

A close-up portrait of Chris Bush, a man with a full grey beard and mustache, wearing blue-tinted safety glasses and a red zip-up jacket. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be the interior of a vehicle or a workshop.

Interview with Chris Bush, Level III Inspector at North Star Imaging

Compliance you can trust

In highly regulated industries such as aerospace and defense, compliance isn't optional – it's everything. Chris Bush, Level III Inspector and member of the Inspection Services Group at North Star Imaging, shares his perspective on how regulatory compliance can move from a burden to a business advantage, and how Comet's MesoFocus technology helps make that possible.

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Quality under compliance

Is regulatory compliance mainly a burden that companies must manage, or can it be turned into an opportunity to stand out in the market?

"I believe that compliance in most companies often begins to feel like a burden due to the initial time and cost required for documentation. Initially, most companies view it as a significant burden. But if you look at it differently, it can become a competitive advantage. Companies that treat compliance as part of their quality culture, not just something to check off for an audit, can build stronger trust with their customers. That trust helps them stand out, especially in defense, aerospace, and other regulated industries."

What kinds of regulatory and production requirements do customers in defense, aerospace, and other regulated industries face today?

"These industries face extremely demanding requirements. I just finished a NADCAP¹ audit, and I'm still working through some small non-conformance reports from that. Everything from NADCAP standards to military specifications requires rigorous process control, repeatability, and traceability in everything you do. It's not just about making a quality product, it's about proving you can do it consistently under audit conditions, with records to back it up."

How is quality typically measured in these industries?

"Image resolution is critical. Specifications often highlight several quality metrics. In radiography, we use ASTM . The MesoFocus tube we use at our facility consistently achieves the required resolution, and often exceeds it. It still amazes me every time I use it."

How do these requirements impact your daily operations, production, and quality processes?

"Compliance impacts everything in a good way. Operators need systems that are straightforward to use while still ensuring that every inspection is properly documented. We must maintain records that are not only complete but also organized in a manner that allows auditors to easily verify them. It takes discipline - discipline that improves product reliability and quality under pressure, while also reinforcing this discipline across the entire team."

¹ National Aerospace and Defense Contractors Accreditation Program

From your experience, what happens when compliance isn't met?

"The risks are huge. I always tell inspectors, it could be you and your kids flying in that plane - that's how I look at it. Families, people with everyday lives depend on our work. When compliance fails, the consequences can include failed audits, loss of certification, or even loss of major contracts. In industries like aerospace and defense, this can translate to millions of dollars."

NSI in practice

How does NSI approach compliance when designing and building systems for customers?

"As a former customer before joining NSI, I can confidently say that NSI designs systems with compliance in mind from day one. The control checks and quality checks are built in to follow ASTM specifications, which 99% of aerospace customers rely on."

Traceability and documentation are part of the system design. From the start, we want customers to feel confident that every inspection is audit-ready."

Why is NSI well-equipped to understand customers' standards and challenges?

"We have team members who work closely with major aerospace primary contractors ("primes"). Many of us have spent decades in regulated industries and are thoroughly familiar with ASTM standards. Because of that experience, we've already faced and solved many of the same challenges our customers are dealing with now."

How is NSI helping customers achieve compliance more easily?

"My own experience is a good example. I joined NSI because I believed in the company's commitment to quality and wanted to help build our Inspection Services Group from the ground up. Having worked closely with major "primes" and being deeply familiar with ASTM standards and NADCAP processes, I saw an opportunity to shape a culture where compliance and quality go hand in hand — making the path to certification smoother for our customers."



**"The Comet
MesoFocus 450
is a game
changer. It gives
us sharper, more
consistent
images that
directly support
compliance"**

Chris Bush, Level III inspector at NSI

Reliable imaging ensures compliance

Why is high-quality imaging so critical to consistent, compliant production?

"High-quality imaging is the foundation of compliance in non-destructive testing. If an image isn't clear, consistent, and properly recorded, the inspection results can't be trusted. Regulators want to see proof, and the proof is in the image. That's especially true in the aerospace and defense industries, where regulatory oversight is extremely stringent."

How does NSI ensure its systems deliver the image quality needed for compliance?

"Our engineers design every system for stability and repeatability of calibration, from hardware to software. Everything is tuned to deliver the same reliable image every single time. That consistency gives operators, auditors, and customers confidence that inspections aren't left to chance."

How does NSI component selection help customers meet industry standards?

"Customers can request specific components, but we guide them based on their compliance requirements. If a customer needs to meet a specific ASTM or aerospace standard, we help them select the configuration that ensures compliance while minimizing unnecessary costs. Our team's knowledge of specifications enables us to recommend the best setup immediately."

To further strengthen compliance, we rely on advanced imaging solutions like the Comet MesoFocus 450. It provides the resolution and detail that regulated industries demand, allowing us to capture sharper, more consistent images that directly support compliance. The technology helps customers not just meet standards but often exceed them.

Our primary focus is always on quality. In my experience, the MesoFocus 450 delivers both precision and efficiency. Even when working with thick superalloys like nickel, it achieves the required resolution without slowing throughput. It's my ideal tube because it consistently meets the strictest standards while maintaining efficiency."

Confidence backed by performance

How do your customers react when they see that your systems can help them meet strict regulations?

"There's often a real sense of relief. Customers no longer dread their next audit — they feel confident as they walk into it. That shift in mindset builds long-term loyalty to both NSI and Comet. Yes, the MesoFocus might come at a higher price, but the reliability and peace of mind it provides are worth it."

How does the Comet brand contribute to trust, reliability, and compliance?

"Absolutely. Many of our customers use their compliance records as a differentiator. Being able to say, "We consistently pass audits with zero findings," is a powerful statement. It's not just about meeting requirements; it's about proving reliability, discipline, and trustworthiness."

The Comet brand reinforces that message. The Comet tube is a key point of discussion when it comes to compliance. I've used Comet tubes throughout my entire career, they've always been reliable. At my previous company, I managed five systems that all used Comet tubes, and I never encountered any issues. Comet has a strong brand reputation, and in my view, it's synonymous with reliability."

"NSI designs systems with compliance in mind from day one. Traceability and documentation aren't afterthoughts - they're built right into the system."

Chris Bush, Level III inspector at NSI

A future built on compliance

How do you see compliance changing in the years ahead?

"Compliance is only going to become stricter as technology continues to evolve. The standards will evolve, too, but I also see more companies recognizing that compliance isn't just about risk management; it's about building a culture of quality that makes them more competitive.

I believe it's already becoming a competitive advantage. Companies that build compliance into their identity become partners of choice because customers know they can rely on them - It's already."

And lastly - how do NSI and Comet make compliance a competitive advantage?

"Together, NSI and Comet give customers confidence, confidence that their inspections meet the strictest standards, that their records will withstand any audit, and that compliance won't slow them down but instead set them apart.

We help transform compliance from a burden into a strength. Having a system with a Comet tube means reliability and quality that meet even the most demanding standards."



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