



## Changing Lanes

For the past 60 years, GESIPA® Fasteners USA, Inc. has made blind rivets and the tools to install them. Its products have come to stand for quality, and wherever dependability and toughness are required—in demanding industrial applications like oil platforms and ship turbines, for example—GESIPA® products are found. Until recently, however, one sector was closed to the North American division of the company; automakers require their suppliers to be certified to ISO/TS 16949, the rigorous quality management system requirements for the design and development, production, installation and service of automotive products, and GESIPA® had never pursued certification. The relatively small amount of business that it could conduct with North American automakers, therefore, had to be handled by third parties.

The company's upper management spotted huge growth potential for the company in the automotive sector, and decided that GESIPA® Fasteners USA would enter the market full-force, locally supplying automaker GM with parts that the parent company had been shipping from Germany. For the plant managers in GESIPA®'s North American headquarters in Mocksville, NC, the decision meant that they needed ISO/TS 16949 certification—and they needed it fast.

### Managing the Effort

GESIPA® was already certified to ISO 9001, the foundational standard for quality management systems, and Vice President of Engineering and Quality at GESIPA® Dennis Buss had to figure out what additional steps and components would be required to earn ISO/TS 16949. He began researching consultants who might be able to help, and soon discovered that the only company to offer the desired gap analysis was NCMEP partner Industry Expansion Solutions (IES). GESIPA® engaged IES and quickly got to work.

### **GESIPA® Fasteners USA, Inc.**

#### **Challenge**

GESIPA® Fasteners USA, Inc. was directed by its German parent company to enter the North American automotive parts market, but the company lacked the appropriate certification.

#### **IES Solution**

ISO/TS 16949

#### **Benefits**

GESIPA® earned certification and retained \$600,000 in business as a result. The company plans to double its production over the coming years.

As a result of the gap analysis and internal auditor training conducted by IES, GESIPA® Quality Manager Tim Harris saw that one of the biggest undertakings in the quest to obtain ISO/TS 16949 certification would be the creation of the required work instructions. With this knowledge in hand, the management team was able to more effectively plan where its human resources would be used in the ISO/TS 16949 application process.

GESIPA® was awarded ISO/TS 16949 certification months ahead of the deadline imposed by GM, retained \$600,000 in business, and started adding and prospecting for new business immediately.

### **Competing on Speed**

In a competitive market, any advantage is crucial; being able to offer its customers the quick fulfillment time that comes from close proximity is a huge differentiator for GESIPA®.

“Speed is the new business model,” says Brian Cole, GESIPA®’s general manager. While the company currently produces ninety million rivets per year, they are looking to double the scale of production within the next few years, and automotive

““ We’re already looking at doubling the size of our facility to keep up with business. The future is nothing but bright. ””

—Tim Harris, Quality Manager, GESIPA®

business will make up 50 percent of the company’s portfolio.

“We can now freely pursue opportunities without relying on distributors,” adds Harris.

Management is seeing non-monetary benefits, too, most notably in the increased confidence in the products that GESIPA® delivers.

“When you go for ISO/TS 16949, you’re saying that everything you do, all your activities, are focused on making a good quality product. The ideal is that you’re going to have zero defects leaving the facility,” explains Cole. “Where automotive parts are concerned, you don’t want anything but top quality.”

And where a formal assurance of quality is demanded, GESIPA® can now deliver.

**NC STATE**

Industry Expansion Solutions

Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) is the engineering-based, solutions-driven, client-focused unit of NC State University. Our broad portfolio and deep industry expertise help organizations grow, innovate and prosper. Our extensive partnerships with business, industry, education and government generate a unique culture of collaboration that provides access to cutting-edge expertise, research, and technology.

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Visit our website: [www.ies.ncsu.edu](http://www.ies.ncsu.edu) to find the IES Regional Manager nearest you. Contact us by phone: 1.800.227.0264 or email: [iesservices@ncsu.edu](mailto:iesservices@ncsu.edu)

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