

LEVERAGING THE BENEFITS OF ISO 9001 CERTIFICATION AND A
STRONG PARTNERSHIP

ABOUT MEMSCAP, INC. MEMSCAP, a Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) manufacturer, provides the aerospace/defense, optical communications, medical and biomedical and IT/consumer industries with custom solutions based on MEMS. Located in Durham, North Carolina, the French-owned manufacturer is "focused on the advancement and welfare of humanity."

THE CHALLENGE. When MEMSCAP found themselves in a situation where they needed to renew their ISO 9001 certification after their quality management specialist suddenly left the company, they called on a familiar organization for support. Christine Schmid, site manager at the North Carolina MEMSCAP manufacturing facility, knew action had to be taken quickly. Schmid said, "We had to change our way of thinking and that quality should be a company commitment and not a one person job." They couldn't let their ISO 9001 certification lapse. Doing so could have given their direct competitors an advantage and they couldn't afford a situation where their competitors were ISO certified and they were not.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Schmid says she reached out to NCMEP partner Industry Expansion Solutions (IES), a member of the MEP National Network, for assistance because of the long running history between the two organizations. "The stakes were high and we understood a simple lapse could have impacted our business's profitability, among other things," added Schmid.

Within a nine month period, IES improvement specialists trained all members within the organization on the concepts and practices of quality control and how to implement quality management systems in time to renew their ISO 9001 certificate. "They trained us to understand what we needed to do every day, every month, every year in order for us to constantly improve standard operating procedures and managerial systems," said Schmid. "The recertification became a way to ensure we're always improving. Our employees also have a greater sense of pride, knowing they work in an ISO-certified company & MEMSCAP continues to work with IES. An IES improvement specialist has been on site three to four times to conduct the internal audits. "Each time the improvement specialist comes, we learn something new. We use their feedback to implement root cause analysis which helps pinpoint exact problems in operations or defects in products. We go back to the source and fix any problems so they won't happen again," said Schmid. MEMSCAP hasn't hired someone to fill the vacant quality management specialist position and doesn't intend to anytime soon. Schmid said, "The reason? Quality is now everyone's responsibility."

"We had to change our way of thinking and that quality should be a company commitment and not a one person job."

-Christine Schmid, Site Operations Manager

RESULTS



\$500,000 in retained sales



\$100,000 in new sales



\$250,000 in cost savings

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