

Advanced Technology in Greensboro Takes Control

By Kimberly Conley

Advanced Technology, Inc. chose to adopt a quality management system based not on the mandate of a client, which is typically the case, but to regain control of their production.



Advanced Technology in Greensboro produces decorative laminate sold in do-it-yourself retail chains.

Advanced Technology earned ISO 9001:2000 certification in March, 2008.

The company, manufacturer of decorative laminate, was approached by one of their distributors and asked if they might carry a private label for a large do-it-yourself retail chain. Saying “yes,” was the easy part. To fulfill demand, the company embarked upon a transformation. Over the next six months, Advanced Technology doubled its workforce, its plant and its output.

In the wake of this, production problems persisted and they were constantly reacting to problems that affected their bottom line adversely.

Tara Burgio, vice president of sales and a [North Carolina State University](#) graduate, saw the need for process and procedure. “We needed to stop recurring issues in production,” she said. “We were applying band-aids and not getting to the root cause of our problems.”

The company enlisted the help of the NC State University Industrial Extension Service ([IES](#)) for ISO 9001:2000 preparation training.

Acquiring ISO 9001 certification is no small task and for Advanced Technology, it was a three - year journey. “We were like the students who lacked 8 credits to graduate,” said Burgio. In hindsight they are perfectly happy they took the extra time. It allowed the company to further refine their processes and manuals, tailoring them specifically to their needs.

“ISO 9001 gave us a sense of structure,” said Charles Walker, IT manager. “It’s like a positive big brother.”

Organizations that adopt a quality management system wholeheartedly, as Advanced Technology did, can actually shift the culture to one that views quality and process first.

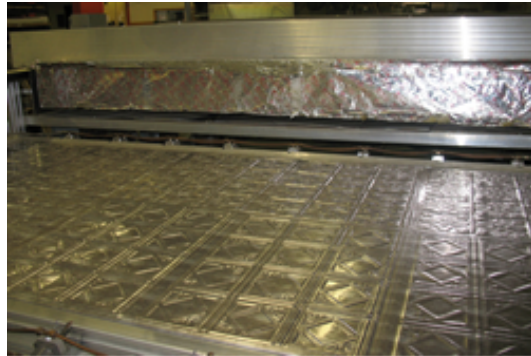
Frank Daniello, vice president, liked the fact that the preparation allowed the company to work on something for the common good that had a non-political agenda.

“If we hadn’t done this (become ISO 9001:2000 certified), the growth would have crushed us,” said Burgio. Employee training and standardized procedures take assumptions out of the mix.

ISO 9001 (International Organization of Standardization) provides quality management standardization of activities that facilitate the international exchange of goods and services. ISO 9001 standards enhance customer satisfaction and provide tools for continuous improvement.

The ISO 9001 standard guides companies into developing training consistencies, a quality policy and appropriate documentation and records. It also includes a self-auditing component so that long-term results are sustained.

[Advanced Technology](#) manufactures laminates that are a composite thermal plastic material formed into designs and thermally infused with color. Finishes include brushed and polished metallics, woodgrains, marbles and granites. These laminates may be used as ceiling tiles, backsplashes, wall coverings and more.



Clear PVC is joined with foil and then stamped with a pattern mold. It is then adhered to a protective masking with heat to produce the decorative laminate.