

Webinar showed how company was able to 'branch' out from ISO 9100 / AS9100

WAI's webinar series for 2011 ended with recollections and advice from Whitmor/Wirenetics President Michael Weiss, who on Dec. 6 shared his company's experience developing and living with ISO 9001/AS9100.

AS9000, the predecessor to AS9100, the "aerospace" standard, was first published in 1997 by SAE International. The AS9000 standard evolved via an international effort to AS9100, which is now recognized by all major aerospace OEMs. In his webinar, "Twelve Years with ISO 9001/AS9100 - Reflections on Benefits, Challenges and the Future," Weiss explained the challenges and benefits of AS9100. Also taking part in the webinar was Doug Anton of AEM Consulting Group, Inc., who guided Whitmor through the ISO/AS process and discussed the methodology used to design, document, implement, maintain and improve their system.

Whitmor/Wirenetics, a custom cable manufacturer founded in 1959 and now based in Valencia, California, today provides high-performance wire, cable and tubing to the military, aerospace and satellite industry. The company became ISO 9001 certified in 1998 and AS9100 certified in 2003.

As Weiss explained, he chose to be proactive about the certification as he believed it was inevitable that the business would need to pursue AS9100 for its aerospace business. Following advice from AEM Consulting, the company recorded its current processes, gathering documents and constructing a flowchart; assessed current process to the company's needs; reviewed requirements for the ISO 9001/AS9100 standards; and redesigned, documented and implemented the process. The results, he said, was that the project was delivered on-time and within budget. Some of the lessons that were learned, he said, is that quality is a never ending responsibility; QA, in a small shop, is hands-on, not just pushing paper: and there is a cost for quality, but it's worth it.

Weiss has a saying about the certification. "ISO - AS is like a tree; same trunk but the trick is to hang your own leaves on it." He said it also provides an excellent opportunity to examine processes. In terms of results, he said that revenues for Whitmor/Wirenetics have grown well,



and that to some degree ISO AS9100 was a contributor. It is also of value in terms of preparing for the future, he said.

Doug Anton, who helped Weiss through the process, said “the implementation went smoothly for Whitmor/Wirenetics, largely because it was a deliberate application of the standard. Whitmor refined and documented what they were already doing, they didn’t just create paperwork.” “Additionally Whitmor benefited from the involvement of the people working with the processes.” Anton said.

For more details on Whitmor, go to www.wireandplastic.com.

To contact Doug Anton at AEM Consulting Group, call 541-488-0202, e-mail anton@aemconsulting.com or go to www.aemconsulting.com.

