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IECEX certification helps Versa Products Co. to access global markets

Versa Products Co., whose world headquarters is in the USA (United States of America), is one of the world's leading manufacturers of directional control valves, a great number of which are used in hazardous areas. IEC e-tech based this article on interviews with Vice President – Sales and Marketing Gerry Gramagna and Engineering Manager Bahram Nazmi.



Safety and reliability are of crucial importance in sectors that operate in hazardous atmospheres where the risk of explosion is very high. Valves are widely used in the Ex (explosive) industry sector. Oil and gas, pharmaceutical, chemical and food processing plants, among others, all rely on these devices to control flow, pressure, temperature or liquid levels through pipes.

The recent explosion that caused an oil spill from an offshore drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico shows the need for extremely strict safety measures in such an environment.

The Australian experience

Some years ago, Versa Products Co. had its first Australian customers. The company already had a broad international market base and had had its products certified to the [European ATEX directives](#) [Note: equipment intended for use in potentially explosive atmospheres]. To enter the Australian market proved more difficult. The company had to produce reviews, letters and documents complementing the ATEX certificates. The fact that Versa was the sole manufacturer of the specific type of valves requested by the customer helped move things forward.

Through this first experience of the Australian market, Versa found out that an IECEX certificate was all that was required to export Ex equipment to the country. Had its products been IECEX tested and certified, it would have been spared the costly and time-consuming paperwork necessary to upgrade from ATEX.

Versa immediately concluded from this first venture on Australian soil that it made sense to export the valves to Australia as tested and certified to [IECEX](#). It continues to sell its products in that part of the world.

Going global

IECEX certification also helps Versa Products Co. trade with a number of other countries such as Canada, China and Brazil. IECEX certification makes local approval much easier to obtain – so much so that when it had to update its ATEX certification some 18 months ago, it decided to go all the way and obtain IECEX testing and certification as well. It decided further that all new products would immediately have IECEX certification.

IECEX facilitates global trade

The use of an internationally recognized certification system such as IECEX is essential to reduce unnecessary costs associated with duplication of testing and assessment. It helps companies to market their products globally and forms a clear basis for sound risk management.

The IECEx System comprises three core certification schemes and a Conformity Mark:

- **IECEX Certified Equipment Scheme**
Provides the assurance that products listed on an IECEx CoC (Certificate of Conformity) conform to the International Standards that are listed on the IECEx Certificate.
- **IECEX Certified Service Facilities Scheme**
Assesses and certifies that organizations and workshops that provide repair and overhaul services to the Ex industry do so respecting the requirements of IEC International Standard 60079-19, *Explosive atmospheres - Part 19: Equipment repair, overhaul and reclamation*.
- **IECEX Certification of Personnel Competencies Scheme**
Provides companies with independent proof that a person holding an IECEx CoPC (Certificate of Personnel Competency) has the qualifications, experience and competency necessary to implement the Ex International Standards.
- **IECEX Conformity Mark Licensing System**
Provides immediate evidence that products bearing this Conformity Mark are covered by an IECEx Certificate of Conformity.

Versa Products Co.

Versa Products Co. was founded in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York, USA. The company grew rapidly in the economic boom of the post-war years and moved to bigger premises in Englewood, New Jersey, in the 1960s. Expansion also meant a broader, international customer base. Versa Valves today has an office in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, serving the European and Middle-Eastern markets.

The company manufactures brass, aluminium and stainless steel directional control valves for a wide range of applications and industrial process control, robotic industries, packaging, textile, wood, mobile, automotive, printing, tires, oil and gas drilling, and many others.

Directional control valves are one of the most fundamental parts in hydraulic and pneumatic machinery. They allow fluid flow into different paths from one or more sources. They usually consist of a piston inside a cylinder which is electrically controlled. The movement of the cylinder restricts or permits the flow, thus controlling the fluid flow.

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