

First-time quality: We owe it to our customers, and ourselves

John Van Gels
Vice president, Operations and Supplier Management
Senior St. Louis site leader

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It's no secret that Boeing employees take tremendous pride in the products we build and the services we provide; that's always one of the highest-ranking responses on the Employee Survey.

We're proud not just because we build cool jet fighters that defend freedom and passenger airplanes that connect people all over the world. We're proud because we've done a darned good job—a quality job that makes us worthy of the trust that customers place in us.

Our reputation, our personal integrity and our company's success all ride on our collective ability to provide that quality to

our customers. No matter the product or service, it needs to be complete and correct because lives depend on it.

We aim to do our work right the first time. When we don't, the results can be costly, as the stories on quality point out in this issue of *Frontiers*. This quest for quality applies at every level, in every department, to every team and business. The work we accept from others must be of high quality, what we add to it must be right, and what we pass along to our customers must be better for having come through our hands. In other words, as Boeing Chairman, President and CEO Jim McNerney said in the story on Page 12, we must accept no defects, create no defects and pass along no defects.

There's been a renewed focus on quality throughout Boeing this year. A basic concept, you might be thinking, and you're right. Yet we continue to struggle, for example, with rework, bad work instructions, foreign object debris (FOD) and the quality of parts from suppliers. Everything, whether we make it or buy it, needs to meet the same rigorous standards. Quality issues at any point along the value stream hold us back from being as productive and efficient as we can be. We simply can't accept these problems as part of how we do business, especially in today's marketplace.

So here's what's been happening. In Manufacturing—at both Integrated Defense Systems and Commercial Airplanes—we've been working together to address FOD, conducting root-cause analyses, and looking at options to help us track tools and catch metal shavings, for example. To improve supplier performance, Supplier Management is identifying and helping low-performing suppliers. Safety Now (an Environment, Health and Safety initiative) calls attention to the need for a safe workplace so everyone can be on the job, every day, performing quality work. And Engineering has launched the Lean+ 10X focus, which relies on seven simple disciplines to improve quality and performance, and which continues to spread across Boeing. We regularly coordinate efforts companywide through the Boeing Operations Leadership Team and Process Action Teams.

It takes the right culture and environment to support all of these activities—one that encourages employees to speak up when something isn't right. And it takes managers who will do what they can to make things right. It's never easy to step forward and say there's a problem. Schedules may slow or costs increase. But believe me, the personal integrity that makes us come forward with a concern means *everything* when it comes to quality. In the end, our commitment to doing the job right the first time will lower costs, and it will improve our performance and competitiveness across the board.

I like to claim first-time quality as my mantra. But it's not really mine; it belongs to all of us who feel pride in Boeing. Thanks for keeping quality at the top of your list of priorities. Now that's something I'm truly proud of. ■

