

WILLIAMS PLATING COMPANY: A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

ABOUT WILLIAMS PLATING COMPANY, INC. Williams Plating Company, Inc. - a second-generation, family-owned business based in Arden, North Carolina - has built a strong reputation in the metal finishing industry, specializing in small-batch, critical precision metal finishing and chemical processing. The company provides electroplating and finishing services to North Carolina and across the United States for high-value, high-quality products in the electronics, aerospace, marine, defense, and industrial markets. Their services include gold, silver, copper, nickel, and tin plating, as well as chemical cleaning.

THE CHALLENGE. While Williams Plating has long prioritized quality and craftsmanship, increasing customer expectations—particularly from its largest client—prompted the company to seek ISO 9001 certification. Although not required, the certification had become a key industry preference and a competitive advantage.

Ilana Williams, the Quality and Compliance Manager, confidently stepped into a demanding and multifaceted role. With a master's degree in biological sciences, she applied her analytical skills and critical thinking to manage the complex field of quality management. "Learning the language and terminology of quality management was a hurdle," she shared. "It was a completely different discipline than what I was trained in, and wrapping my head around the documentation and processes took time."

The certification process took nearly six years, with delays due to business demands and the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the main challenges was gaining management-level support and understanding the complexities of document control, especially for a small, family-owned business that manages new work alongside a consistent, specialized operation.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Recognizing the need for expert guidance, Williams Plating partnered with NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions (IES). The IES team provided tailored support to clarify ISO 9001 requirements, develop an effective quality management system, and prepare for certification audits. Through workshops, on-site visits, and one-on-one coaching, IES equipped the team with the knowledge and tools necessary for success.

"IES made the process manageable for us as a small business," Ilana said. "They broke down complex concepts, helped us develop documentation, and offered support whenever we felt stuck. Having a partner like IES was priceless."

RESULTS



\$10,000 in new products and processes



\$12,000 in information systems and software



\$20,000 in workforce improvement



\$5,000 investment in other areas

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"I can't imagine going through the ISO 9001 certification process without the support of Industry Expansion Solutions. Their team was there for us every step of the way, and they truly understand what it takes for small manufacturers to succeed in today's market.

Nora Milley was instrumental in our success in achieving ISO 9001 certification. Our path to completion took six years to complete, and she was with us every step of the way. Her breadth of knowledge and passion for helping companies succeed helped us not only grasp the content to apply to our business but also have faith in our ability to pass the certification audits."

-Ilana Williams, Quality and Compliance Manager