



Focus on quality and inspection key to STL success

Earlier this year, Redditch based presswork and metal contact specialist Samuel Taylor Limited (STL) became one of the first manufacturers in the UK to attain the conversion from BS18001 to ISO45001 standard certification for Health and Safety.

The achievement was no mean feat but looking beyond the headlines, it becomes clear that this is part of a much bigger picture, one of a companywide philosophy of putting quality and inspection first and a desire to continuously improve.

STL Quality Manager Bogdan Dumitru tells us more...

"I joined the company nearly 3 years ago as an Operations Analyst, conducting risk analysis and control plans, before gradually getting more and more involved with quality" comments Bogdan.

"After taking over the running of the 6-person strong STL Quality Assurance (QA) team in 2018, I decided to focus on the integration of the Health & Safety and Quality Management systems into one single system.

"The Quality Assurance and Health & Safety systems were overlapping, so it made sense to bring them together. As a result, it is easier to maintain and audit, less time consuming and more efficient. I believe achieving ISO45001 is partly a reflection of our success in doing this. Furthermore, by integrating them, it gives us the opportunity of also obtaining an environmental accreditation. Rather than starting from scratch for this, we already have a solid foundation" adds Bogdan.



The STL QA team have also modernized every day procedures, moving towards more comprehensive documentation of manufacturing processes.

Bogdan continues: "We are continuously upgrading the way that we record what we do, such as better documentation of standard operating procedures. The company is well established and has always benefited from a hands-on director approach. As a result, whilst we all fully understand and communicate our KPI's, we should also ensure that we record it to the extent required".

Comprehensive documentation will be key to ensuring that the company is successful, should they pursue in their efforts to gain the IATF Automotive qualification, according to Bogdan.

"We have automotive customers already, and whilst it is not mandatory for us to have the IATF Automotive qualification, it will mean being audited less by customers and enhances our credibility.

We are already operating with the required best practice procedures, we simply need to enhance the way that we record information relating to production planning and processes, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of what we are doing. Of course, we know what we are doing and already evaluate how efficient our processes are, but documenting this more comprehensively will without question continue to benefit us”.

There is a tangible desire for continuous improvement within the STL company culture, embodied not only by the philosophy of the QA team, but also by the organisation’s ongoing commitment to supporting the team with investments in new technology.

Earlier this year, STL announced a £500,000 investment as part of a focused effort to increase capacity and efficiency. The additional production capacity needed better and faster QA tools to maximise the investment payback, so STL moved to invest in their first Keyence Image Dimension Measuring System.

The investment ensured that the QA team can now perform high-precision measurements, automatically record data, and generate reports with the push of a button, improving quality assurance, enhancing in-house inspection capabilities and efficiency, as well as dramatically reducing QA inspection times.



“The Keyence machine came in addition to our CMM, which is also a great piece of kit. Put simply, it eliminates human error. The challenge is to make sure it is well programmed, and it understands what it is supposed to look for, which is our job to ensure happens” adds Bogdan.

“We strive to better ourselves every day and the quality team all share this view with me. I involve my team and do my best to empower them. I am fortunate to have colleagues that have been working for this company for over 20 years and the retained knowledge is immense. We should be tapping into this as part of a cohesive unit”.

STL are a truly global company both in respect of their customers and supplier base. The importance of developing close working relationships with suppliers to ensure the required levels of quality is also an area that Bogdan and his team have paid a significant amount of attention to.

“Good quality suppliers are essential, and we benefit from a great supply chain. We spend a lot of time making sure that suppliers share our values of continuous improvement and buy into this. We have processes that help us monitor suppliers with the ability to invest time in supporting them when required, explaining why we may need things done in a certain way. We build relationships based on trust and mutual respect. It also helps that we have a multilingual workforce that can communicate with suppliers across Europe and beyond, overcoming challenges that may have been caused by things getting lost in translation”.

Moving forward, quality assurance will continue to play a huge part in determining the future success of STL. Bogdan concludes: “In my opinion, quality systems and quality teams help to build a manufacturers reputation. Our customers look at how well defined our systems are, how in control we are before they even consider using us, often it represents a defining factor with regards to them choosing to work with us or not. Whilst we always strive to improve, we feel that what we now have

in place, provides a strong platform from which the company can achieve future growth”.

ENDS.