

Not Made in China

A number of factors are driving Florida companies to move operations back to the Sunshine State.

By Amy Keller

I-Con Systems, a Seminole County company that makes plumbing control systems for correctional institutions, had been manufacturing its components in China for about a decade when CEO Shawn Bush began thinking about moving manufacturing operations back to Florida.

Like most manufacturers, Bush says he was originally lured to China by lower labor costs, but had encountered a number of problems in dealing with his overseas manufacturer, including the language barrier, a lack of consistent quality and a time lag in receiving material.

A critical moment came when all three problems occurred at the same time with a

key vendor. "We had a large shipment that was delayed by a vendor, and when it was received, it did not pass our quality control," says Bush, who was unable to communicate with the vendor to explain the issue and get it corrected in a timely fashion.

After scrambling to save the customer and the project, Bush decided that the offshore relationship was not working and began acquiring equipment, personnel and the skills to bring the key items in-house to his factory in Oviedo in Seminole County.

"We began moving manufacturing about two years ago and now do 90% of our manufacturing in-house," says Bush, who has hired 15 additional workers and purchased more than \$300,000 in equipment to aid his growing manufacturing operation.



☞ "Take the time to do the analysis on what the true costs are of dealing with offshore companies. The quoted price will be very attractive, but the other costs add up quickly and, we have found, are substantial," says I-Con Systems CEO Shawn Bush.