

## **Maine MEP Helps Position Elscott Manufacturing for New Market Opportunities**

### **Attainment of ISO 9001:2000 Certification Verifies Firm's Commitment to Quality**

Augusta, Maine: For companies engaged in the competitive field of contract manufacturing, effective quality management is indispensable. In a sluggish global economy, competition becomes all the more fierce. When market opportunities develop, manufacturers must be able to demonstrate their ability to meet the highest international quality standards.

Elscott Manufacturing, LLC, headquartered in Ellsworth, Maine, recently attained an important independent confirmation of its commitment to quality management by passing its certification audit for ISO 9001:2000. The firm, a diversified contract manufacturer for the past 22 years, operates two manufacturing facilities in Maine. It serves customers in the automotive, medical, aerospace and national defense sectors.

The training for ISO 9001 certification was provided by Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP).

"We were not familiar with the Maine MEP program before Congressman Mike Michaud recommended that we utilize their services," said Elscott General Manager Will Taylor. "Having now worked with the Maine MEP and learned about their capabilities and range of services, we understand why the Congressman has been such a strong proponent on Capitol Hill of the national MEP program."

"Elscott Manufacturing is an example of an impressive Maine manufacturer that needed to be able to document and verify its abilities in the face of stiff global competition," said MEP Project Manager Bob Doiron. "The firm's ability to provide custom fabrication enables it to meet the most demanding design specification. And it has both engineering and manufacturing facilities under one roof, which expedites product development and reduces the time needed to bring new products to market for its customers."

"The firm has an impressive list of clients," said Doiron. "So when these customers began asking Elscott about ISO 9001 certification and encouraged the company to establish a formal quality management system, company management responded. Elscott identified ISO certification as part of its strategic business planning, recognizing that new market opportunities require ISO 9001 certification."

Maine MEP met in 2008 with the Elscott management team and proposed an ISO training program that was partially funded by a U.S. Department of Labor training grant. In an intensive 12-day training program, the implementation team led by Maine MEP instituted quality management system processes, provided internal auditor training and established a plan to implement the ISO procedures over a six-month period.

"ISO certification carries a lot of weight," said Doiron. "In selecting a contract manufacturer, firms carefully review a supplier's capabilities, including how well they are organized, the capabilities of the management and engineering teams, and the effectiveness of internal training programs."

"When it comes to this kind of review, ISO certification often makes the difference. Clients know that 9001 certification assures processes are in place to make a consistently high quality product. The ISO 9001 certification is internationally recognized. A commitment to operating your company in conformance with

the ISO 9001 standard not only helps to ensure the quality of products and services, but more importantly confirms that your company has defined and documented processes that ensure consistent customer satisfaction. In addition, implementing ISO 9001 helps companies organize and streamline processes, and this often leads to savings,” said Doiron.

After successfully passing its ISO 9001 audit, Elscott indeed confirmed the benefits of the certification. As a result of implementing ISO 9001, the company retained 25 jobs and \$1 million in sales. It has been awarded \$40,000 in new sales contracts. Moreover, the company realized \$25,000 in cost savings by working with Maine MEP, quickly recouping a sizeable portion of the ISO workforce training cost.

“This certification is an important milestone for Elscott Manufacturing, but it is important to note that quality is an ongoing process,” said General Manager Taylor. “For more than 20 years, we’ve made a commitment to our customers. They understand and appreciate our vision. This certification provides independent validation of our approach; and it reinforces our reputation for providing high quality products and customer satisfaction.”

Taylor believes that ISO certification will bring Elscott new clients. Some clients demand certification and will not work with a company unless it is ISO certified.

“It’s been a pleasure working with Maine MEP,” said Taylor. “MEP’s experience and knowledge helped to implement a LEAN culture throughout our company, which has led to increased market share within our current customer base and unlocked opportunities for new customers to keep much-needed manufacturing jobs in Downeast Maine.”

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) based in Geneva, Switzerland, is the source of the ISO 9000 family of quality management standards. ISO is a network of national standards institutes from 146 countries working in partnership with international organizations, governments, industry, business and consumer representatives.