

GETTING READY

ABOUT R&D BATTERIES INC. R&D Batteries, Inc., manufactures replacement batteries and lamps for the health care industry from its 15,000 square foot plant in Burnsville, Minnesota. The company was founded in 1989 by president and CEO Randall Noddings, who was intrigued by the high-end batteries' business model; with their limited shelf life replacements will always be in demand. A classic entrepreneurial startup, Randall and a couple of employees engineered R&D's first products from an 1,100-square-foot office, where he also took on purchasing, payroll, customer service and shipping. He instructed his first salesman to come back in three months after he had developed a market.

Randall's plan worked. R&D grew exponentially in its first five years. And with his three sons, Christopher, Jim, and Travis, he built the company into an \$18 million operation that today employs 35 people.

THE CHALLENGE. As Randall nears retirement, heir-apparent Christopher Noddings is already tweaking the operation for future growth. He's executing plans to expand the company's product lines into cables and sensors that would plug into the same equipment powered by its batteries. That expansion, Christopher understood, would mean that new, bigger customers would require R&D to get its ISO 13485:2016 designation, so they reached out to Enterprise Minnesota, part of the MEP National Network™, to find guidance and support.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Under the instruction of Enterprise Minnesota Business Growth Consultant Keith Gadacz, Christopher says he and three of his company managers invested more than 4,000 hours over 11 months to complete the ISO 13485 application, which he thinks was time well spent. "We'd been talking about it for a number of years before we actually pulled the trigger," said Chris, knowing that it would require a significant investment in time and money. "The audit went as smoothly as can be. We finished early by almost an entire day," he said.

"Keith did a great job for us! Helped with our QMS and got us more than ready for ISO certification. Also made the surprise FDA audit happening at the same time fly by without any problems! "

-Christopher Noddings, VP of Operations

RESULTS



\$200,000 invested in new products or processes



\$150,000 invested in other areas of the business



\$30,000 in increased sales



\$20,000 invested in employee skills



\$10,000 invested in facilities or equipment

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