

The Quality Control System - an effective instrument for increasing the competitiveness of products

Zaporizhstal JSC is an export orientated enterprise, which produces competitive products in the world market. According to the results of the work of BID (Business Initiative Directions), representing 163 countries of the world and the decision of the committee of the IV International Conference on Quality in 2002 Zaporizhstal JSC was awarded the international award "Era of Quality" in the highest category – the Diamond category. The collective of the Works is not stopping at the achieved, understanding that with modern saturation of the metal market not only qualitative products can withstand the competition, but products satisfying the requirements of a concrete consumer today and in the future. Therefore continuous improvement of the products' quality and the degree of satisfaction of the consumers' inquiries have become a priority in the Works' activity.

In 2002 the Works started creating the Quality Control System corresponding to the requirements of the international standards ISO, series 9000:2000. To fulfil this assignment a new post was appointed in the technical department, deputy head of the department on developing the system. A separate bureau was organized, too. The firm "TUV Nord Ukraine" helped to organize and prepare the system for certified audit.

All the best taken from the Complex System of Product Quality Control and the effective usage of resources was put into the basis of the system. The old system operating at the Works was quite effective, but at the very beginning it was not orientated towards the conditions of the metal product market.

Creation of the system started by training the top management, the bureau experts on the development of the system and the representatives of the main structural divisions. The experience of the system development at related enterprises has been studied: JSC Ilyich Iron & Steel Works, Mariupol; DMZ - Donetskiiy Metallurgicheskiiy Zavod (Donetsk Iron & Steel Works), etc.

Preliminary control of the working processes has allowed to define further work and to develop measures on elimination of the detected drawbacks. Performance of these measures has given a noticeable effect even before the introduction of the Quality Control System. For example, full product identification in the cold pig iron stockyards and in the consumer goods shop is provided. The creation of a "section of rejected material" started, usage of marked aluminium pigs not according to the GOST standard is excluded in production of steel, storage of refractory products is improved.

The analysis of the basic processes and the working documentation has allowed to make up a list of documents to be created or revised. To make out documents in each structural division a worker responsible for the job was appointed, as a rule, at the level of the head of the division. The documentation of the second level has been reconsidered, updated and new documents added, additional standards of the enterprise have been approved, regulations about divisions have been updated, necessary changes have been made in duty regulations, industrial instructions for controllers of the Quality Department have been reconsidered. Particular attention is given to the Management on quality, in particular maintenance tracking processes, concrete and synonymous definitions, clearness of

statement and clearness in distribution of responsibility. The fulfilled work has allowed to strengthen the horizontal connections between divisions, to remove the existing discrepancies, to improve the passage of processes and noticeably to weaken the current loading on the management vertical. In the divisions people have been appointed responsible for conducting the Quality Control System documentation.

In the center for personnel training "Prirost" at the Ukrainian association of quality a group of internal auditors of the System had a training course based on the materials of the German society on quality (DGQ), received within the framework of the Ukrainian-German project and adapted to conditions in Ukraine. For fuller understanding of the audit requirements representatives of other departments of the Works, except the experts of the bureau on development of the Quality Control System: management on supply, the central factory laboratory, Quality Department, consumer goods shop and the sales department, were trained under this program. Our experience has shown, that training of auditors is better to be carried out not at the end, but at the beginning of the system development, allowing to develop a more correct approach to the creation of the necessary documentation. Constant attention is paid to the work of the Quality Control System from the leaders of all levels. Weekly meetings on quality are carried out in shops, in other structural divisions – at least once a month.

The attitude towards the consumer of the products has essentially changed. Individual approach to fulfilment of orders has become a rule. Each inquiry of a potential consumer is registered, analysed and conformed in minimum terms. Aspiration to use all opportunities to fulfil the customers' requirements has become the integral part of the work of all the personnel.

The consumers constantly complete questionnaires. Their results are reported twice a year at the Quality Council, where the consumers' inquiries are analysed, completeness of the fulfilment of the orders, adjusting and warning actions are developed. The Council on Quality analyses the work of the Quality Control System, makes decisions on its improvement, up-dates the policy and the purposes in the field of quality.

Special attention is given to training of the personnel. In all the curriculums of the professional training department questions on the Quality Control System are included. The Works' experts on a regular basis participate in the educational seminars on questions of management on the territory of Ukraine carried out by various organizations. Annually a group of experts are sent to the Kiev institute of economy and law "Krok" for training on speciality " Quality, standardization and certification ".

The maximum contribution of each worker to the improvement of quality and satisfaction of the consumers' requirements by providing conditions for self-realization, increase of competence, motivation and satisfaction is considered decisive in achieving the purposes in the field of quality. The personnel constantly completes questionnaires. The satisfaction of its job conditions is constantly estimated. The analysis of the questionnaire data is discussed at the Council on quality.

In the plans of reconstruction developed up to 2010 special attention is given to output with parameters of quality at the level of the best world samples and widening of the range of products that will favourably be reflected on the level of fulfilment of orders.

Certified audit of the Quality Control System in the system TUV CERT was carried out in October 2003.

CONCLUSION

Creation of the Quality Control System at Zaporizhstal JSC, corresponding to the requirements of international standards ISO, series 9000, is the first step on the way to introducing the concept of total quality management (TQM). TQM is orientated on constant self-perfection and self-appraisal, continuous improvement of the atmosphere of social satisfaction inside the organisation and beyond its boundary.

Bringing the Quality Control System in accordance with ISO 9004:2000 is a guarantee of further increase of competitiveness of production and a degree of satisfaction of the consumers' inquiries, one of the conditions of stable work of Zaporizhstal JSC.