The Customer:
Areté Associates

Company Size:
270 Employees

Industry:
Defense

Key Benefits:
- Better Decision Making with actionable insights into quality & manufacturing data

- Integrated system creates costs savings, increased transparency, and access to flexible reporting

- Greater responsiveness to manufacturing performance issues

- Seamless bi-directional interface to Deltek Costpoint ERP

With more than a 40-year history of technological innovation and development, Areté Associates remains a leading manufacturer of remote sensing products for security and government contractors in the defense and intelligence sectors. Its highly-regulated products are used in military, airborne, and oceanographic applications to measure a range of parameters. Phenomenology, algorithm development, laser design, and electro-optic system integration are all areas of expertise for Areté Associates, and are all critical to defense and improved communication. Due to the nature of the clients it serves and the investment its equipment requires, consistent delivery of quality products is paramount to the success of Areté Associates.

The Need for Quality Improvement
Government contracting is highly competitive by regulatory design. Open competition is encouraged at all levels of development, so contractors are always under pressure to demonstrate why they are best suited for a job. Faced with this market pressure, Areté Associates realized that maintaining a competitive edge was going to require quicker access to quality data and insights.

Areté Associates was using a series of spreadsheets for traceable configuration. This process was time consuming and inefficient. They needed a way to streamline critical quality processes and gain visibility into problems and costs. Serialized parts including traceable configurations at receiving inspection needed to be automated.

Tony McManus, Production Manager for Areté Associates, claimed that their in-house quality solution was fragmented, and lacking the capability to manage attachments. "This prevented us from reaching our goal of quickly providing objective evidence for documented failures." With legacy software that was unstable and hard to maintain, Areté Associates made the decision to search for a new quality management solution. "We were nearing a point where our in-house solution was going to require a ground-up redesign to keep up with contract reporting requirements," said Tony. As a small business, an effort that large would likely have had a negative impact on its programs due to the availability of personnel.

The Decision Process
Areté Associates conducted a market survey to find a modern, electronic Quality Management Solution (QMS) to support its state-of-the-art manufacturing processes. This included Internet research and conversations with customers and vendors of Areté Associates. The search conducted by the Areté Associates Production, Quality, Operations, and Program Management Teams led them to TIP Technologies.

While evaluating potential solutions, the most important factor to Areté Associates was the flexibility to report as much, or as little as required. Finding a QMS that was both highly configurable and easy to use, was a must. Improved reporting would make a significant impact on their manufacturing processes.

The new quality solution needed to provide out-of-the-box functionality, with a promise of delivering a quick time to value. The TIPQA Quality Management Solution presented seamless integration to its Deltek Costpoint ERP system, allowing for a real-time exchange of critical quality and manufacturing data. The ability to attach documents, link parent-child records, and allow for unlimited text input made TIPQA stand out from the competition. "Simply put, TIPQA was best aligned with the way we were already doing things," stated Tony McManus.

In the end, purchasing TIPQA as part of TIP Technologies' Ease of Ownership Offering (EoO) was the right fit for Areté Associates. The software bundle gave them everything they needed, without having to pay for functionality they didn't. It was a package that was sized right for their organization, without the need for custom programming or a lengthy implementation.

The Expected Results

Traceability is a priority for Areté Associates. They are currently using TIPQA to track items by serial number, and their goal is to have a traceable configuration in TIPQA for all fielded systems. Areté Associates has a plan to improve its material review board process, as well as its nonconformance reporting and calibration management processes. They expect to see a decrease in material disposition cycle time directly related to increased visibility provided by the TIPQA solution.

When it comes to reducing liability, they expect that TIPQA will help them reduce risk by providing a feedback loop for previous designs that will allow them to focus on areas of improvement.

The Right Quality Solution

"TIPQA gives us the advantage that all small businesses are looking for—the ability to do more with less. Our employees are free to focus on their core strengths because TIPQA has streamlined our quality reporting," says Tony McManus. With the TIPQA solution in place, Areté Associates is confident they will continue to achieve operational excellence throughout the product lifecycle.

About TIP Technologies:

TIP Technologies (www.tiptech.com) was a pioneer and continues to be the recognized leader in quality assurance software. Founded in 1989, the company was one of the first to provide integrated quality assurance software using a commercial, off-the-shelf strategy. With companies around the world, continuously and successfully deploying TIPQA, TIP Technologies focuses on serving the needs of companies in regulated discrete manufacturing industries. We don't just create quality assurance software. When it comes to compliance, traceability and global supplier management, we deliver peace of mind. TIP Technologies is headquartered in Milwaukee, WI, with additional operations representing EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) APAC (Asia, Pacific, China), and North America. For more information, please visit www.tiptech.com or contact us at (262) 544-1211.

Learn how your company can achieve similar benefits with a TIPQA Solution. Contact us today to schedule a demo.

TIP Technologies, Inc.
The difference between surviving and thriving

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