

ISE 428 Quality Interview Project

Interviewee:

Marc McCluney

Manager of Quality Assurance

CMC Steel Alabama

Interviewer:

Chris Meador

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# Introduction

**CMC Steel Alabama is an experienced company that has been supplying a wide range of Merchant Bar and Structural Products to service centers and end-users throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1983. CMC Steel Alabama is part of Commercials Metals Company located in Irving, TX. Most of the work force for CMC Steel Alabama is provided by the surrounding city of Birmingham. A large majority of the customers that CMC caters to are located in the Southeastern part of North America.**

**The company also produces a wide range of standard and high-strength grades, is ABS certified, and their quality process is registered to ISO 9001:2000. CMC Steel Alabama places safety in high regard, and doing so has enabled them to be recognized twice by the Steel Manufacturers Association as the safest steel minimill in North America.**

I interviewed Marc McCluney of CMC Steel Alabama. He is the manager of Quality Assurance for the plant. The interview took place via email and was used for the Quality Engineering class in the 2011 Spring semester.

# Interview

CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

* Does your company have a quality mission statement?
* Yes. We Will Provide High-Quality Steel Products and Services.

We also have a Quality Policy (see below):

Deliver products and services that meet or exceed customer’s requirements. Our goal is total customer satisfaction.

Maintain an effective and appropriate formal quality system through meeting all ISO 9001:2008 requirements.

Foster an atmosphere of continual process improvement and problem prevention.

Provide education and training to all employees to support a healthy and safe working environment.

Communicate our mission and quality objectives throughout the whole organization.

Each employee must be committed to doing the job right the first time.

Develop relationships with our customers and suppliers that emphasize continuous improvement in product quality, service, and support.

* Does the company have a written quality plan? If so, where is it located?
* Yes. We have a Quality Policy that is posted at various places around the plant and is accessible on the company intranet via a Sharepoint file management system. We also have a Quality Manual that details our Quality Management System.
* Do you have a quality department? Who heads the department? What is the educational background of this individual?
* Yes we have a quality assurance department. Marc McCluney heads the QA department as QA Manager. He has a BS and MS in Materials Engineering and an MBA.
* In your organization, who is responsible for quality?
* Everyone is responsible for quality.
* How important is quality to your organization?
* Quality is vital to our business to the point it is expected by our customers. There is no business benefit to having good quality, but there are negatives for having quality issues.
* How does your organization define quality?
* A quality problem is any issue that a customer finds unsatisfactory whether it is a paperwork problem, a late delivery, or a physical material problem.
* How do you train your employees concerning quality issues?
* All employees are presented our philosophy on quality during new employee orientation. They are then given on the job training for their job that emphasizes the aspects that effect quality. Any quality issues are communicated by to the employees through crew meetings and personnel contact from supervision.
* How do your customers influence your quality program?
* Customers communicate back to our quality program through customer complaints, customer surveys, and call reports written by outside sales managers.
* Has your company (or department) ever earned a national quality award or certification? (MBNQA, ISO 9000, CMMI, Other?)
* CMC Steel Alabama is ISO 9001:2008 registered and certified by the American Bureau of Shipping.

QUALITY METHODOLOGY

* What methods do you use to ensure quality output?
* Chemical and physical product testing. Dimensional checks and visual inspection.
* Does your organization follow Six Sigma or Lean Sigma quality methodologies for process improvement?
* Six Sigma techniques are used on a limited basis. Our processes are very dynamic and do not lend themselves to true Six Sigma at large scales.
* Do you routinely collect data on the quality of your product or process? Do you use statistics to analyze the data collected?
* Yes. Quality data is gathered monthly and charted and reviewed/analyzed by the Management Team and this information is pushed down to the employees at all levels.
* How do you monitor incoming materials and/or your suppliers?
* Materials are only purchased from approved suppliers that have been evaluated and approved by past history or by an audit. They are monitored by receiving inspection.
* Do you use control charts? If so, what processes are charted?
* Select control charting is done, as needed, on dimensional checks and chemical/physical test data.
* What kind of quality reporting techniques do you use? Who generates the reports? Who routinely sees the reports?
* Bar charts, pie charts, and line graphs are all used, along with data reporting. The majority of these reports are generated by the QA department personnel. These are reviewed by the Management Team and this information is pushed down to the employees at all levels.

# Discussion

The first thing that caught my attention about the interview was the fact that the company is meets the ISO 9001:2008 requirements. In the past I did not really understand what it meant for a company to have these certifications. However, now that we have discussed some of these certifications in class and what it means for a company to obtain and follow these certifications it has a lot more meaning. During my job search I have come across several companies that have different ISO certifications; for instance, one company I have talked with got their ISO 14001 certification which is for safety.

My favorite part about the interview is the interviewee’s statement about quality and business: “There is no business benefit to having good quality, but there are negatives for having quality issues”. I truly do not believe there are any words that can describe the relationship between quality and industry any better than that. That statement reminds me of a couple of sayings – the first being “Somehow there is always time to do something over but never time to do it right the first time” and the second, “I do not look busy because I did it right the first time”. Both of these statements I have incurred through working on the job and at home.

It impresses me how seriously the company takes quality and safety in the mill. I personally know two people who have worked, or still work there, and the reports I have heard shock me on how strictly safety standards are enforced. I also believe that sharing the quality information with employees at all levels is important because it helps give the employee some responsibility by attributing ownership to the product. In my opinion, the employees that make the products need to know just as much as upper management to consistently produce quality products.

# Appendix

Website: <http://www.cmc.com/cmcsteelal/Default.aspx>

Mission statement:

We Will Provide High-Quality Steel Products and Services:

* Exceeding the requirements of our internal and external customers,
* Working in an environment where the dignity of the individual is not compromised,
* Producing profits to grow our Company,
* Yielding a fair return to our stockholders and stakeholders,
* Promoting pride, satisfaction and fun while doing it.