



IMPACT

ILLINOIS ISSUE 1

The proven benefits of ISO certification

ISO certification does have a positive impact on businesses of all sizes and in all industry sectors.

Far from being a cosmetic marketing tool, the real and proven benefits of certification are plain to see.

The fundamentals of ISO certification will make your company more efficient and increase your competitive edge.

In many industries it has already become a basic requirement for doing business.

Increased efficiency, a real strengthening of your position in the marketplace and increased revenue are direct results of achieving ISO certification. Don't just take our word for it – the following clients from Illinois are proof of ISO's benefits.

A NEW GENERATION OF QUALITY

Susan Kanellis, vice president of Wireformers Inc, Chicago, was sure that the company her father, Louis Lischko, founded more than 40 years ago would benefit from achieving ISO 9000 certification. Her father, who still heads the company, wasn't so convinced. Susan, who has responsibility for quality, felt he would see the advantages once Wireformers went through the process.

"Wireformers makes thousands of items for a broad spectrum of industries," explains Susan. "We produce wireforms, springs, stampings and assemblies for industries as varied as the automotive industry and the surgical industry, often parts that companies cannot produce themselves. We don't even necessarily know what the end use might be."

With a diverse number of customers using their products, Susan began to find that many were

demanding ISO 9000 certification. As she saw it, certification was essential to business and, in the current industrial climate, could give Wireformers an edge over their competitors.

When IMSM approached the company, Susan quickly realized that achieving ISO 9000 might not be as daunting as she had thought. "I was determined that we would do it," she says, "and IMSM's assessor soon convinced me that the process would mean tweaking what we do, rather than a complete overhaul of our operations. It didn't even mean we had to produce the masses of paperwork I had feared and, Graham, our assessor, helped a lot with that."

Susan believes that certification will lead to further business in the future. "Having ISO 9000 will help Wireformers when we are seeking new customers – it means we are seen in a better light," she says.

Even her father has been convinced of the benefits. "He's very proud that we have certification," Susan admits. "He even says that, since we achieved it, there's a whole new attitude around here!"

www.wireformers.com



QUALITY – NOT JUST A BOLT-ON

Big Bolt is a relative newcomer to ISO 9000, having attained certification through IMSM earlier this year. It is a business which does exactly what you would expect, manufacturing bolts, screws and threaded fasteners, which it has been doing for more than 20 years.

Part of the business, its laboratory, already had an internationally recognized quality standard – ISO 25 – which was due for renewal earlier this year. This time Big Bolt's owners decided to seek ISO 9000 certification for the company's entire operation.

According to Ray Hueckstaedt, Big Bolt's quality manager, the company's quality systems were in good shape before certification. "We didn't actually have to change what we did too much," Ray confirms, "and those changes we did have to make we could do ahead of time, once we had begun discussions with IMSM."

Ray is quick to credit IMSM with an easy-going approach to the process. "Some of the other consultants and registrars made it seem a foreboding task, something to be much feared," he says. "IMSM took the nightmare out of the process, and made certification far less confusing than others made it seem."

"IMSM took the nightmare out of the process, and made certification far less confusing than others made it seem."

As the man with responsibility for quality, achieving ISO 9000 has a positive impact for Ray. "For me personally, it means we don't have to go through supplier audits," he says. "We can show our certificate, and they're impressed. There are very few questions asked."

Ray believes certification could improve Big Bolt's profitability in the long term: "It's perhaps too soon to say it," he says, "but, in times like these, having ISO 9000 certification certainly doesn't hurt."

www.bigbolt.net



"Having ISO 9000 will help Wireformers when we are seeking new customers – it means we are seen in a better light."

International Management Systems Marketing Inc (IMSM Inc) was founded in 1994 to provide businesses with the practical expertise to add value through quality systems and efficiency. From its base in the UK, IMSM Ltd has developed a strong network in Europe, USA, Canada, South Africa and Australia.

IMSM's fully trained team of auditors hold recognized IRCA (International Register of Certified Auditors) qualifications.

As an active member of the British Quality Foundation the organization is itself continually assessed to ensure it delivers its promises.

