



An ATAC Client Success Story



AUBURN

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



QUALITY FILTERS, INC.

THINKSIMPLE. THINKSMART. THINKQUALITY.

To help small and mid-sized manufacturers grow top-line sales, the Alabama Technology Network (ATN) has partnered with the *Eureka! Ranch*, a leading innovation group that has helped companies like Nike, American Express, and Walt Disney to generate business-building ideas.

Auburn Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), the ATN center at Auburn University, has aligned with Quality Filters Inc. of Robertsdale, Ala., where ATAC's assistance in implementing *Eureka! Winning Ways* has helped the firm expand into a profitable niche market with a potential for doubling over the next few months.

With *Eureka! Winning Ways* ATAC helps companies create growth strategies

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Quality Filters manufactures a full line of products for the HVAC and paint booth filtration industries. The company has grown over its more than 26-year history from a small manufacturing firm with a limited line of pleated filters to a competitive presence offering a large array

of HVAC, gas phase and paint filtration products nationwide.

"We are a very innovative company with a lot of ideas," said Rich Scott, company president. "Our employees have always strived to devise new and better ways to meet customer demands and to keep our company competitive. Our challenge as a small company, though, was organizing those efforts. *Eureka! Winning Ways* gave us a very effective way to get our ideas organized, evaluate them, and conduct the necessary market research to better guarantee success. It also gave us the momentum to launch and sustain the program through implementation."

The ATN-Eureka! Ranch partnership is focused on helping companies generate ideas for: Creating more

effective marketing messages; capturing new customers or markets; and generating ideas for new or improved products, services or business models.

"*Eureka! Winning Ways* is a powerful process for Alabama manufacturers who need to create and execute measurably smarter choices for growth," said ATAC's David Mixson, who is one of only two *Eureka! Growth Coaches* in the ATN who trained under EWW founder Doug Hall.

Over some three months time, Mixson guided and coached Quality Filters through EWW. The effort now has progressed to the point where the company is seeing measurable results.



EUREKA!
Winning Ways

Quality Filters is presently installing new manufacturing equipment to the tune of a more than \$23,000 investment to meet customer demands in its new growth area, according to Scott.

“We have actually had to slow down sales in this market so that we can catch up,” Scott said.

The company launched its EWW initiative largely to evaluate an idea that there was a demand for its product among environmentally conscious homeowners.

“We thought there was growth potential in the ‘green’ market,” Scott said. “We took that idea through the Eureka! Winning Ways process, grading it against some pretty stringent criteria, actively conducting organized research on the market, through actually launching the idea into a specialty product line.”

The result: Quality Filters has captured a previously un-tapped Internet sales base through which it markets custom air quality filters to residential customers.

“This is a market segment valued at some \$1 billion nationally,” Scott said. “Eureka! Winning Ways has helped us capture a portion of that market for our business in a significant volume.”

Quality Filters has operated as a Lean enterprise for the past six years, Scott adds. Lean, a system based on eliminating or removing waste and non-value-added activities from a process, typically frees up additional production capacity within manufacturing operations.

“I can’t say being a company that is implementing Lean is responsible solely for our being able to expand into this new market, but the flexibility afforded to us through Lean certainly has been a factor in our being able to effectively exploit it,” Scott said.

Scott agrees that EWW is a valuable complement to Lean that offers companies a truly effective process for planning and implementing

growth strategies that capitalize on the benefits they achieve through Lean.

“I definitely would recommend Eureka! Winning Ways – particularly for a mature company looking for new ideas,” Scott said.

To learn more about Quality Filters, visit its web site at www.qualityfilters.com. Learn more about Eureka! Winning Ways

and other continuous improvement programs by visiting the ATAC web site at www.auburnworks.org.

EDITOR’S POST SCRIPT: *Quality Filters Inc. of Robertsdale, Ala. also is working with Auburn University in the area of attaining guidance in protecting its intellectual property rights.*

How Eureka Winning Ways Works

A Proven Pedigree With

Manufacturing Job Shops
Industrial Valve Company
Commercial Bakery
Oil Rig Equipment Company
IT Security Software Co
Vibratory Screen Mfg. Co
Industrial Measurement Co
Packaging Printing Co
Air Compressor Mfg. Co
Integrated Circuit Equip. Company
Warehouse Equipment Co.
Commercial Mint
Commercial and Consumer Cutlery
Kitchen Cabinet Mfg. Co
Stone Tile Manufacturing Co
Aerospace Sub Contractors
After Market Power Equipment Parts
Emission Testing Equipment
Pressure Vessel Manufacturing
Specialty Chemical Mfg.
Wood Toy Manufacturing
Uniform Manufacturing
Elevator Products Co
Educational Equipment Co.
Book Publisher
Clean Room Products
Hoist and Crane Mfg.
High Performance Sensor Mfg. . . . And More!

Step 1 - Eureka! 7.0 Idea Engineering

Customization for Your Unique Situation

A 2 hour meeting gathers insights. An online survey measure your team’s ‘readiness to create & execute growth ideas.’



Your Team Works TOGETHER on Growth

In a one day session, your team simultaneously engineers your customer promise product AND product reality. Ideas are developed for: 1) more effective sales messages, 2) new customers or markets & 3) new or improved products or services as research finds these are the richest areas to explore for growth.



Step 2 - Merwyn Research

Your Team Selects Ideas With Greatest Odds of Success

Merwyn research aligns your team on those growth ideas with the greatest chance of generating CUSTOMER PULL.

Diagnostics help you improve your odds of success

- Overt Benefit - helps drive customer interest
- Real Reason to Believe - increases sales closing rates
- Dramatic Difference - increases profitability



Step 3 - Trailblazer Development

Collective Brain Power Creates Action Plans

Your team works together to develop a step-by-step action plan for turning the top growth ideas into reality. Importantly, the process reduces risk while it also accelerates time to market.



30 Day Coaching turns ideas into REALITY

Weekly coaching sessions keep your project leaders on track, accelerating learning by applying rapid cycles of “fail fast - fail cheap- get smart” learning. The result is a 95%+ success rate discovering and developing ideas that you feel confident taking to market - to get you growing NOW.



Auburn Technical Assistance Center was established in 1976 and is an affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network and an Economic Development Administration University Center. As an Outreach arm of the Auburn University College of Business, ATAC provides business and technical assistance, customized training, and consultation in implementing value-added strategies to manufacturers and other businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies in Alabama and the Southeast. SOAR is an ATAC publication. Direct inquiries and questions to Mitch Emmons, Sr. Outreach Assoc. 334.844.3881, emmonmb@auburn.edu.

Auburn Technical Assistance Center

147 Lowder Business Building
Auburn University, AL 36849-5350
1-800-446-0386
(334) 844-4659
www.AuburnWorks.org

