

Florida MEP Helps Manufacturer Achieve Government Contracting Breakthrough

Miami-based Maxiforce Becomes First After-Parts Manufacturer in Nation to Earn GSA Contracting Approval

Miami, FL – Guided by the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP), a Miami-based company recently achieved a notable distinction in government contracting when it became the first after-market parts manufacturer in the country to become a federal Government Services Administration (GSA) [Schedule contractor](#). The achievement marks the end of year-long process during which the Florida MEP helped the company achieve ISO certification and meet other requirements for federal contracting. As a result of those efforts, the company's catalogue of 527 engine replacement parts is now available online for order by more than 400,000 authorized federal purchasers worldwide.

Florida MEP Board Chair Gene Lussier hailed the accomplishment as a victory for small manufacturers and testament to what small manufacturers can achieve by partnering with the MEP.

“Maxiforce’s success in becoming the first after-parts manufacturer to earn approval as a GSA Schedule contractor opens up innumerable new sales opportunities for the company. Federal agencies have enormous purchasing power. And, unlike the private sector where sales have plummeted during the recession, federal government purchasing remains strong. With Florida MEP assistance, Maxiforce has demonstrated how small manufacturers can target new markets for their products even in the midst of an economic downturn,” Lussier stated.

Founded in 1994, [Maxiforce](#) specializes in making and distributing replacement parts for John Deere, Cummins and Perkins engines. Looking to expand its customer base, company executives attended a Defense Alliance Conference in Miami, where they met Florida MEP project managers and learned of the opportunities in federal government contracting.

Maxiforce’s interest in the opportunity became a real commitment to the goal when Florida MEP staff identified grant funds that could be used to support the company’s effort. Working with an MEP project manager, Maxiforce successfully applied for an Incumbent Worker Training grant that enabled the company to embark on a training program to become ISO 9001-2008 certified.

Becoming a GSA Schedule contractor, and not just a parts supplier, requires ISO certification. The ability of Florida MEP staff to find grant funding to support the delivery of ISO training enabled Maxiforce to pass the first hurdle on the path to becoming a federal contractor.

Maxiforce Vice President of Sales and Marketing Paul Kelly praised the partnership with Florida MEP.

“After attending the conference on defense contracting, we recognized the opportunity that existed for us, if only we could get on the GSA Schedule. It was the Florida MEP that taught us how we needed to approach that challenge. Their ability to help us get the grant funding for ISO training really launched the whole project. Without it, it wouldn’t have been financially feasible to undertake the training initiative,” Kelly stated.

After delivering the ISO training and helping Maxiforce achieve ISO 9001-2008 certification, Florida MEP project managers guided the company through the multiple steps and paperwork required for GSA Schedule contracting. More than 500 Maxiforce products had to meet federal procurement requirements and earn approval at negotiated prices and specified delivery times. The company’s commitment to Lean manufacturing, and the Lean workshops delivered by MEP staff, helped Maxiforce achieve the production efficiencies needed for competitive pricing and on-time delivery.

Florida MEP Chairman Lussier expressed admiration at the commitment Maxiforce demonstrated in pursuing its goals of becoming ISO certified and earning federal contracting approval.

“Maxiforce provides an outstanding example of how a small manufacturer can achieve success. The Incumbent Worker Training grant they received gave the company a one-year window of opportunity to upgrade their workforce skills to meet ISO certification standards. They pursued that goal with visionary leadership and uncommon determination. Now they’re in a position to reap the benefits,” Lussier said.

Achieving federal contracting status is good both for the company and for U.S. taxpayers, Lussier noted. Before Maxiforce became a GSA Schedule contractor, the only option federal agencies had for purchasing John Deere engine replacement parts was from John Deere. Maxiforce’s entry onto the Schedule interjects an added element of competition.

Florida MEP project managers continue to work with Maxiforce and are helping the company develop marketing strategies to identify which federal agencies offer the best prospects for new sales. Targeting those procurement opportunities among the thousands of possible federal buyers is the next phase in the company’s long-term government marketing strategy. Florida MEP has particular expertise in matching companies with federal procurement needs.

Maxiforce Vice President Kelly noted other benefits that have derived from his company’s partnership with Florida MEP.

“Our attainment of ISO 9001-2008 certification helps Maxiforce stand out from the competition. With Florida MEP’s assistance, we became only the second after-market parts company in the country to earn that certification. It gives us instant credibility that you can’t put a dollar value on. And the certification itself has requirements that will drive us to continue to perfect our business operation. We hope to be a great representative of what a small family-owned business can achieve by working with the Florida MEP,” Kelly concluded.