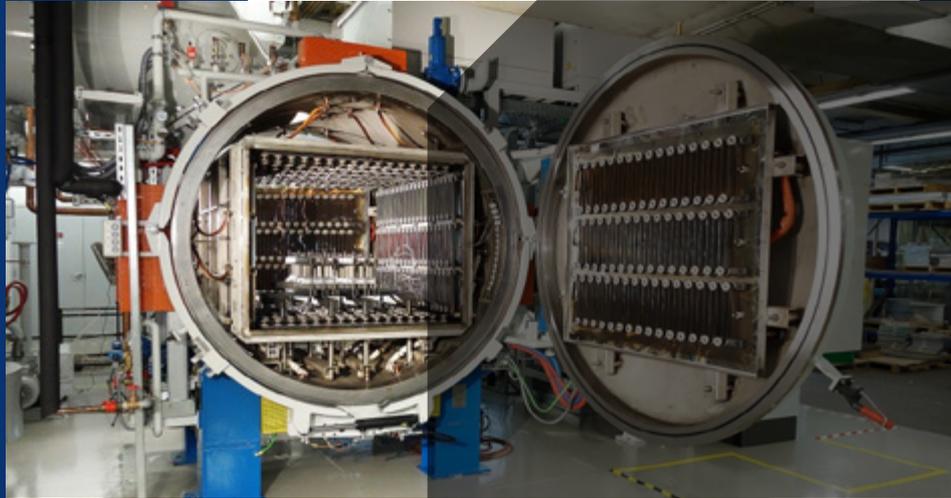




## Nadcap Accreditation Case Study



Wilfried Weber, Director of Quality and Strategy for PFW Aerospace GmbH and Supplier Voting Member on the Nadcap Management Council talks about his perspective and experience of Nadcap audits.

**How did you first hear about Nadcap and why did your company decide to pursue Nadcap accreditation in the first place?**

I first heard about Nadcap back in 2005, because my customers began to require it.

**How easy is it to find the information you need to help you prepare for a Nadcap audit?**

Keeping in mind that English is not everyone's first language, it is not that easy. However, eAuditNet is full of good and useful documents – it only needs some time to get used to it, and to the way information and documents are structured. For us, being actively involved with Nadcap for the past 13 years, eAuditNet looks familiar and we have learned how to navigate and use its content. Therefore, I think the

eAuditNet Tutorials given at each Nadcap meeting, along with the Nadcap symposia held in different places throughout Asia, Europe and the USA are helpful. When I first became involved with Nadcap, the symposia did not exist, and I believe that the situation might be different since they have been introduced.

**How long before the actual audit do you start preparing and what do you do to prepare for a Nadcap Audit?**

We start preparing for a Nadcap audit four to six months prior to the actual audit date – it all depends on the process being audited and whether or not it is on Merit – by holding a “kick off meeting”. The team consists of the responsible persons performing the process. It includes Quality individuals overseeing the process,

internal auditor, work order planning and (preventive) maintenance functions.

The Team Leader, an individual from Quality as well, is then tasked to define the upcoming “audit status” by:

- Gathering information from the past: last audit results, non-conformances (NCRs), results of internal audits and related NCRs raised.
- “Status of today”: taking into account any open issues that need to be addressed, reviewing the sustaining implementation of corrective/preventive actions performed, making sure that our audit scope is still in line with the checklist slash sheets.
- Future plans: is there anything new or coming up that needs to be taken into account for the audit? In addition to discussing the above, we also create an “action register”, where every action is listed with its owner as well as a date for implementation/completion.

**“ The better the audited organization is prepared, the smoother the audit ”**

Moving forward from this meeting, we then monitor our progress and hold monthly meetings to ensure that everything is on track and the self-audit checklists are ready to be uploaded in to eAuditNet no later than 30 days prior to the actual audit date.

**How do you find the audit scheduling process?**

The process works fine, although there may be some areas of improvement. Auditees have to keep an eye on their audit administrator email address for an incoming email detailing the audit date. Upon receipt, the Auditees have to work internally to make sure that it does not fall during vacation time or bank holidays. I have to say, however, that whenever it was necessary to reschedule an audit, it was quick and easy to do and if you do it right

away after receiving the notification email, there is no additional cost.

**Do you have much interaction with PRI staff before the Nadcap audit and how is it?**

Yes, I do. While preparing for the actual audit, working down from the checklist, there are always questions that come up, sometimes related to recent checklist changes. Usually, PRI staff is available, friendly and helpful. I guess they appreciate if you ask before the audit instead of complaining afterwards.

**What are your expectations of the following and how do they compare with what actually happens...**

**...The Auditor and his/her way of conducting the audit?**

Although English is generally neither the Auditee’s first language, nor the Auditor’s one, I would say that it is most helpful to create a trustworthy environment where the Auditor realizes that his task, auditing, is respected and every answer to a question is an honest answer. As generic as this may sound, the better the audited organization is prepared, the smoother the audit will be, as both parties would know the requirements of the process and the content of driving documents from customer(s).

**...Opening session?**

I strongly advise that the audited organization makes sure that every single one of its departments involved in the Nadcap audit process attend the opening session, or is at least invited. This meeting is crucial to get everyone “up to speed” on what happened and will happen. It is also a time when questions can be asked directly to the Auditor and the ground can be laid out for a smooth run of the audit. At PFW Aerospace GmbH, we have these departments involved from the very beginning of the audit preparation process.

