



Auditors, be the best

Do you have 30 years of experience in materials science or metallurgy? Have you considered moving into auditing? Arshad Hafeez, Director of Global Business Operations for the Performance Review Institute, explains why the role is so important.

The aerospace and defence industries are always looking to improve quality, while reducing costs for quality assurance. Nadcap is an international, industry-managed approach to conformity assessment that brings together technical experts from both industry and Government. Prime contractors, suppliers and Government representatives work together to establish requirements for accreditation, approve suppliers and define operational programme requirements. Unlike traditional third-party programmes, this process results in a standardised approach to quality assurance and a reduction in redundant auditing throughout the aerospace industry.

Industry elite

George Hayes, who lives in the USA, is an auditor for materials testing laboratories, chemical processing, coatings and non-conventional machining and surface enhancement. He has held this position for almost 12 years.

Hayes says, 'My career was spent at the Naval Air Weapons Centre at China Lake, California, USA, starting in 1957, until I retired as Director of the Materials Test Laboratory in 1992. After retirement, I was looking for a way to keep mentally sharp and up-to-date on emerging technologies, and to continue my involvement in the aerospace industry.'

Martin Bridge from the UK is an auditor for heat treatment and aerospace quality



The A-team: George Hayes, Martin Bridge and Chee Soon Lum

systems. Bridge was attracted by the flexibility offered by the role.

'I worked in the UK steel industry and ended up as a Quality Director in first tier automotive supply. This is a volatile industry and, when my company downsized, I wanted something different,' he says. 'I can work as many – or as few – weeks as I want.' Bridge also likes being able to plan his workload, saying, 'the booking horizon is currently around six months.'

Chee Soon Lum of Singapore is an auditor for chemical processing, heat treatment, non-conventional machining and surface enhancement. He previously worked for Sundstrand and was attracted to auditing by the opportunity to 'learn about new technology in my field, and it also allows me the opportunity to experience different cultures'.

The professionals

A review of the credentials reveals professionals with –

- Multiple certifications in appropriate areas.
- 80% typically have degrees in metallurgy/material science or other relevant fields.

- 30-50% typically have advanced degrees (MSc and PhD) in relevant areas.
- Average years of relevant experience generally number over 30.

In addition to their technical credentials, auditors are computer literate. All have to undergo a screening process before entering the role. Their years of experience and qualifications mean that they are able to provide a unique insight and continuous improvement within the aerospace industry. Ongoing recruitment and evaluation of existing auditors helps to ensure special process quality.

The benefits

Beneficiaries of improvements resulting from Nadcap are as diverse as their 1,500 customers. A participating prime contractor reports a saving of over

US\$1 million annually while achieving technically superior audits. An accredited supplier has tracked a 97% reduction in rework due to improvements to his system stipulated by Nadcap requirements.

Nadcap facts

- Nadcap has over 2,500 accredited suppliers of special processes listings on the Nadcap Qualified Manufacturers List (QML).
- Nadcap has conducted over 16,700 audits with 3,200 audits expected in 2006.
- Subscribing prime contractor/government near 50.
- Associate prime subscriptions number 13.
- Total Nadcap subscriptions number 205.

Further information

Nadcap is administered by the Performance Review Institute (PRI). For further information, visit www.pri-network.org. If you are interested in becoming a Nadcap auditor, contact Wendy Grubbs, Manager of Auditor Staffing and Training, e-mail: wendyg@sae.org, website: www.eAuditStaff.com.

Nadcap aims to –

- Establish stringent industry consensus standards that satisfy the requirements of all participants.
- Replace routine auditing of suppliers with one approved through a consensus decision-making process of members from the user community.
- Conduct more in-depth, technically superior special process audits.
- Improve supplier quality throughout industry through stringent requirements.
- Reduce costs through improved standardisation.
- Utilise technically expert auditors to assure process familiarity.
- Provide more frequent audits for primes and fewer audits for suppliers.