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## Case Study: QCP Project Inspection Using Remote Technology

With product specification, fabrication and installation deliveries looming, QCP Licensees are under enormous pressure to juggle time-sensitive schedules that accommodate customers. Registering for QCP project certification and undergoing project inspection, when applicable, presents another timing consideration.

But QCP project inspections via Skype can fill the need, allowing both QCP Licensees and QCP Inspectors to change schedules more easily while allowing all parties to improve productivity and meet time-sensitive project deadlines.

### What's involved?

To find out, *Quality Times* recently spoke with **Matt Gongwer of Lue Manufacturing Inc.**, who worked with **QCP Representative John Reininger** to complete inspections for two of the firm's projects requiring certification. John conducted both inspections via Skype, which were fully documented in about 90 minutes. Use of the technology streamlined the process

### What is Skype?

According to Skype's website, "It is a **powerful collaboration tool for real-time input**. Built for business by Microsoft, the technology can be used with any device, such as a PC/Mac, iPhone, iPad and Android. It allows for sharing of files, sending messages, using interactive tools with annotation, and more."

### QCP Project Inspection

Lue Manufacturing has three QCP project inspections under its belt: The first is a "Provisional" (i.e. mandatory probationary) inspection conducted by John in person at Lue's facility. The **second and third inspections were executed remotely via Skype on the same day**. They involved solid surface countertops for an elementary school, and laminate casework/countertops for a police substation. While these items were also staged in Lue's plant at the time of remote inspection, John pointed out that, "in other circumstances, and depending on the complexity of the fabricated projects, off-site inspection of the installed products may also be required for fabrication certification," John said.

### What was Required of Lue Manufacturing Personnel?

"Not a lot," Matt said. "All we had to do was have appropriate measuring devices available and a way to use Skype. I used one of my team engineers to assist with camera and tools for examining the products."

John explained that for any Skype inspection, he works with QCP Licensee personnel to set up video and audio using available technology, checking the signal, assuring that a clear picture is

viewable and conversations are clearly audible. “Once the technology is functioning, the inspection is the same as if a QCP Inspector is in the shop,” John said.

“For the Lue Manufacturing countertop inspection, I directed the engineer to show such things as seam joints and thickness, as well as provide a scan giving a whole picture of the finished product.” Inspection of the countertops took about 30 minutes. “The other project inspection involving casework and countertops was more complex and took about one hour,” John said.

### **Scheduling Flexibility**

To begin with, **remote inspections provide scheduling flexibility, which is a big benefit**, according to Matt. “For a commercial woodworking company dealing with architects and general contractors, everything is scheduled down to the day,” he told QT. “There are tight deadlines for completing and gaining approval of the shop drawings, ordering materials, fabricating the products, sending submissions for QCP certification, and having QCP projects inspected — usually involving **demanding turnarounds**. With QCP certification deadlines built into projects, woodwork industry outsiders don’t always understand timing issues,” Matt noted.

Matt said, “Participating in the remote inspection process with its documentation serves as a **self-inspection training process for self-labeling**. For instance, by responding to John’s direction about measuring space and other steps in the inspection process, our team knows what is expected for a certified project.”

### **Process Efficiencies**

John told QT that the Skype inspections allow for more efficient coordination and scheduling. “Since I began using the technology, about 10 or more remote inspections have had to be rescheduled.” John explained the benefits. “I’ve done three project inspections in one day. I’ve conducted Skype project inspections in Montana, Missouri, Wisconsin, Florida and Alabama in a short period of time – **all without logistical arrangements and travel expenses**. In between remote inspections, I can complete reports, thereby reducing their delivery turnaround time. **The cost reduction and time savings is a tremendous benefit**,” John said. “The time savings of a remote inspection directly impacts project delivery and **customer satisfaction**,” Matt added.

“During Skyping, I gain quicker responses to information requests; I secure total agreement of all on board; it speeds up the inspection process; and provides documentation of the inspection. If any product corrections are required, a remote re-inspection with visual proof of the corrections may only take 15 minutes,” John said. Of course, for all re-inspections solely for the purpose of assessing corrections, QCP charges for inspection and reporting time.

John estimated that about 80% to 90% of project inspections could be conducted via Skype, thereby offering added benefits to QCP Licensees.

“Matt is one of our great 5-star companies concerning timing,” John said. “John turns the inspection into a learning process so that going forward we are educated about how to correctly meet specifications in order to grow our business,” Matt noted.

Matt Gongwer, Engineering Manager, Lue Manufacturing Inc. Matt has been with Lue Manufacturing for 4-1/2 years. Previously, Matt was associated with Coleman Cable, Inc., as a quality and process manager for 5-1/2 years and as a plant manager for 2-1/2 years. Based in Goshen, Indiana, Lue Manufacturing has been producing fine custom made countertops, cabinetry and case work for 45 years. Founded in 1970, this second generation business has continued making products for both residential and commercial using a variety of surfaces and cabinetry. Lue

Manufacturing became a QCP Licensee in August 2016; the company has been an AWI Manufacturing Member since 2009. [www.luemfg.com](http://www.luemfg.com).

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## **Technology Undergoing Testing for QCP Project Inspections**

### **Advantages of *Remote* Inspection for Woodworkers**

- QCP Licensees receive a list of tools needed and technology requirements prior to the inspection, saving valuable time.
- Focuses QCP Licensee personnel on preparation BEFORE inspection so the products are ready at the appointment time.
- Eliminates ancillary conversations during onsite visits about issues that can be addressed at other times.
- Reduces time spent executing an inspection.
- Time savings increases woodworker's availability for other aspects of the project as well as other product fabrications.
- Allows for scheduling flexibility.
- Improves customer service.
- Serves as training process for a self-labeling certified project.

### **Advantages of *Remote* Inspection for QCP**

- Reduces time spent making travel arrangements and traveling.
- Eliminates related travel expenses (airline, hotel accommodations, car rental, etc., as needed).
- Frees up time for scheduling an inspection and responding to requests for schedule changes.
- Reduces time spent on onsite inspections that could take an hour or two onsite.
- Improves productivity for other administrative tasks such as report preparation.
- Allows the QCP Inspector to conduct more project inspections.
- The inspection video provides "live" demonstration of the process and serves as better documentation than photographs.