



# IMPACT

## MINNEAPOLIS 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 Minneapolis are proof of ISO's benefits.

## ARROW'S AIM IS FUTURE SUCCESS

Based in Blaine, Minnesota, Arrow Cryogenics is a job-shop that provides the fine finishing of precision components for a variety of industries, including the automotive, military and medical industries – “a little bit of everything,” as Arrow's President Curt Salo suggests.

The company first achieved ISO 9000 in April 2002 and, Curt reckons, the processes outlined through certification have just become the way the company now does business. “It certainly helped streamline the way we do things, and we have a better system now than we ever had before,” he says.

As with many companies, Arrow also found that having ISO certification would provide a competitive edge to its business. “Our customers were demanding that we had a clearly defined system we could demonstrate to them, so it has meant we have kept their business where perhaps they might have looked elsewhere. It has also brought new business to us, although we have not yet measured the



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savings and profits certification has brought us,” says Curt.

While he is prepared to say that there were concerns within the company before IMSM came in to take Arrow Cryogenics through the process, Curt recognizes that it has been for the good. “We feared that it would mean a lot of unnecessary paperwork, and that we would be creating work for ourselves,” he says. “In reality, the truth is very different. The paperwork is beneficial to us and, ultimately, it saves us time.”

[www.arrowcryogenics.com](http://www.arrowcryogenics.com)

## FORSYTHE'S SAGA HAS A HAPPY CONCLUSION

In its 10 year history Spec Plating has grown to become a well-known force in the metal components industry within Minneapolis.



I would say we would be restricted in the market without it.”

Steve also believes there will be clear benefits for the company itself.

Set up by its president Steve Forsythe, it now employs 80 people, and serves a whole range of industries, including electronics, medical, defence and aerospace companies throughout the USA.

It has not always been easy for Steve, however. In 1998 the firm's premises were reduced to ashes in a fire, but it is a measure of his personal determination that the business carried on and recovered from such a catastrophe.

“Our mindset was that we will keep this going,” Steve says now. “Our customer relations were maintained and we were able to start running three shifts of operations within two weeks.”

Evidently a man determined to keep his focus on running an effective and profitable business, Steve has recently achieved ISO 9000 certification through IMSM. “It is partly a marketing issue,” he confirms. “Having certification gives us bragging rights, and our customers are demanding it of us.”

“It will bring greater consistency across our business, and improve our record keeping and internal audit processes.”

The decision to choose IMSM to take Spec Plating through the process was based on equally sound business practice. “They are competitive, they can inspect with little delay and the program looks good,” says Steve.

With certification now achieved, let's hope Spec Plating can look forward to an equally successful, although perhaps less eventful, second decade of business.

[www.specplating.com](http://www.specplating.com)

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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.

## CASWELL SETS SIGHTS ON PROFITABILITY



Jeffrey Dorsch, Director of Engineering at Caswell International, is adamant that achieving ISO 9001 certification is essential to the company's future success. The Minneapolis-based manufacturer of firearms training equipment sought certification

because of the impact it could have on its profitability. "For us," says Jeff, "it was a proactive move to keep us ahead of the competition in the market."

Caswell customers include law enforcement and security agencies, military installations, commercial shooting range owners, and ammunitions and firearms manufacturers. Caswell is committed to providing products that realistically simulate live fire situations while ensuring shooter safety. Changing firearms training techniques and diverse customer requirements played a major part in Caswell's quest for certification. "It demonstrates a commitment to provide customers with quality

products that meet their individual requirements," says Jeff, "and it was critical for us to achieve a level of certification that encompasses all ISO standards, including design engineering control."

Their choice of IMSM as the company to help them reach the certification they wanted was based on a number of factors. "IMSM offered us a very competitive package deal, in which they proposed that they would also provide the consulting," says Jeff. "I spoke to some of the companies they put forward as references and heard only good things about IMSM. Now I understand why. I would definitely recommend them; we have been very pleased."

Satisfaction at achieving ISO 9001 is evident throughout Caswell International. Paul Faust, the company's president, says: "It provides independent confirmation that we are continually measuring the effectiveness of our processes, and is a significant measure of our commitment to meeting our customers' needs."

[www.caswellintl.com](http://www.caswellintl.com)

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## FROM CERTIFICATION TO EXPANSION...

For Wiltec President Al Olsen, the decision to seek ISO 9000 certification was essential for the future of his business. Al, who founded the Anoka, Minneapolis-based precision machine shop 25 years ago, puts it simply: "We wanted ISO 9000 because our customers were demanding it of us"

"...we have been able to use our certification in our bid to bring new customers to our business."

Since they first achieved it last year, it's true to say Wiltec has been able to use certification as a means to expand their customer base. "It has been very favourably accepted by our existing

customers, and we have been able to use our certification in our bid to bring new customers to our business," says Al. "We have also recruited a new sales person and put together a new brochure to make the most of having ISO 9000."

Although Al says it is impossible to measure the savings and profits which could be attributable to having certification, he is certain that there has been an impact on Wiltec's bottom line. "Achieving ISO 9000 meant we had to tighten up our procedures," he confirms, "and that led to our producing fewer rejects and improving our delivery schedule." According to Al any changes implemented as a result have been well received across the company.

Al is quick to pay tribute to the part IMSM played in Wiltec's achievement. "They were very knowledgeable about our industry," he says, "and very easy to work with. I couldn't really imagine how their service could be any better."

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## TOP MARKS FOR IMSM

The company's name might suggest otherwise, but Accurate Component's motto is a greater reflection of what they do. "We supply solutions, not just hardware" boasts the New Brighton, Minnesota firm, which distributes specialty fasteners to industries ranging from computer hardware, water softeners and the automobile industry.

"We are highly diversified," explains Mark Rovie, "and some of our customers had begun to mention ISO 9000. We realized that certification might improve our competitiveness and approached IMSM in 2002 to discuss what we would have to do to achieve the standard."

Accurate's main concerns about the process centered around the possibility that achieving certification would detract from the day-to-day running of the business. "I feared there would be a huge time investment involved, but that didn't prove to be the case," says Mark. "We all got a little nervous, but IMSM made the whole process entirely painless."

Mark was also very impressed by the levels of service IMSM provided. "They just came in and did everything they said they

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...I'd give IMSM a 10 out of 10 for their service"



would," he says, "and I'd give IMSM a 10 out of 10 for their service."

The company is already seeing the benefits, and has just undergone its second audit. "It went well," confirms Mark, "and I think we have recognized that certification has saved us time in our processes, improved our documentation and given us better control of the systems we have in place here."

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