

# Quality Initiatives in Birla Carbon, Europe & Africa

“Quality is not an act, it is a habit”.  
– Aristotle

**By Dr. Toralf Peymann, Quality Director**

The Europe & Africa region is unique in itself, with diverse cultural backgrounds and languages. This diversity is as much a strength as a weakness – an example of which is when aligning the way we operate across plants.

In our efforts to align quality processes across our plants, the position of Regional Quality Director was created in early 2012. We wanted to operate in a way such that everybody at each site fulfilled the procedures in exactly the same way, i.e., the best way. This is called standard work in LEAN manufacturing.

Simultaneously, our region has challenged itself to become the leader in carbon black quality. This is necessary because our customer usually will not buy our product based just on price. They will turn to our region when they are looking for high quality. Hence, we started our journey to become the highest quality producer of carbon black.

Today, I want to share with you six examples of how we are improving our processes.

## 1. Regional Quality Organization

We created a new regional quality organization. The Quality Director (QD), five Quality Managers (QM) and two Technical Service Managers have a conference call every month to discuss quality topics such as complaints, specifications, new procedures, upcoming audits, test equipment, etc. Twice a year the QD and QM meet off-site for two days to discuss quality in more depth. As an example, the next meeting will focus on ISO/TS 16949 implementation, rubber testing in the region, measurement system analysis and supplier management. We are also inviting colleagues from overseas to participate and get insight from our corporate technical experts. All our QMs will join or already have joined a professional national quality organization such as the German Society for Quality (DGQ). We want our QMs to be exposed to the experts in the field of Quality and Statistics.

Each producing site is audited once per year by the QD and an accompanying QM from a sister site. These Quality