To date, IMSM has helped more than 5,000 organizations around the world to achieve ISO 9000 certification.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY GIVES BETTER RELATIONSHIPS



The rapid expansion of the company over a decade prompted Sems and Specials, of Rockford, Illinois, to seek ISO 9001 certification in November 2001. The business, which has more than 40 employees, manufactures

fasteners and 'sems', which are captivated washers on screws, and supplies to a variety of industries, and includes Harley Davidson among its clients.

As the company grew, however, the quality systems in place at Sems and Specials had not kept pace. "Even though we had always supplied a quality product, our quality systems, and our documentation could have been better," admits Robert Bair, Sales Engineering and Quality Representative. "We knew we had to do something, and one of our suppliers had recently achieved ISO 9001, and recommended IMSM to us."

According to Robert, the whole company quickly bought in to the benefits of achieving ISO 9001, and they soon saw benefits to the way the business was run.

"Certification meant we increased our efficiency by being able to pinpoint areas of concern and concentrated our efforts to improve them," he says. "In turn, this has lowered the number of rejects we produced, and has helped create even better relationships with our customers."

Two years down the line, Sems and Specials is due to be reassessed by IMSM in the fall, a prospect that doesn't faze Robert at all. "The service we had from

the assessors last time ran along pretty good," he says, "so we're confident that we'll achieve certification without a problem. In fact, we're quite looking forward to it!"

www.semsandspecials.com

"...this has lowered the number of rejects we produced, and has helped create even better relationships with our customers."

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Ken Norman, owner of Integrated Measuring Systems, believes that ISO 9000 certification has not just increased the quality of the company's product, but has also brought him new customers.

His business, located in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, was set up 10 years ago, and it designs, develops and manufactures specialist scales for the healthcare industry, exporting to markets globally. Ken suggests that certification is almost a necessity for a company like his: "If you go back perhaps 10 years, customers weren't interested in your quality manuals, and the systems you have in place," he says. "It's very different now."

By his own admission, organization isn't one of Ken's dominant skills. The process of achieving certification forced him to reconsider how he ran his business. "As we got bigger, our controls became less tight," he says. "Going through the ISO 9000 process with IMSM meant we had to become more organized. It didn't come naturally to me, but it's a good discipline to have in place."

"ISO 9000 has made bringing my business to the attention of newer, bigger clients much easier."

If the business is running more smoothly internally, the company has been able to devote more time to developing new customers, and improving its standing within the market, Ken admits. "ISO 9000 has made bringing my business to the attention of newer, bigger clients much easier," he says. "These new clients account for around 50 per cent of our business."

Ken is quick to acknowledge the part played by IMSM in achieving this success. "We heard about them by word of mouth, and found them very easy to deal with," he says. "I've recommended IMSM to other companies since we were certificated, and would happily do so again."

www.intimeasys.com

CERTIFICATION BRINGS NATIONAL PRIDE

There's a very simple reason why Erich Heinrich, President of National Assembly and Sorting, wanted his company to have ISO 9000 certification. Without it, he suggests, his company may not still be in business. "Our largest customers are in the automotive industry," explains Erich, "and they wanted us to have ISO 9000 to maintain our business relationships."

There were concerns that going through the certification process would be costly and time-consuming for National Assembly and Sorting, who are based in Addison, Illinois. "We are a small company, and IMSM were one of the few who were interested in helping us achieve ISO 9000," says Erich. "Once we started working with them, we found them very helpful, and very easy to work with."

According to Erich, keeping National Assembly and Sorting in line with certification won't be a problem: "IMSM demonstrated the advantages of the program, and designed the

system around us," he says. "It could not have been more user-friendly."

Essentially, achieving ISO 9000 means National Assembly and Sorting can demonstrate the quality of how the business is run, which is good news as far as Erich is concerned. "We can show our customers we mean business with ISO 9000," he says, "and keeping our customers satisfied has always been our number one goal."

"We are a small company and IMSM were one of the few who were interested in helping us achieve ISO 9000"

Contact: Scott Mersch
Illinois Office: 401 North Michigan, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: (630) 240 5050 Fax: (630) 960 1935
Email: scott9000@eudoramail.com Web: www.imsim.com