

RESULTS

COMPANY PROFILE

RSL Fiber Systems (RSLFS), a subsidiary of Skyler Technologies Group, Inc., has grown as rapidly as the light it transmits through its fiber optic cable. The company has been the sole source provider of advanced fiber optic illumination systems for the U.S. Navy since 2001. The RSLFS system is unique because light can be transmitted more than 900 feet in their proprietary fiber optic cable. Remote source lighting technology generates light in one location and then transports it to other locations.

Skyler Technologies opened RSLFS' R&D and Manufacturing facility in East Hartford, Connecticut in 2007. With roots and key employees in CT, Giovanni Tomasi, Chief Executive Officer of RSLFS, was happy to return to the state. Mr. Tomasi was also happy to discover that CT has a variety of solutions to support small businesses. He found technical and managerial talent in the Hartford area and a pro-technology business environment – both vital assets to the company. The CT Development Authority connected Mr. Tomasi to the CT Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) which gave RSL Fiber Systems infrastructure support in its Regional Innovation Center. Later, CCAT connected RSLFS to CONNSTEP when the company needed to standardize its quality management system.

SITUATION

In 2008, the company secured a \$9.8 million contract from Northrop Grumman which stipulated that an ISO compliant quality system had to be in place.

ISO 9001 standards for a quality management system specify organizational requirements in documentation, procedures and operations. These standards are important for a business focused on demonstrating its ability to consistently provide products or services that meet customer satisfaction and applicable regulatory requirements.

In light of robust growth, RSLFS made the strategic decision to standardize its quality, adapt its company philosophy and customize its infrastructure to meet business demands. To do this, they needed the assistance of a consultant.

RSL Fiber Systems, LLC
East Hartford, Connecticut
14 employees

- 30% increase in sales
- Increased profitability through more efficient business processes
- Increase in workforce by over 40% and retention of eight positions to meet present demands and expand into new markets



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SOLUTION

RSLFS entered into the certification process with the support of a grant awarded by CCAT as part of the Small Business Incubator Program (SBIP). The grant partially funded the work of CONNSTEP ISO 9001 consultant, Dave Tufano.

CONNSTEP's Dave Tufano became a member of RSLFS' Quality Team and assisted in guiding the company towards its ISO Registration. Conformance to ISO 9001 quality assurance standards meant RSLFS had to implement increased documentation, training, procedural changes and adjustments to their operating systems.

Achieving the registration impacts many aspects of a company's management system and so demands a strong company commitment to excellence – and enthusiastic participation of all company members. The entire company embraced the intent of ISO 9001. As Mr. Tomasi says, "When you put a quality management system in place, you need to embrace it as a company philosophy but customize it to meet the business needs."

RESULTS

Through the dedication of the RSLFS team, the leadership of its Production Manager, Billie Jo Mitchell, and the support of CONNSTEP, RSLFS received the ISO 9000:2008 registration for quality management systems (QMS) in less than one year, January 2009. This registration covers the design, manufacture, engineering services and assembly of fiber optic based remote source lighting systems for several military applications. The registration also confirms the company's commitment to continuous process improvement through performance monitoring and timely corrective/preventative action.

As a complement to RSLFS' innovative technology and exceptional staff, ISO 9000:2008 registration

has helped open new opportunities for other navy and government contracts and will be valuable as the company continues its pursuit of commercial applications. The ISO Registration was one of the significant factors that enabled RSLFS to:

- Increase sales by over 30%
- Increase profitability through more efficient business processes.
- Meet customer contractual requirements.
- Increase its workforce by over 40% and retain eight positions to meet present demands and expand in new markets.

"CONNSTEP's consultant, Dave Tufano, supported us throughout the ISO certification process. He helped us rationalize, consolidate, and organize our quality policies and procedures.

CONNSTEP continues to assist our growth; for instance, they introduced us to a critical new supplier through their vast network of manufacturing companies.

We enjoy a very positive, collaborative relationship with CONNSTEP - they have become one of our advisors."

Giovanni Tomasi
Chief Executive Officer
RSL Fiber Systems, LLC

In addition, RSLFS can proudly assert that the investment made by the State of Connecticut through the SBIP grant was more than paid back in state income taxes resulting from the increased business and higher staffing levels.

NEXT STEPS

RSLFS is focusing on the continued development and sales of remote source lighting and advanced lighting technologies for both the military/government and commercial markets. Commercial applications for fiber optic lighting include industrial environments, hazardous environments (mines, marine oil & gas platforms, grain silos, and chemical plants), remote locations (towers, bridges, etc), emergency lighting systems and architectural illumination systems.

Mr. Tomasi believes that fiber optics is on the verge of revolutionizing the illumination industry the same way it completely changed the communications industry 25 years ago.