



"The biggest surprise for us was the best benefit: getting everyone on the same page and joining the commitment created a much stronger unity within the company."

- Jim Rathbone
Kensington Glass Arts, Inc.

images courtesy Kensington Glass Arts

NACC Case Study: QUALITY COMMITMENT FROM SHOP TO FIELD

NACC Certified Glazier

Kensington Glass Arts, Inc.

Ijamsville, Md.

Team

CEO: David Stone

Senior Vice President: Jim Rathbone

Vice President of Manufacturing: David Bibb

Vice President of Project Management: Mike Cefalu

About Kensington Glass Arts

Kensington Glass Arts, Inc. (KGa) is a leading fabricator and installer of high-end interior architectural glass in the Baltimore-Washington area. With three facilities totaling over 70,000 square feet, KGa produces 70 percent of the glazing products it installs. The company prides itself on 200 employees committed to doing whatever it takes to conquer any challenge. *KGa attained NACC certification in September 2016 and was recertified in October 2018.*

About NACC

The North American Contractor Certification Program provides architectural glass and metal contractors with certification recognition through a professionally administered, third-party assessment, as a means of creating a baseline for competency and adherence to industry-accepted guidelines.

Willing to Do Anything

Maryland-based Kensington Glass Arts (KGa) and its employees strive to accomplish "anything" in architectural glazing. The single-word mission is imprinted on employee t-shirts and ingrained in positive attitudes. In fact, Jim Rathbone's full title is Senior Vice President of Anything. He and the KGa team enjoy solving the most complicated glass challenges. They do so by being one of the few glazing contractors with its own facility that manufactures heavy tempered glass and performs glass laminating.

Early Adopter

KGa was an early NACC adopter. No stranger to third-party certifications, the company had previously undergone Safety Glazing Certification Council (SGCC) independent testing to certify the manufacture of its safety glazing products and was about to kick off an ISO 9001 certification process for its manufacturing facility in 2016.

The team from Administrative Management Systems, Inc., which administers SGCC and the Architectural Glass and Metal Technician (AGMT) programs, approached KGa leadership about NACC during that program's infancy. "The entire executive team was involved and committed to the endeavor," Rathbone explained. "The ISO and NACC certification processes overlapped. Because we are a process-driven company, we already had a lot of things in place to meet NACC guidelines."

Future of Glass

There's a line in KGa's marketing materials: *The future of glass is in our DNA.* KGa leadership sees NACC certification as a way to remain always one step ahead in the glass business. Quality is a primary factor in future success. Through the quality management systems put into place through ISO, SGCC, and NACC, KGa now has a formal quality policy that describes the use of technology and innovation, a system of accountability, and continuous improvements. The policy doesn't limit quality to products and services, but extends to KGa employees, whose competency, growth, and training are also described.

From KGa's perspective, ISO certification ensures quality products. NACC was a natural addition to confirm quality on the contract glazing side of business. "We gained a stronger internal commitment to process and training," said Rathbone.

Many Benefits

NACC certification has touched so many areas throughout the KGa organization that were not anticipated. From human resources and finance to the role of safety management, the processes KGa has put into place – and into practice – have made the company function better.

What some considered extra bells and whistles early on have changed how employees approach things. Now, two years after initial certification, the processes feel like second nature and keep the company operating efficiently, communicating effectively, and striving confidently to reach additional goals.

Growing Interest

NACC continues to gain traction and attract growing interest from architects and GCs. Meanwhile, companies such as KGa appreciate the third-party endorsement for quality and are reaping the benefits. "NACC drives profitability, efficiency, and makes everything flow so much better," said Rathbone. "But it also means you can get jobs, sell jobs, and keep jobs at a higher margin."

Below: KGa quality at Madison Marquette Washington, D.C.

