



Produmax is the first UK company to achieve BSI certification to the key aerospace quality standard EN 9100:2016

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Jeremy Ridyard,
Managing Director, Produmax

Benefits of certification

- Meets aerospace industry requirements for an effective, audited quality management system
- Ensures regulatory compliance and helps to mitigate risk
- Improves efficiency, saving time, money and resources
- Involves, engages and motivates staff
- Facilitates continual improvement and monitoring of processes
- Increases market opportunities by demonstrating excellent levels of traceability throughout the supply chain
- Boosts performance and provides a competitive edge

At a glance

Produmax is a specialist UK manufacturing company with expertise in high precision engineering. Operating globally, it works in partnership with many of the most prestigious aerospace manufacturers to produce high quality machined components and assemblies. It is the first UK company to be independently assessed by BSI to achieve certification to EN 9100:2016 Quality Management Systems – requirements for aviation, space and defence organizations – and is also the first organization globally to be registered on the Online Aerospace Supplier Information System (OASIS) to EN 9100. Certification by BSI to the new standard clearly demonstrates Produmax's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction.

Customer background

Produmax was originally formed in 1966. In 1997, current Managing Director Jeremy Ridyard led a management buy-out and oversaw a move away from general engineering into the commercial aerospace and defence markets. Today, around 90% of its products are exported around the world.

The company has grown to 58 employees, with current turnover of over £7m and a target to grow by at least 10% per year. Expansion has led to a recent move to a new purpose-built manufacturing unit in Baildon, between Leeds and Bradford.

Produmax was one of the first 40 companies to receive funding under the UK government-backed Sharing in Growth programme, enabling it to gear up fast to fulfil the needs of its customers.

Why certification?

EN 9100 specifies the requirements for implementing, maintaining and continually improving a Quality Management System (QMS) for organizations in aviation, space and defence. EN 9100 is the European equivalent of the internationally-recognized AS 9100 in North America and JISQ 9100 in Japan, and is strongly supported and adhered to by major aeronautics manufacturers, including Airbus, Boeing, GE Aviation and Rolls-Royce.

The recently revised EN 9100:2016 builds on the latest version of QMS standard ISO 9001, which was updated in 2015 to include a High-Level Structure (HLS). This features terms, definitions, headings and text common to all management system standards, and allows for easier integration when implementing multiple management systems.

EN 9100:2016 represents the latest best practice for comprehensive quality management in the aerospace industry. Jeremy Ridyard explains, "This revised version goes right to the heart of our vision, mission, values, strategic objectives, market analysis and stakeholders, in much more detail than previously. It's all-encompassing, a kind of audit on all our business processes, not just quality management."

He continues, "EN 9100 is non-negotiable in the aerospace industry, so we made a strategic decision to get on with transitioning to the revised version. We could see its requirements made for robust processes and good

business management, and having the latest version would give us an advantage over our competitors."

Transitioning to EN 9100:2016

"When we started to look at transitioning, Sharing in Growth helped to prepare us. The scheme was critical to how robust our internal processes were," says Ridyard. "All the processes we had to put in place for Sharing in Growth – strategy, business management and reporting – are totally relevant to the standard."

In the new version of EN 9100, Produmax's senior management also has more explicit involvement, with the company's leaders required to ensure that the management system is fully integrated throughout the organization.

As Mark Gjessing, Produmax's Quality Assurance Manager, explains, "There's more focus on risk management, not just quality, and more focus on buy-in from everyone. Although it's a quality management standard, it's morphed towards more of a business management standard."

Produmax has a strong culture of engaging the whole workforce in relevant processes and decisions. "In many companies the quality management system is treated as a 'bolt-on', but we decided to start from scratch to ensure we were fully prepared for the revision," says Gjessing. "We held company-wide presentations and training, and conducted very thorough internal audits, involving people from different departments. It's really important for everyone to understand all the nuts and bolts."

Benefits of certification

Ridyard believes EN 9100:2016 is a great tool for any organization seeking to enhance quality, customer satisfaction, continually improve operations and demonstrate Organizational Resilience. "With supply chains becoming more complex, the importance of achieving, maintaining and improving quality is vital," he says.

He continues, "In fact, you can't get on to a tender without it. For us, the benefits of EN 9100:2016 are inextricably linked to benefits of Sharing in Growth, for which we won top award for the integration of all our business processes. Between the two, we have noticed an increase in business. We've taken on three major new customers and we're seeing much more interest."

Produmax has figures to prove it. Turnover is up 40%, the cost of 'non-quality' (components that are not right first time) has halved, operational efficiency has increased 20%, and its annual employee engagement survey score has improved by 25% to 4.08 (where a score above four is considered world-class).

Ridyard expands, "Being first across the line illustrates the robustness of our processes, especially as we're a lot smaller and have fewer resources than firms that didn't get to the same level. Some of our major customers are keen to learn how we did it."

BSI's role

BSI had given Produmax a 'heads-up' about the requirements for transition to EN 9100:2016 during Produmax's previous audit. Thereafter, BSI was ready to assist with a team of expertly trained auditors.

"I found BSI's two-day transition course invaluable," says Gjessing. "Once I'd changed our processes and quality manual, and carried out training, we had a 'remote readiness conference call' with BSI to flag up any issues. BSI's support was great because, no matter how much preparation you've done, there's always something that needs clarification."

Ridyard adds, "I've always viewed BSI as very rigorous. We wanted the certification body that would give us the most thorough audit and highlight the standard as it's supposed to be. BSI's competence comes out on top. And there's also a level of reputation as a certification body that gives us confidence in the BSI brand."

He sums up, "This standard is vital for our business as it provides our customers with the comfort that we deliver quality products on time, and that we have the necessary processes in place to manage and reduce risks. We would encourage other companies to make the transition as early as possible."

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