

ELECTRONIC PRECISION SPECIALTIES: PERFECTING THE PROCESS

To meet the most stringent manufacturing requirements in the industry, Henry “Hank” Brown knew that the manuals and procedures in his electroplating facility had to be more automated. The president of Electronic Precision Specialties also knew that a certification from the National Aerospace and Defense Contractors Accreditation Program equaled happy customers. So he hunted for the best technology and accomplished his goal fast. The company expects to earn its certification in June. “We are fairly sophisticated from a technology standpoint,” said Brown. “We were looking for a better way to do what we do best.”



Gold Plating

The 35-employee facility, located in Brea, CA, since 1980, makes high-quality gold, silver, nickel, tin-lead and copper plating for aerospace, defense, electronic and medical device manufacturers. The shiny metal plating can be found in everything from radar arrays, satellites, and missile components to microwaves. Electronic Precision Specialties products are also used in life-saving devices like pacemakers and in the batteries used in night-vision equipment for the military. “The quality of the component becomes extremely important when it could mean the difference between living and dying,” Brown said.



Silver Plating

The improvements put in place to earn the rigorous NADCAP certification took energy and commitment from everyone at the plant. It involved more than the documentation of processes and reorganizing the work areas. Electronic Precision Specialties had already improved many quality systems while earning the Quality Management System certification to ISO 9000. What the company did need were project management and computer experts who could take the customer-generated software they were using and go further. Brown credits California Manufacturing Technology Consulting® (CMTC) with jumpstarting the process by securing the public funds quickly, setting the goals, and coordinating with the software developer to expedite the certification audit.

Electronic Precision Specialties’ new systems now maintain and monitor chemistry in a particular order and assess the purity of the deposit. Systems were installed to maximize communication on the floor. Operators can see real-time displays of the tanks to more efficiently check if products meet precise manufacturing specifications. Rather than have a two-step quality system, they will have a one-step system that works efficiently, allowing the company to

produce quality plated products for all its customers including military and medical device manufacturers.

One immediate benefit of the certification process and the audit was that communication at the plant greatly improved. Employees now understand their duties in the larger context. "The qualities of products are better and our employees are more engaged," said Brown. Also, the certification process resulted in a drop in the number of rejects.



Nickel Plating

Brown predicts that if they hadn't had ISO certification in the last year, they would have lost \$450,000. They anticipate saving \$500,000 in the coming year as a result of earning NADCAP certification. "California is an extremely difficult business environment and the only way we can stay competitive is to become more efficient," said Brown. "We have done very well in the current economy and I am very pleased with that."

For more information, visit their website at www.elecprec.com.

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*Henry "Hank" Brown,
President*

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