

ACCELERATING THE PATH TO SUCCESS WITH PRIMEX

ABOUT PR INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND. Puerto Rico Industries for the Blind, Corp., ((PRIFB) is a 501 (c)3 corporation, founded in 2017 and located in Mayagüez, providing training and employment opportunities to more than 300 workers with severe disabilities. It manufactures protective clothing and gear for the United States Department of Defense. Founded in 2013, PRIFB began as a small manufacturer of commercial uniforms. Its new leadership transformed the organizational philosophy to make it more inclusive and integrating it into the Federal Ability One program. This program allows federal government agencies to procure products and/or services from nonprofit organizations that provide employment for people with severe disabilities.

THE CHALLENGE. PRIFB was required to develop, implement and certify a quality management system in accordance with the international standards of ISO 9001: 2015. The challenge was not only to achieve the ISO certification, but to achieve it simultaneously with an accelerated growth process, which required the hiring of dozens of employees each week for the initiation of new production lines. The Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension, Inc., a NIST MEP affiliate, was recommended to assist PRIFB in this process.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. PRIMEX first performed an ISO 9001 review of the PRIFB quality management system and developed an aggressive working plan with all the requirements needed to pass the ISO 9001:2015 certification audit. PRIFB had an ambitious goal to become ISO certified in six months to meet a customer's requirements and PRIMEX played a critical role helping them complete this requirement. PRIMEX provided quality management system training, developed the standard operating procedures and put together all the required documentation while serving as a lead auditor in support of the quality management system.

After implementation and an internal audit, that determine that PRIFB was ready for ISO 9001:2015 certification. PRIMEX select a third-party auditor and scheduled our formal certification process. PRIFB achieved certification on its first attempt, without any inconformity in a record period of 5 months. This achievement increases PRIFB reputation and we won two contracts that create more then 225 new jobs. Without PRIMEX's support throughout this process, we would never have achieved such success.

"The strategic approach that PRIMEX gave us, allowed us to obtain the ISO certification in 5 months. We were aware that it was a big challenge, but there is no doubt that we selected the best mentor to guide us in this process."

-Mr. Josean Feliciano, Executive Vice President

RESULTS



\$500,000 invested in new equipment



225 jobs created



Increased sales **\$2M** (500%) & retained sales **\$3M**



Won **2** new contracts with US Department of Defense



ISO **9001** Certification in 5 months; Quality & Manufacturing Excellence Award during 2019 MFG Day

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