

CARDINAL MACHINE COMPANY

Since 1972, family owned and operated **CARDINAL MACHINE COMPANY** has been in the business of designing and building factory automation or specialty machines used to help other companies make their product. Located in Clio, Michigan, the 25 employee shop have been assisting auto suppliers and other customers for over 30 years. Brian Pennington, President of Cardinal began to do research on Quality Standards to determine which standard fit best and how to efficiently implement it.

Many times customer demands for improved quality are the driving force behind certification to a recognized quality standard especially in the automotive industry. In Cardinal's case, it was rooted in the desire to benefit internal operations by developing a standardized set of procedures. While past performance was excellent, Brian felt that there was always room for improvement and a quality system was the best way to begin realizing those benefits. He determined that the TE Supplement to QS-9000 best met those needs, but then was the question of how to implement it. His first thought was to have the company do it on their own, tailoring it to their needs, as opposed to having an outside company dictate changes. On the other hand, the need to control internal cost and monitor employee time away from duties on the shop floor became paramount.

Enter the MMTC. Cardinal Machine, a member of the Michigan Tooling Association (MTA), heard about the MMTC's TE Supplement to QS-9000 User Group, starting at the MTA facility in Farmington Hills in February 1999. The User Group appeared to be the perfect compromise between outside assistance and inside effort. They joined the User Group and worked together with the MMTC's Jim Rice and several other companies in that group,

to write and implement Quality Manual policies and procedures. It was a big task, but Brian felt the results would be worth the effort. The User Group format allowed Cardinal to spread out the external and internal cost over time. In addition, it allowed employees to work part time on QS/TE materials and part time on the shop floor. The company saw little adverse effects to being involved in the User Group.

There have been many improvements since the completion of that User Group in February of 2000. Brian Pennington, Cardinal company President, said, *"The biggest single improvement has been our ability to control inventory. We now know how much of every part we have and where it is located. Our procedures have also allowed us to cut back on ordering supplies we don't use as often and increase spending on those we do."*

Cardinal has been able to increase sales without staffing increases due to increased efficiency and standardized procedures. They have added a full-time quality manager to maintain and improve the quality system. New purchasing procedures identified exactly where and how much money was going out every month, enabling them to make spending adjustments. These improvements go straight to Cardinal's bottom line profitability and strengthen their position in the marketplace.

When asked about the benefits of a User Group over other implementation methods, Brian said, *"The MMTC User Group format was helpful because of Jim's ability to take the quality system language and put it in everyday terms that were easy to understand. His positive attitude and encouragement throughout the process helped keep our company on track."* Cardinal Machine is preparing for their first pre-assessment audit

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Cardinal Machine Company
Clio, Michigan

