

**Photo Caption: Employees of KD Bearings of Auburn display the manufacturing plant's new ISO 9001 banner. The Auburn Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), an outreach unit with the Raymond J. Harbert College of Business at AU, assisted the company with developing its Quality Management System and in attaining ISO registration. ISO registration is an international recognition of high quality products and adherence to highest quality standards.**

**External:**

ATAC helps Auburn bearings manufacturer establish QMS and attain ISO registration  
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AUBURN, Ala.: It involved a detailed 18-month-long process, but at the end of the journey, KD Bearings, Inc. (KDB), an Auburn, Ala.-based roller bearings manufacturer, is an ISO registered company.

The Auburn Technical Assistance Center (ATAC), an outreach arm of the Raymond J. Herbert College of Business at Auburn University, assisted the company in its journey from the ground up.

ISO registration – the International Organization for Standardization -- is a recognition sought and more often, expected among top U.S. manufacturers. The process involves the design and audited operation of a firm's Quality Management System (QMS). ISO registration is achieved when a firm's QMS meets established international standards, ensuring that products and services are safe, reliable and of high quality. Businesses use ISO registration as a strategic tool for controlling costs, maintaining quality, and above all, to attract top-line new business and customers.

“This is huge for our company,” said KDB National Sales Director Ray Klaff. “In terms of customer satisfaction, this assures that we are giving them the quality product that they seek and deserve, and it makes us more competitive in our market.”

KDB Plant Manager Brian Bukowski adds, “We have seen an increase in companies seeking out American made products from their suppliers. ISO registration gives us higher visibility as an American manufacturer of quality bearings.”

KDB General Manager Joe Zirkel thanked ATAC, the city and state for supporting the company in its effort to strengthen as a local economic entity.

“ATAC has helped us throughout the entire process and has supported us every step of the way. We could not have done this without the assistance ATAC provided,” Zirkel said. “The City of Auburn and the State of Alabama also have been behind us and have demonstrated their firm support for manufacturing.”

As an offshoot of Kendale Industries Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio (with more than 40 years of bearing manufacturing experience), KDB opened its doors in 1994. In the beginning, the company supplied skate wheel bearings; washers and stampings to strategically located customers. It now is a major producer of unground bearings used primarily by the conveyor and wheel goods industry. KDB consolidated its entire bearing manufacturing operation at the Auburn location in 2000.

### **Background:**

KDB determined that in order to meet customer requirements and expectations, and to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction, it needed to implement a quality management system (QMS) to achieve those objectives. Requests from potential customers for evidence of a QMS that conforms to ISO 9001:2008 further corroborated the need for pursuing development of the system. To minimize lost business potential, KDB management engaged ATAC at Auburn University to provide training and facilitation for development of an ISO 9001 QMS.

### **Solution:**

ATAC set out to design a quality management system (QMS) that could be easily managed, operated and maintained by the small employ staff at KDB – and – with minimal impact on productivity. ATAC directed the development of a secure, web-based QMS that enables immediate access to QMS documentation and job performance tools. Moreover, anticipating future growth, the system is expandable. To accommodate immediate and future training needs, ATAC also developed an interactive training component that facilitates employee knowledge and skill development for achieving the requirements specified in Sections 4.0 to 8.0 of the KDB quality management system. Other components of the QMS include: The incorporation of 27 associated operational

procedures; development of a QMS “toolkit” including job aides; A QMS “Change Brief” module to provide a means for tracking revision status and history; a quality forms library; and the development of a secure database for holding proprietary drawings and other documents.

**Results:**

The overall impact of the web-based QMS is that valuable production time is maximized through the use of the online system. Revision control is simple and quickly accomplished as a document becomes available to any employee with computer, tablet, or smartphone Internet access upon upload to the server. Previously, employees would be required to walk to other parts of the building (up to hundreds of feet) to access printed department-specific forms, drawings, control plans, and work instructions stored in filing cabinets. The new QMS greatly reduces the time expended in locating, pulling, referencing, and re-filing these documents. It is estimated that the system is saving approximately \$60,000 annually with the new resource.

ATAC is an affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network (ATN) and an Economic Development Administration University Center.

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