

## HELPING EVERYONE REALIZE OPPORTUNITIES



André Belanger is a business coach with 16 years experience of providing entrepreneurship, training and organizational management, offering what he calls "one of the most powerful small business education programs that's available."

His company, Hero's Incorporated (it stands for Helping Everyone Realize Opportunities) boasts a wide range of achievements and qualifications on its website and, as of last year, has been able to add its ISO 9000 certification to what is an already impressive list.

Operating out of Barrie, Ontario, much of André's work is within the healthcare industry and Canada's aboriginal community, which influenced André's wish to become ISO-certificated. "ISO 9000 is recognized by government agencies, and has opened the door for us to deliver our business model," says André.

That's not to say that he sees ISO 9000 strictly as a marketing



tool, however. "ISO keeps managers managing,"

André says, "and makes accountability a key issue for any business." He also sees the habits that he has developed in his business as a platform both for making savings and increasing profitability. "I'm personally saving 6 to 8 hours each week

where I wasn't following procedures in the past and, on the principle that time is money, that's quite a saving."

Uppermost in André's concerns when he first spoke with IMSM about his quest for ISO certification was that it wouldn't be relevant to his business, providing, as it does, a service rather than a product. "They overcame this by being flexible and open," he says,

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...the IMSM team were exceptional."

"and, while the governance of our business is tighter, IMSM was able to be flexible enough to allow for our uniqueness."

Clearly as someone so experienced in the world of business, André is well qualified to assess the strength of an organization. "The IMSM team were truly exceptional," he says, "and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend them."

[www.herosonline.net](http://www.herosonline.net)

## Georgian Hose boosts the flow with ISO 9000

"Our paperflow is tight now... it's true that the efficiency of the business has improved."

Collingwood-based Georgian Hose is a small business that makes and fits hydraulic hose and equipment throughout Ontario, and has done for almost 20 years. With customers primarily in construction and industry, the firm gained its ISO 9000 certification in late 2003, and is already seeing the benefits that come with it.

John Kuuter, the firm's president - a title which means he "...does everything," he says - sought certification because he believed there were two huge advantages to be had through it. "Firstly, I saw that going through the ISO process would be a great asset in controlling the flow of paperwork and, secondly, it meant that bigger companies were more likely to deal with you," he says.

On the first point, John believes the company is already making improvements. "Our paperflow is tight now, where perhaps it was a little sloppy before. I think it's true that the efficiency of the business has improved," he admits.

John also believes that the relationships Georgian Hose has with its major clients have been strengthened on the back of certification, and the company has also gained some new accounts recently, where having ISO 9000 may have been an influential factor.

Happily, the company found that gaining ISO 9000 status wasn't as daunting as John had feared. "People had told me it could be a nightmare, and that auditors would come to you with a 'snitty' attitude," he says. "I didn't find that to be the case with the IMSM team at all. Would I recommend them? Oh yes, I would and I have. I'm certain they have improved the overall running of this business, and we're very proud that we have the plaque that came with certification on our wall for all to see."

[georgianhose@georgian.net](mailto:georgianhose@georgian.net)

## WILKURO TOES THE QUALITY LINE

As a company which achieved ISO 9000 status as recently as January 2004, Wilkuro Safety Toes is already beginning to realize the benefits certification brings to it. The Concord, Ontario-based firm, which manufactures, as its name suggests, protective safety toes for the workplace, has always been able to pride itself on the quality of its product and practices. With certification, it can now demonstrate it within its market.

Wilkuro's sales manager, John Wilson, argues that the firm had a quality-oriented approach since it was founded in 1985. "In many respects, we're 'old school'," he says, "and we've always run this business with a 'right first time' attitude. Achieving ISO 9000 shows the standards we've always maintained here."

John also admits there was some reluctance within the company when the idea of gaining the ISO 9000 status was first mooted. "The amount of work we thought it would involve was a concern, particularly as we are a small firm, but we have been helped through



that by John Hill and the IMSM team, who did a very good job."

It's too soon to assess the impact ISO 9000 certification will have on what is already a successful company, but John's optimistic. "I think it could prove to be a very useful marketing tool for us," he says, "and it's proof to our customers how seriously we take our business."

[www.wilkuro.com](http://www.wilkuro.com)

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Contact: John Hill, Scotia Plaza, Suite 4900, 40 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5H 4A2  
Telephone: 416 460 9280 Fax: 416 777 6655  
Email: [johnhill.sales@sympatico.ca](mailto:johnhill.sales@sympatico.ca) Web: [www.imsm.com](http://www.imsm.com)