

Benefits of Nadcap Accreditation and Meetings

In this interview from Nadcap's June 2013 newsletter, Dale Harmon with Cincinnati Thermal Spray shares his thoughts on his company's relationship with Nadcap

What is your current Nadcap status? We have merit for chemical processing and coatings. Three of our four sites are Nadcap accredited.

Why did your company decide to attain Nadcap accreditation in the first place? It was a customer requirement – simple as that!

What challenges have you faced in gaining and keeping Nadcap accreditation? Well, I was in Engineering when we first got involved in Nadcap. Although I wasn't in a leadership role, I wrote about a third of our procedures that we needed in order to get accredited. That was a big challenge, and it's an ongoing one, because we have to make sure all our systems and procedures are kept up-to-date; it's not a one-off activity. It's tough and time-consuming but I have to tell you, going to the Nadcap meetings is a big help.

One of the main benefits of attending the meetings, as far as I'm concerned, is that I get to hear what's going to change in the checklists ahead of time. I bring that information back to my company so we can make any adjustments as necessary to our procedures or practices in good time before our next audit. More than that, by being at the meetings, I actually get a voice in any proposed changes, which is invaluable, as they have a real impact on my company.

What benefits have you seen from being Nadcap accredited? Accreditation initially allowed us to maintain our aerospace customer base and, later, to expand in the industry. Our third facility, which did no aerospace work initially, achieved Nadcap accreditation to improve processes and then experienced business expansion to include aerospace customers.

Being involved in Nadcap also helps because I know where the information is, and whom to ask if I have questions. For example, if we are investigating bringing a new process on board, one of the first things I do is download the Nadcap checklist and use it to ensure our process controls are in place. Even if the new work is not for a Nadcap subscriber, or even for an aerospace company, the discipline required to pass a Nadcap audit is a best practice I like to follow. The work has been done – and by industry experts who have collectively more years' experience in the field than I will ever have – so

why not use their insights to improve quality at my company? That's what Nadcap is about, after all.

I briefly mentioned the Nadcap meetings already but I want to highlight again why they are so good and such a benefit of being involved in Nadcap. As well as keeping abreast of new developments and getting to input into the audit checklists, which I already talked about, the meetings are a great way to network with customers and other companies in your field, which is incredibly useful. The people who make the decisions on new approvals for my company are at the meeting – that's a very powerful thing. Also, I think the fact that they see that my company supports Nadcap to the extent that I now attend every meeting speaks volumes to them regarding our commitment to quality and supporting global industry improvement.

Why did you want to get involved with the Nadcap Supplier Support Committee? Back in 2004, the Coatings Task Group Supplier Lead, who'd been involved since the very beginning, retired and I was selected by the Task Group as his replacement. At that time, Arne Logan of The Boeing Company was Nadcap Management Council Chairperson and a really strong supporter of the SSC. Although I am involved with SSC activities, my priority is the Task Group work. That's why my company pays for me to attend the meetings. Now, I'm actually Secretary of the Coatings Task Group.

What SSC achievement are you most proud of? We started the Supplier Help Desk, or Supplier Support Center, about three years ago and I'm now the leading that effort. The purpose is to help suppliers at the Nadcap meetings by providing them with information about the meeting as a whole and the SSC activities that take place there that could be of benefit to them. We are inundated with queries at the meetings. The first two days, when lots of people are arriving, is when we are most busy. New attendees especially don't know what meeting to attend, which Task Group they should go to, where everything is... it can definitely be a bit overwhelming for first-timers and I'm pleased to be able to help. There are PRI staff there to help too, of course, but sometimes it's nice to interact with your peers. ●

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