

CASE STUDY



LEADING UK-BASED ENGINEERING COMPANY REAPS THE **REWARDS** OF **AS/EN 9100** CERTIFICATION **SUCCESS**

Productivity improvements, increased business volumes, and tangible cost benefits were just three of the benefits on offer when Polymeric Composites achieved AS/EN 9100 certification.

Polymeric Composites is a leading composite engineering company with a long-standing reputation for expertise in the production of high-performance structures and components.

In its 30,000 sq. ft manufacturing unit at Clevedon, near Bristol, Polymeric develops, manufactures and supplies complete assemblies; and sources and fits component parts as required. The company manages the whole process from concept to delivery.

SGS



WHY POLYMERIC CHOSE AS/EN 9100 CERTIFICATION

In 2005, a leading aerospace customer identified a need for all its approved suppliers to be certified to AS/EN 9100.

Safety, quality and reliability are critical principles in the aerospace industry. If anything goes wrong with a product or service, it can affect safety, severely damage reputations and reduce sales. Sustainable quality is key, and AS/EN 9100 certification provides a way to address the challenge as well as an opportunity to improve quality management systems and capitalise on business building opportunities.

BRIDGING THE GAP FROM ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFICATION

The AS/EN 9100 series is an ISO based set of standards, which meant Polymeric was able to bridge the gap quickly between their existing ISO 9001:2000 standard and the requirements of AS/EN 9100.

Polymeric selected SGS to carry out its AS/EN 9100 certification based on previous exposure to the experience and professionalism of the SGS auditors.

AS/EN9100 PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS-BUILDING ADVANTAGES

Certification has provided an effective entry-to-market tool.

By certifying their management system against AS/EN 9100, Polymeric has boosted its credibility and aligned its quality management systems with the same high levels now expected, recognised and adopted by the aerospace industry.

Since achieving certification, the company has grown from 21 to 43 employees, and between 2005-6 and 2006-7 turnover grew by 46%.

"AS/EN 9100 CERTIFICATION PROVIDED POLYMERIC WITH A PASSPORT TO THE ONLINE AEROSPACE SUPPLIER INFORMATION SYSTEM (OASIS)"

REDUCES AUDITING COSTS AND DISRUPTIONS

AS/EN 9100 certification helps to reduce any costs and disruptions caused by multiple second and third party audits, often needed to demonstrate acceptable standards.

For Polymeric, this has proved advantageous when bidding for new business customer auditors know in advance that they won't have to spend time auditing Polymeric's generic system elements. They can simply concentrate on the specific areas directly relevant to their purchased product.

In addition, Polymeric encourages its key suppliers to take up AS/EN 9100 certification. In this way, Polymeric conducts its own desktop audits once a year, saving time and money.

REDUCES AMOUNT OF DEFECTIVE PRODUCT AND RETURNS

Certification to AS/EN 9100 is driving a Right First Time culture and encouraging a greater degree of control and conformity in production.

This leads to less defective product and fewer returns, ensuring high levels of customer satisfaction and supplier confidence.

With AS/EN 9100 certification in place, blue chip customers know in advance of the negotiating table that Polymeric works to a high degree of control and conformity to the industry standard.

IMPROVES PRODUCT TRACEABILITY

New materials come directly into a "bonded" store (AS/EN 9100 stipulates that companies restrict access to the store) and staff allocate each part a unique batch number. This means all materials are traceable at all times in the production process, right back to the supplier, if necessary. If problems arise, staff quickly and easily pinpoint where they occurred in the production process.

ENABLES A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN THROUGH QUANTIFIABLE AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

With the AS/EN 9100 system in place, Polymeric enjoys tangible cost benefits. The company can measure the effectiveness of the system and see a measurable ROI.

For example, they can measure key performance indicators such as non-conforming product, customer returns, customer satisfaction and repeat business, and build a continuous improvement plan.

Provided you put the work in, have the system in place, and ensure it is robust, then it becomes self-maintaining," says Simon Howarth, Quality and Business Development Manager.

"The maintenance of the Quality Management System becomes a process in your operating methodology and a part of your normal pattern of work."

EXPANDS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

AS/EN 9100 certification provided Polymeric with a passport to the Online Aerospace Supplier Information System (OASIS). Here, the company publishes its annual results, certification and audit results. This visibility on the database has led to business enquiries from other members.

BENEFITS OF CONTINUING TO WORK WITH SGS

Regular surveillance visits and assessments by SGS auditors help Polymeric continue to use, monitor and improve their management system and processes. This improves the reliability of their internal processes to meet their customer requirements and overall performance.

Certification to AS/EN 9100 has also delivered significant improvements in staff motivation, commitment and understanding of their responsibilities in enhancing the quality of their products and services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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