



A medium-sized family business changes certifier

Field report from OTEK Oberflächentechnik Kläke GmbH: It meets the challenges of ISO 9001 and the alternative system according to SpaEfV Since 1925, family-run OTEK Oberflächentechnik Kläke GmbH has been dedicated to the galvanic finishing of metallic surfaces.

OTEK refines metals in series and single-part production at two locations in Berlin. Meeting individual customer requirements is an essential aspect of its mission statement, because satisfied customers remain loyal and recommend it to others. And that is essential, especially for the sustainable success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Many years ago, OTEK decided to introduce a quality management system (QMS) according to ISO 9001. Such a certificate is indispensable for obtaining orders - especially from major customers. But for the management, the QMS is above all a solid basis for its own quality control. Systematic error detection is of great importance in order to keep the complaint rate as low as possible.

Since 2014, OTEK has also been operating an alternative system in accordance with the SpaEfV in order to identify its own energy savings potential and to benefit from tax incentives. While the QMS was certified by a market companion until this year, the alternative system was tested by GUTcert right from the start.

The fear of the unknown

SMEs in particular often see a high risk in a change of certification body and shy away from the associated effort. In particular, the probable change of the auditor team is often the decisive factor for staying with the known certification body. But sometimes increasing dissatisfaction with the incumbent certification body also leads to a more intensive consideration of a change.

Due to their positive experience with GUTcert in the area of testing the Alternative System, the management of OTEK decided in 2018 to also have their QMS certified by GUTcert for the first time. The GUTcert procedure was already known, but there was still a certain amount of uncertainty, especially with regard to the first on-site audit with the new, still unknown auditor.

The first audit after the change

Each audit has to be prepared intensively internally and means an additional burden for those responsible. OTEK's first quality management audit with GUTcert included the recertification according to ISO 9001 including the transition to the new revision (ISO 9001:2015).

Deploying the necessary staff during an audit is a challenge for many SMEs. This is because, unlike in many large companies, those responsible for the QMS often also take on important tasks of the operative business. Therefore, it was particularly important to OTEK that the certification body and auditor take into account the specific circumstances of the company.



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According to Mr Thomas Jahn, QMS manager at OTEK, who accompanied the audit from start to finish, this was completely successful in this case. He praised the friendly interaction with the auditors and the very pleasant atmosphere during the entire audit.

Sensible recommendations and notes, which were discussed in detail during the audit and subsequently recorded in an audit report, will help in the future to avoid the sometimes occurring

Keep "operational blindness" at bay and integrate new ideas into existing processes.

Not every recommendation will be adopted, but the intensive analysis helps to justify why implementation in individual cases is not expedient for OTEK. For Mr Jahn, this is also part of a good audit and open communication, because the findings will be discussed in the next audit and new starting points may arise.

GUTcert as a strong partner for ISO 9001 and Alternative System

The advantages of having two systems certified "from one source" are obvious to those responsible at OTEK: a uniform approach to auditing, one contact person for both systems - and not least lower costs.

Mr Jahn particularly praised GUTcert's transparent pricing and individual service:

"We have been surprised several times in the past years by subsequent additional costs following the on-site audit. With GUTcert, we have experienced through many years of testing the alternative system that communication is clear and no hidden costs are to be expected. These expectations were confirmed once again with the first-time certification according to ISO 9001 by GUTcert. In addition, we now benefit from a price advantage compared to previous years. "



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