

# Internal Quality Audit Puts Aerospace Manufacturer Back on Track to Compliance



## Background

Pursuit Aerospace, headquartered in Manchester, Connecticut is a global company with 16 locations across the United States, Canada, the UK, Mexico, and Tunisia. Its over 3,000 employees produce complex components for commercial and military marine and aviation engines.

Pursuit's East Berlin, CT location, formerly Paradigm Precision, began operations in the 1960s. Pursuit Aerospace was formed in 2023 when Paradigm Precision and Whitcraft Group merged to become a leading supplier in the aerospace industry. Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, and Greenbriar Equity Group are the private equity owners of Pursuit.

At Pursuit's East Berlin facility, its 28 employees manufacture proprietary parts for companies such as Pratt & Whitney, General Electric, General Dynamics Electric Boat, Precision Custom Components LLC, and BAE Systems.

Pursuit holds AS9100D and ISO 9001:2015 certifications across its operations.

## Challenge

As a defense industry supplier, Pursuit Aerospace needed to remain in compliance with its AS9100D/ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) certification requirements for 2023.

In 2022, Pursuit failed to conduct a crucial component of evaluating QMS compliance, the internal auditing process. This non-compliance posed a significant risk to Pursuit, jeopardizing their operating status and potentially leading to the closure of the facility, resulting in job losses for all employees.

## Results for Siftex:

Facing major operational change including the potential of closure and layoffs, the following metrics resulted from Pursuit taking corrective actions based on the audit findings:

- **Cost savings: \$9,000,000**
- **Increased investments: \$7,200**
- **Jobs retained: 20**



*"When I first started at this facility it was in a transition to new ownership so unfortunately some areas, such as internal auditing, were past due. There were also little to no resources available to conduct the audits. Having worked with CONNSTEP at my previous employer, I knew the value in having CONNSTEP cover this critical portion of the standard. CONNSTEP's service provides objective and effective results without taxing existing or limited internal company resources."*

*Carlo Samartano  
Quality Assurance Manager,  
Pursuit Aerospace*



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Recognizing the critical importance of completing the 2023 internal auditing process, Quality Assurance Manager, Carlo Samartano sought outside expertise from CONNSTEP, Connecticut's MEP.

## Solution

Confident in CONNSTEP's ability to deliver results based on their existing familiarity with the company, Pursuit's management turned to them for help. Working with Business Development Advisor Paul Aiello, Pursuit hired CONNSTEP to perform an Internal Quality Audit (IQA) to assist the company with retaining its quality certification.

The scope of the audit was to determine if the East Berlin facility was in compliance with the AS9100D standard requirements. The audit would measure the organization's QMS effectiveness and provide

necessary feedback to Pursuit's management regarding nonconformities and opportunities for improvement in its QMS implementation.

Rachele Brown, CONNSTEP's Quality and Compliance Consultant conducted the IQA during several sessions beginning in October 2023. The audit focused on Pursuit's top-level processes including Sales, Quality Assurance, Purchasing, Material Management, Process Realization, and Leadership.

## Results

Upon completion of the IQA and delivery of the findings, Pursuit Aerospace's Quality Manager was able to create corrective action requests (CARs), detailing root causes, actions to be taken, and validation of the actions.

CONNSTEP's audit findings resulted in Pursuit taking corrective action in areas including but not limited to:

- Improving preservation of material processes
- Correctly filling out preventative maintenance forms
- Performing operations in proper sequence
- Utilizing project planning worksheets
- Defining new employee training information
- Defining quality review processes and objectives
- Reviewing purchase orders for statutory and regulatory requirements
- Maintaining accurate records of external providers/suppliers

Taking immediate corrective action based on CONNSTEP's audit findings was critical to Pursuit satisfying compliance requirements both internally and for their subsequent registrar audit.



CONNSTEP, Inc. is a consulting firm strategically helping companies in Connecticut to grow their businesses and improve operational methodologies, leading to increased profitability, improved efficiencies, and creating sustainable competitive advantages in the marketplace.