

ILION PLANT QUALITY PROGRAM

H.K. Boyle introduced the Ilion Plant Quality Program.

He noted that the plant's responsibility and objective is to manufacture firearms of the highest quality, which conform to established safety, functional, and visual standards. This responsibility rests with everyone at Ilion - Research for design, PE&C for processes, and Production to build quality. Increased emphasis on quality is necessary in today's marketplace, with more discriminating customers and increased competition. He pointed to a Smith and Wesson advertisement in Time Magazine as an indication of that increased competition.

J.P. Linde reviewed the Ilion Plant Quality Program:

We define quality as 'Conformance to requirements'. The requirements, or standards, are established by safety, functional, and visual considerations. For visual consideration, Marketing has the greatest input. One way we keep our standards current is by conducting regularly scheduled Marketing-Production warehouse audits.

To maintain our quality image in the firearms market, the Ilion plant must continue to improve those characteristics on which customers judge our products.

To meet this task we must make changes to increase the perceived value of our products, maintain our quality control efforts, maintain constant feedback from Marketing and maintain a quality attitude in the minds of all employees.

Product changes to improved perceived value can make the biggest impact in the marketplace. Appearance of wood finishes, metal finishes, functioning characteristics and product reputation are the most important items from which a customer has to make a point-of-purchase selection.

We will start with wood finishes as the Stock and Fore-end are the largest physical items on a gun. The presentation will then cover metal finishes, other significant quality improvements, review of plant quality control indexes, and the Quality Program for next year.