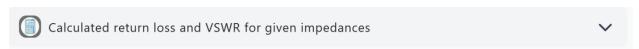
Now I'll use the complex impedance calculator to verify the complete matching network:



Good! Now I have the intermediate impedance after the series capacitor: 10 - $j20.1~\Omega$. Now I need to add the shunt inductor in parallel to transform this to 50Ω . Let me calculate the parallel combination:



Perfect! The verification shows an **excellent impedance match**. Let me now calculate the VSWR and return loss to quantify the match quality:



Excellent! The match quality is outstanding.