

Rate Readiness

Manufacturing Readiness Level (“MRL”) measurements are used by US government agencies and some major companies to assess the maturity of a company’s manufacturing readiness and to identify possible risks and shortcomings associated with both products and processes. As immature manufacturing processes may lead to quality problems, delays and other potential problems, MRL’s attempt to determine proactively whether products entering key design and production phases will ultimately be reliable and available according to the known requirements of a program.

In many ways, the goals of a manufacturing (or rate) readiness review should be adequately answered by an operation’s track-record of quality and on-time delivery. A certified quality system, which is put in place to ensure both product and process quality, should also tell the story loud and clear without the need for discrete program-level audits. Glenair is certified to ISO 9001:2008 and AS9100:2009 Rev C, and both of these industry standard systems are specifically geared to ferret out problems before they lead to quality problems, cost over-runs or delays. I say should, because despite the industry’s best efforts to standardize on recognized systems such as AS9100 as a window into a company’s inner workings, many of our customers continue to expend significant resources conducting independent MRL’s and other types of audits to address the specific metrics of their individual business and programs.

Now don’t get me wrong, we are always willing to dance to our customer’s tune. And it is a great source of satisfaction and pride for us at Glenair that our systems and processes are so well managed that we invariably pass these reviews with flying colors. But yes, they are woefully time-consuming. And I frequently bump into key members of our team caught up in the paperwork of an audit who would rather be designing, building and shipping parts.

So this message is for the Glenair team. We have built ourselves a mighty machine. We have all the materials, resources, equipment, space, people and processes to do all the work our customers demand—from one piece to 100,000; from same day delivery to not even one day early; and from commercial-off-the-shelf to custom one-of-a-kind. More to the point, we have all the operational processes in place to do the work consistently and reliably with no attitudinal constraints when it comes to expending more resources when and where they are needed.

So be of good cheer. Think of a rate readiness review as our chance to show our stuff. And who knows, we might even discover a thing or two we could do better along the way. And that is always an outcome we welcome and embrace.



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QwikConnect is published quarterly by Glenair, Inc. and printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. © Copyright 2014 Glenair, Inc. A complete archive of past issues of QwikConnect is available on the Internet at www.glenair.com/qwikconnect

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