



Building a Better Process

Machine Shop Seeks Global Markets Through ISO 9001

Gaston County machine shop, Dallas Machine Company, Inc., didn't just want local business, though it was great to have. They wanted to compete nationwide, to compete worldwide. And they wanted to do business with larger, more established companies. To rise to those new levels, they needed more effective quality management processes.

On January 18, the company was recognized with an ISO 9001 certification banner, signifying achievement of an internationally recognized quality standard. The ISO 9001 training was accomplished in cooperation with the Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) of NC State University.

"To compete in worldwide markets, you need every edge you can get," says general manager, Jeremy Ledford. "The last recession in 2008 was really tough on us. We kept asking, 'How can we get more business? How can we be more attractive to our customers?' Having a quality control system in place is needed more now than ever before."

The training was made possible by a grant from Gaston County, which recommended NC State as the facilitator. IES Improvement Specialist Sonja Hughes worked with Dallas Machine over the year-and-a-half process.

"It was a good experience," says Ledford. "Sonja was personable, knowledgeable, and stern enough to get strict with us if we were going down the wrong path. We needed that."

Dallas Machine Company, Inc.

Challenge

Dallas Machine Company seeks more effective quality management processes for worldwide business

IES Solution

ISO 9001

Benefits

A simplified, more efficient process

From the beginning, Dallas Machine realized one of their major challenges. It had never measured its own quality improvement, so it had no baseline from which to move forward.

“In the past, it was difficult to measure and track important data which was necessary to know in order to understand the efficiency of our facility,” says Ledford. “The first time we started piecing the puzzle together, it was very eye opening for us.”

The process was made even more challenging by a physical move the company made in the midst of training, to a facility 20 miles away. But Dallas Machine’s management team resolved to press forward, and they brought their workers along.

“People like structure,” says Ledford. “The guys on the floor welcomed anything to make their jobs better and more secure.”

The company feels proud of its accomplishment, according to Ledford. With ISO 9001 under its belt, he foresees Dallas Machine seeking additional certifications like the AS9100 quality management system for aerospace, to expand the company’s customer base beyond railroad-related products.

““ To compete in worldwide markets, you need every edge you can get. ””

—Jeremy Ledford, General Manager,
Dallas Machine Company, Inc.

In the end, he says, working with IES and reaching ISO 9001 exceeded the company’s expectations.

“We expected a paper trail that would be a mess. That’s far from the truth,” he says. “ISO digs deep into your processes and simplifies them. You get leaner, more efficient, and that means less paperwork. It debunks the stereotype.”



Industry Expansion Solutions

Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) is the engineering-based, solutions-driven, client-focused unit of NC State University. Our broad portfolio and deep industry expertise help organizations grow, innovate and prosper. Our extensive partnerships with business, industry, education and government generate a unique culture of collaboration that provides access to cutting-edge expertise, research, and technology.

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