

Menzies-Southern Wins ISO 9000 Designation

Menzies-Southern Hosiery Co. Inc. of Hickory has joined the exclusive ranks of manufacturers ISO 9000 certified.

The certification process focused on the knitted fabrics division of Southern Hosiery, but Vice President Peter Menzies says the process of continual improvement, and the required documentation, will be carried over to the socks operations.

Engineers from the Industrial Extension Service (IES) of North Carolina State University guided the Southern team through the process. Betty Scipione, based at Catawba Valley Community College, and Phil Minz, who works out of Greensboro, were involved in the program that extended over a five-months period. The initial contacts were coordinated by Dan St. Louis, director of the Hosiery Technology Center.

Menzies acknowledged that the ISO certification was motivated by a requirement from an automotive company. The implications will spill over into the socks manufacturing operations, he asserts.

"It's no cakewalk," Menzies reflects. Without the commitment from employees, the undertaking would not have



MADE IT WORK -- Peter Menzies, left, CEO of Southern Hosiery Mills, greets Betty Scipione and Phil Minz of the Industrial Extension Service, N.C. State University, who helped guide the company to the ISO 9000 certification for the industrial fabrics division.

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succeeded. "It is not a top-down program," he says, explaining that top management cannot force the success.

Scipione noted that the quality was always a priority for Menzies-Southern, but documentation had to be integrated into the system. But now the emphasis is on the approach and processes that lead to continuous improvement in the products, Minz explains.

Flow charts to track the improvement process were developed by Menzies and will be a model for the industry, the IES engineers noted.

Menzies is convinced the continuous improvement processes will give the company a competitive edge in the marketplace. "This is all about doing what the Chinese don't want to do," Menzies says. "We're not going to cry in our beer ...we're going to turn over every stone."

Menzies, Scipione and Minz insists the undertaking is not overwhelming. "It's an investment ...just like a piece of equipment," Menzies stresses. "And it is also about change and innovation."



THE TEAM -- Standing before the celebration sign are the management and production people who worked hard to make the ISO designation a reality.



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