

Situation

Area Diesel knew ISO 9001 certification would be valuable, but hadn't found time to take it on. When a valued customer was acquired by an entity that required suppliers to be certified, the idea moved to the front burner. In fact, Area Diesel failed a customer audit—not due to products or services, but because they lacked documentation.

A new quality systems manager, Linda Leefers, implemented key steps that helped the company pass a second audit, but they still required certification. "We were getting close, but I didn't feel we could pass an external audit and I didn't want us to fail." Leefers and her team realized that they needed a change in mindset to embrace ISO standards as an intrinsic part of their culture. They could not do it on their own.

Solution

Area Diesel and IMEC worked together to gauge needs, then set individual and departmental goals along the ISO certification path.

Area Diesel needed to select a registrar that would be a good fit as they navigated the path to certification. IMEC provided potential registrars that we'd worked with in the past, as well as others with whom our network had positive experiences.

As they proceeded toward certification, Area Diesel encountered a major hiccup—their out-of-date operating software did not have CRM capabilities that could meet current needs. They had to pause to deploy a new system and train everyone in how to use it. Leefers recalls, "By taking a little bit longer, it really got some of the ideas to become habits that I think will pay out to be advantageous in the long run."

ISO Certification

ISO 9001:2015 certification has resulted in many positives, most notably the mindset shift of employees. Instead of approaching tasks as checklists, customer satisfaction is top of mind. Capturing customer feedback spurs conversations that help everyone improve. Shares Leefers, "Instead of being reactionary, we're being proactive on everything."

Keeping impeccable records has also made a difference. "When you talk to a supplier and you actually have data to discuss, they really listen." Internal recordkeeping helps, too, as Leefers observes, "Initiatives don't just fall off. It keeps everything in the forefront."

As word spreads that Area Diesel is certified, Leefers expects it to broaden their market share. "When we start going to tradeshow again, we will have our ISO 9001:2015 certification displayed and people who would normally pass us by will stop and take a look."

Results

- **\$100,000** in anticipated new sales
- **\$161,000** in anticipated retained sales
- **1 job created** and 47 retained
- **\$5,000** investment in workforce practices and skills
- **Improved** customer satisfaction
- **Enhanced** work culture

"IMEC's knowledgeable and useful assistance was instrumental in Area Diesel Service's ISO 9001:2015 certification registration."

Linda Leefers, Quality Systems Manager, Area Diesel Services