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Tamworth manufacturer puts quality at the top of its business agenda

Constantly looking for new business opportunities and employing more than 50 people at its Tamworth base, Madewell Products Ltd (MPL) started out supplying gates and security products to the construction industry.

Now, approaching its 40th anniversary, driven forward by a young, dynamic female Managing Director and helped by advice from the Manufacturing Advisory Service West Midlands (MAS-WM), the company has successfully gone from strength to strength and over the past four years has branched out into supplying products to the medical sector, automotive and more recently the petrochemical industries.

MPL has seen significant growth under the leadership of Emma Jeffries, a former radio executive who was manager at Derby County's digital radio station.

She realised that to keep MPL moving forward would require a robust management system and comprehensive quality systems. And that required access to the high quality management information.

Familiar with the MAS-WM sourcing service, Emma contacted the MAS helpdesk for quality systems advice and guidance.

Specialist Manufacturing Advisor, Mohammed Sarwar met with Emma to discuss the businesses requirements.

Emma explained that as well needing access to up to date management information, she could foresee that MPL's customer base would soon demand that the company be quality accredited to ISO9001.

The standard measures a company's internal quality management, the way a company makes sure its products meet a customer's quality requirements and comply with the regulations applying to those particular products or services.

MAS-WM agreed to fund a project to help the company achieve this standard and to help streamline its operational procedures.

Mohammed enlisted the specialist skills of Stoke based technology and manufacturing consultants CERAM, who initially conducted an audit of the company's existing quality processes so that it could undertake a gap analysis and identify what the company needed to do to meet the stringent ISO9001 quality criteria.

Emma was resolute that the company's quality management systems should complement its existing e2i estimating-to-invoicing software. This manufacturing process management system tracks a company's activities from initial enquiry, through production to final delivery and payment.

Mohammed noted that synchronising the two activities would ensure a successful project outcome, since an enhanced reporting capability would also help the company to better manage its processes, people and products.

That was the theory. These were the results:

- Attainment of quality standard
- Successful implementation of ISO9001
- Complete e2i integration, resulting in a 5% reduction in scrap defects, greater operational efficiency and enhanced management information
- The appointment of a full-time employee dedicated to quality function
- Identification and management of Key Performance Indicators, which allow businesses to measure performance against targets
- Increased turnover of 20%
- Increased profits of 26% over four years
- 5% increase in value add

Says Emma: “Streamlining our systems and processes has given us greater control over both quality and operational efficiency.”

“Our customers have benefited through improved traceability which means that we can better react to situations on the shop-floor and focus our efforts on surpassing delivery performance”.

She adds: “We realised that without the right systems in place to measure your business, you cannot manage it. MPL has seen its revenue increased by 41% and profits soar by 26% in just 4-years and I am very excited to see what the next 4-years will bring now that MPL has robust management and quality systems in place.”

“The marketplace is full of opportunities, if you are willing to invest in your people, quality and systems.”

Mohammed Sarwar is pleased with the results so far, but cautions against complacency: “MPL is an example of a small company with a big ambition.”

He says.

“The difference here is that the company has a clear vision and is realistic about how to achieve it.”

He adds: “They have already achieved a significant amount in the last four years and putting the right management and quality systems in place will help them enormously. They have the correct attitude and realise that to remain a sustainable entity they have to keep their business moving forward.”

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

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