**...Closing session?**

In my opinion, there are two types of

closing meetings. On the one hand, the daily debrief, which is particularly important if some NCR(s) have been raised. The people involved with the NCR(s) should be part of this meeting to review the wording of the NCR(s) as the memory is still fresh.

The wording must be clear to avoid any confusion as this is what the Nadcap Staff Engineer will review. On the other hand, the audit closing meeting should be held on the same basis as the opening meeting, with all internal departments involved in the audit attending.

**What did you find was the most challenging during the audit?**

Three areas come to mind when asked this question. Language is the first one. As mentioned earlier, English is sometimes not the Auditor's first language. This may also be the case of the Auditee, who is sometimes even struggling with the English language. This can create confusion and sometimes situations which are not easy to overcome for both sides.

The second area is production schedule. Accommodating the Auditor can create issues like "production flow delay" if an Auditor wants to see something specific but is still busy observing another process/part.

Availability of personnel is the last area as Nadcap Auditees have to make sure that the required employees are working during the actual audit.

**What could be done to improve the experience of going through a Nadcap Audit as well as having an Auditor on site?**

There are two main areas that I think could benefit from improvements. The first one is related to the recently introduced self-audit. Nadcap Auditees are required to perform a self-audit and upload the completed checklist(s) no later than 30 days prior to the actual audit date. These checklists contain a lot of information on where to find objective

evidence for the "yes" questions and I believe that these same checklists could be used during the actual audit to reduce duplication of work.

The second area of improvement involves Nadcap Subscribers:

- Subscribers should take the audit results and merit status into account when creating their audit programs
- All Subscribers' requirements for a special process should be covered by the Nadcap checklists
- Documents provided by the Subscribers for a contract or a purchase order should be in line with what was agreed to with the Task Group at the Nadcap meetings

“ A Nadcap audit is always of benefit

”

**What is the first thing you do once the Nadcap Auditor leaves?**

The first thing we do when the Nadcap Auditor leaves is have a meeting with the people involved during the audit. The aim is to gather information and insights on lessons learned from the audit, such as: What did we observe during the audit? What can be improved for the next audit? Was there anything we found difficult explaining or showing evidence for? We also create a "work down plan" for every NCR(s) we received, which includes questions such as "what to do?" "who is doing it?" and "what is the deadline for reporting the result?".

These meetings are run by our focal point for PRI/ Nadcap, who is also leading the NCR(s) resolution. At PFW Aerospace GmbH, this is the role of our Quality Specialist, who holds the knowledge about the methods e.g. "5 - Why" to get to the real root cause. Stringent monitoring of actions assigned during the above meeting is the next important step to ensure the deadlines are met. If necessary,

we also get in touch with the Nadcap Staff Engineer(s) to clarify some issues.

**How did the outcome of the audit and your company performance compare to your expectations?**

To me, a Nadcap audit is always of benefit. We see it as a reflection of our knowledge and whether we really know what is required to perform the process. It is also a good way to make sure that we have all the necessary objective evidence and ensure people performing the tasks are aware of all the driving documents, as well as if the content is properly understood.

**What tools do you find most useful in the RCCA process?**

We prefer the “5 – Why Approach to Root Cause” which we also upload into eAuditNet as it enables us to show the way to root cause. In other words, we state the cause followed by the word “why”, and depending the following answer, we reapply the word “why” again, and so on until the “real root cause” is detected. This approach helps us understand clearly what the root cause is, as well as making sure that we do our best to have anyone who needs to review this process understands it, and hopefully agree if what we laid out is plausible and accurate.

Finally, PFW Aerospace GmbH has limited contact with Nadcap staff after the audit. But I would like to highlight that each time we are in touch with any of the Nadcap staff, the exchange is friendly, and I feel treated seriously. As a conclusion, I would like to share some advice to other Nadcap Auditees:

- As most know, being prepared is key to being successful during a Nadcap audit. This means that you have to know what the requirements are and assure that all of them are implemented beforehand, starting with the self-audit.
- Awareness throughout the company and commitment from leaders are key to a

successful Nadcap audit.

- Have the responsibilities and authorities clearly defined to avoid any confusion.
- Communication and involvement of all related departments needed for the upcoming audit.
- If possible, have someone who is fluent in English to oversee the Nadcap audit process within your company.
- Try to create a climate/environment that is trustworthy to the Auditor, proving that nothing will be hidden or dishonestly answered.

## About

PFW Aerospace GmbH has over 100 years of experience in the Aerospace Industry. Founded in 1913, PFW Aerospace GmbH has more than 2,000 employees between its four sites, in Germany and Turkey.

The company is highly active when it comes to Quality in general. Member of several Quality organizations, including the German Aerospace Industry Association (BDLI), European Aerospace Quality Group (EAQG) and International Aerospace Quality Group (IAQG), it had its first Nadcap audit in 2005 and now holds six accreditations in four different commodities between its two production sites, with five accreditations on a 24-month Merit (Heat Treating, Welding and NonDestructive Testing for the German site and NonDestructive Testing and Welding in Turkey).