



Navigating Supplier Quality: Insights from Newport News Shipbuilding Experts for Australian Companies Entering the VCS Supply Chain

Speakers: Gary Zimak

As global collaboration takes centre stage in maritime defence, Australian companies are increasingly eyeing opportunities within the Virginia-class submarine (VCS) supply chain. Supplier quality, a critical cornerstone of this ecosystem, forms the bedrock of operational excellence and long-term sustainability. This talk, led by two seasoned supplier quality engineers from Newport News Shipbuilding—an industry leader and principal collaborator in the VCS program—will delve into the nuances of supplier quality management.

Participants will gain exclusive insights into best practices for meeting and exceeding the stringent quality standards demanded by the US defence sector. The speakers will unravel key methodologies such as process audits, rigorous documentation practices, and data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, they will share anecdotes of successes and lessons learned, offering a window into the dynamic interplay between suppliers and manufacturing integrators.

Specific focus will be placed on the strategic alignment of Australian businesses with VCS program requirements, addressing critical factors like compliance with defence regulations, fostering innovation in production techniques, and cultivating collaborative relationships.

This session is tailored for Australian enterprises aspiring to bridge the gap between local capabilities and the unique demands of the U.S. submarine supply chain. It promises actionable insights, fostering pathways for seamless integration and mutual growth in this essential international partnership. Attendees will leave equipped with practical knowledge to enhance their supplier quality framework and contribute meaningfully to the VCS ecosystem.



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Gary Zimak holds the position of Director of Supplier Quality at Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipbuilding. He is responsible for the all aspects of Supplier Quality Management which includes; Receipt and Source Inspection, Supplier Surveillance and Supplier Quality Engineering and Auditing. Gary has held positions of increasing responsibility throughout his 42 year career at Newport News Shipbuilding to include Director of Quality and Technical Services, Director of Program Quality for CVN 78, Director of the Electrical Value Stream, Manager of Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) and Manager of Continuous Improvement. He served as a Director at Large for the

American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT) from 2006 to 2008, and for the past ten years as the National Shipbuilding Research Program (NSRP) Electrical Panel Chair and Major Initiative Team Lead for Ship Production Technologies.