

# ENTERPRISE

TODAY WEDNESDAY MARCH 9, 2011 B7

## Quality and standard make the difference

SINGAPORE — “Improved productivity at the workplace will lead to improved quality,” says Mr Shuy E S, director of Jitron Pte Ltd. This realisation was the motivating factor behind Jitron’s decision to participate in SPRING’s Standards Implementation for Productivity (SIP) project.

Formed in August 2007, Jitron is in the business of innovating, manufacturing and distributing biomedical devices and healthcare products. Its distribution channels are growing in Singapore and overseas. Its manufacturing partners are based in Taiwan while it oversees the distribution channels. For a company in the biomedical and healthcare industry, quality assurance is of paramount importance.

“Our consumers want to be 100 per cent confident of the medical devices they use. Our products need to give accurate measurements every single time,” says Mr Shuy.

### TROUBLE AHEAD

Without standards, it was not long before logistical issues began to plague the warehouse. There was no temperature monitor or control, so the temperature would at times exceed the optimal 30°C. Such fluctuations caused damage to the test strips, reducing their diagnostic accuracy.

“We also didn’t have a proper storage management system. Whenever we received an order, we had to manually locate the products in the warehouse. These products were not always properly placed and finding them was a time-consuming process,” recalls Mr Shuy.

The warehouse also did not observe the first-in-first-out practice with its shipments. This meant that products which came in earlier would often be shelved longer, giving rise to the problem of ageing stocks. “Products with a short lifespan became obsolete, and the company incurred losses,” says Mr Shuy.

Not having a quality management system in place also meant that Jitron was vulnerable to the risk of non-traceable product defects and/or recalls. If a defective product was found, Jitron would not be able to trace it, nor could it access information such as manufacturing batch.

“We would not be able to investigate to determine if the defect is repetitive or just

to review its internal processes. In 2009, the company joined SPRING’s SIP project to work towards certification to ISO 13485 Medical Devices — Quality Management Systems — Requirements for Regulatory Purposes.

“We knew that to create a strong brand image, we needed to attain the ISO certification,” says Mr Shuy. The certification helped Jitron to build its credibility, paving the way for its successful penetration into overseas markets. “We devised and implemented a quality system and made the standardisation of our business operations a priority,” says Mr Shuy.

Today, all it takes is a fraction of a second to locate a product in the warehouse. The risks of product damage and ageing stocks were also eliminated. A proper management system has also enabled Jitron to respond more efficiently to customers’ queries.

### STANDARDS AS A SUCCESS FORMULA

Following the ISO certification, Jitron saw an increase in distributor enquiries, as consumers and distributors alike gained confidence in the company. “Our revenue also increased by 80 per cent,” shares Mr Shuy. With the ISO certification, the company is all set to expand into new markets where stringent product regulations are enforced.

Mr Shuy firmly believes SMEs need to implement standards to raise productivity. “Compared to large conglomerates, SMEs like Jitron lack financial power and resources, and thus do not have the luxury of failing.” Through standards implementation, business owners can counter the perceived risks and consistently achieve quality results.

*Reprinted from SPRINGnews February 2011 Issue. Published by SPRING Singapore.*

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Mr Shuy (left) and Mr Jimmy Abraham, directors of Jitron. Mr Shuy believes SMEs need to implement standards to raise productivity.

