



Case Study: Accellent Chooses InfinityQS as Quality Platform to Support Strategic Goals

Accellent, Inc. provides fully integrated outsourced manufacturing and engineering services to the medical device industry in the cardiology, endoscopy and orthopaedic markets. Accellent has broad capabilities in design & engineering services, precision component fabrication, finished device assembly and complete supply chain management. The company is focusing on "Continuous Improvement", which is supported by the strategic goal of delighting its customers through eliminating customer complaints. Continuous Improvement also emphasizes improving processes to better serve customers by standardizing quality practices.

In support of these key initiatives, Accellent has chosen to standardize on InfinityQS as the standard Statistical Process Control (SPC) platform, rolling out the system at some key facilities. On March 14, 2007, Accellent signed a corporate Licensing Agreement with InfinityQS, providing discounts on software and support, including training.

SPC helps to eliminate customer complaints by establishing expected limits around which a process functions. By doing this the system can identify significant events that affect a process and alert the operator. The operator can then adjust the process before the process produces a non-conforming part. This reduces the risk of shipping a non-conforming part to a customer, thus eliminating customer complaints.

Accellent chose InfinityQS because the software offers many advantages over other SPC packages available. One advantage that the company cited is the use of a Relational Database structure, which utilizes common databases such as Oracle. An integrated analysis packages through the enterprise edition includes tools for supporting lean six-sigma and continuous quality improvement. InfinityQS optionally integrates SPC, Measurement System Analysis (Gage R&R), and Gage Tracking and Calibration. This expands the capability to analyze the measurement system, as well as the process of manufacturing the parts. InfinityQS further allows engineers the ability to put "any data on any chart", enhancing the ability to measure and analyze processes for improvement opportunities.

A further advantage of InfinityQS is the configurable toolbar. The toolbar allows access to shared documents through the click of a button. This allows the operator one-click access to such documents as the prints, control plans, inspection records, and other quality-related documents. Todd Gatto, Senior Quality Engineer at the Wheeling facility said, "One of the main reasons we liked InfinityQS is that we can configure the toolbar to access our controlled documents through the project. Where we spent time clicking through multiple folders to find documents, now there is one button to open that document. It promises to be a real time-saver for the operators."

InfinityQS is designed to be run as a real-time Shop-floor SPC system. Data is input manually or automatically. Data is then tracked and monitored through the use of one or more of the 300 available control charts. Alerts are generated automatically through the charts, e-mail, and other forms of communication. E-mail notification can be configured to be sent to individuals responsible for supporting the process. Because of the database structure, data may be entered on the shop-floor, and analyzed real-time remotely by support staff. Upland has been using the software for a number of years. According to Dody Dunquez, Quality Supervisor, "We've been using this software for 11 years and it is really user friendly for the floor user. Once you do a few [projects] it's second nature."

The ability of InfinityQS to collect data has the added advantage of reducing cycle time in measuring parts as well, an advantage toward the strategic goal of reducing cycle time in everything Accellent does. "We began to implement InfinityQS in our inspection areas [Incoming and Final], and immediately saw the advantage of interfacing gages. Instead of measuring parts and spending time filling in an inspection record, the inspector is able to hit a button, the data is automatically entered and the inspection record is generated," said Gatto.

Wheeling began to implement InfinityQS in their inspection areas as part of a focused effort to reduce cycle times in incoming and final inspection. They are also implementing in quality areas as part of a qualification effort. They expect to roll out InfinityQS to the shop floor later this year to replace existing, out-dated SPC stations. Brooklyn Park has also rolled out InfinityQS in their VMC Department. According to Eric Sandberg, Quality Technician, "We also have been collecting data from a portion of our VMC department since September using inspection automation, which has reduced the source inspection times by about 80%."



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