

# PROTO-1 ADDRESSES QUALITY MANAGEMENT & STREAMLINES WORKFLOW

## Company Profile:

Founded in 1997 in Winnecone, Wisconsin, Proto-1 began as a machine shop specializing in creating safe and efficient equipment to deburr tube and pipe. The result was the creation of our patented Roto-D-Bur® head. Company owners and founders John and Valerie Schwochert recognized and responded to customer demand for other types of tube finishing equipment in the tube and pipe industry. Proto-1 quickly evolved to offer rotary tube cutoff, customization, cell integration, robotics, rotary tube end forming, jigs, fixtures, sizing, notching and progressive ram end-forming equipment. Proto-1 serves various markets such as automotive, heavy truck, aerospace, military, recreation, gas, agriculture, hydraulics, furniture, food, heating/cooling, and water/energy.

## Situation:

With succession planning on the horizon, company ownership knew that the only way to add value to Proto-1 and reassure that future personnel could continue to operate sufficiently, a change had to be made. The company operated through occupational understanding of daily processes within departments. This didn't allow for a consistent operational plan. Too often, changes were made without all stakeholders knowing and not documented. Proto-1 needed to implement a Quality Management System to ensure a consistent and accurate process through all the separate departments within the company.

## Solutions:

After initial consultation with WMEP Manufacturing Solutions revealed the challenge facing Proto-1, meetings with core groups at Proto-1 launched the implementation of the Quality Management System that Proto-1 operates under to this day. A WMEP consultant started with a gap analysis of the various departments at Proto-1. From there an ISO Core team was created and a S.W.O.T. analysis was held to address company issues and determine top action items. Through WMEP, the core team learned the ISO standard and how to implement a Quality Management system to meet the standard.

## Results:

- Proto-1 achieved ISO Certification from a qualified Registrar.
- Consistency of daily processes has helped streamline workflow.
- The E-filing structure within the Quality Management System has made it easier for Proto-1 personnel to retrieve company changes and records.
- E-Filing also has led to the removal of hand-to-hand documents, thus limiting the potential spreading of germs and viruses.

**“Keep up the good work that you are doing to help Wisconsin business succeed.”**

*Bill Grau, Operations Manager – Proto-1 Manufacturing LLC*

