



Chatsworth Products Scales Smart Manufacturing Through Training and Standardization

For manufacturers navigating rapid growth, standardization can mean the difference between scaling successfully and struggling to keep up. At **Chatsworth Products** in New Bern, North Carolina, building consistency across multiple manufacturing locations became a strategic priority—and a partnership with NC State University Industry Extension Services (IES) helped make it possible.

Today, Chatsworth Products manufactures critical infrastructure for IT data centers, including cabinets, enclosures, and power distribution systems used to house and protect servers powering digital networks worldwide. As the company expands into advanced technologies, including liquid cooling systems for AI chips, maintaining quality and operational consistency across facilities has become increasingly important.

For Dan Grimsley, Chatsworth Products' Corporate Director of Training, that challenge represented an opportunity.

"We're growing quickly," Grimsley explained. "Our business is booming, and standardization is critical for us. We're trying to transition from more of a grassroots system into larger, more standardized systems across all of our sites."

Building a Stronger Foundation Through Training

Chatsworth Products first engaged NC State IES to strengthen its internal auditing process after receiving feedback during an ISO audit that improvements were needed.

"Right after I came here, we had an audit and got a minor finding that our internal auditing processes were weak," said Grimsley. "I immediately went back to what I knew and reached out to NC State."

IES partnered with Chatsworth Products to deliver ISO 9001 Internal Auditor training, helping employees better understand quality systems and audit processes. Because Chatsworth operates multiple manufacturing sites across the U.S., consistency mattered just as much as capability.

Through collaboration between the North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and Chatsworth's counterparts in Texas and California, training content and delivery methods were standardized across locations.

"The nice thing was having the MEP and IES groups working together," he said. "Texas and North Carolina collaborated, shared materials and processes, and



we were able to transfer what worked from one site to another. That standardization is a huge plus for us.”

Bringing Training Within Industry (TWI) to the Shop Floor

To further strengthen workforce development and operational consistency, Chatsworth is implementing Training Within Industry (TWI) instruction through NC State IES. Originally developed during World War II to rapidly train manufacturing workers, TWI remains one of the most effective approaches for hands-on skills development and standardized work instruction. “I’m a big believer in TWI,” Grimsley said. “For shop floor skill sets and on-the-job training, it’s been proven over and over again.”

Chatsworth Products focuses on the Job Instruction (JI) component of TWI to train subject-matter experts and supervisors who teach standardized work processes. “At first, it doesn’t always resonate with people,” he admitted. “But once they start using it, they realize the power it has. Our instructors are now asking to run another session.”

The timing aligned closely with Chatsworth’s internal lean transformation efforts, which include a companywide

initiative grounded in Lean principles and the Toyota Production System. “TWI transitions really well with lean methodology when you’re trying to teach standard work on the floor,” shared Grimsley.

A Measurable Impact: Four Times the Output with Less Employees

The results of CPI’s process improvements have been dramatic.

Over the past several years, the New Bern facility has nearly quadrupled production output while operating with fewer employees. We have quadrupled our output within four years—with less people.” Grimsley attributes much of that growth to process improvements, standardization, and smarter systems. “We learned what we should be doing and started implementing quite a few things,” he said. “Cleaning up processes and standardizing how we work has made a huge difference.”

The company is now preparing for the next phase of growth with a new smart manufacturing center featuring advanced automation and German-engineered fabrication equipment. As automation expands, standardized training will become even more critical. “We’re building curriculum

for the new systems now,” he said. “And I know we’ll continue leaning on partners like IES because we need that consistency across all our sites.”

Growing Talent Through Rural Works

Beyond technical training, Chatsworth has also built a strong talent pipeline through NC State IES’s Rural Works internship program. What began as a learning experience evolved into a successful workforce strategy. “Our first year, we floundered,” Grimsley admitted. “We weren’t ready. We didn’t have a plan for interns.” The company adjusted by defining meaningful projects, preparing mentors, and creating a structure for student experiences.

“The second year, we planned projects and started evolving,” he said. “Now we get a big bang for our buck.” Today, Chatsworth Products hosts interns from NC State University, East Carolina University, and local high schools, often drawing talent from disciplines beyond traditional engineering—including computer science and nuclear engineering.

“They teach us as much as we teach them,” Grimsley said. “The students bring a lot to the organization.” One standout NC State student intern became so valuable

that he returned for multiple years, eventually managing projects and mentoring newer interns.

Advice for Other Manufacturers: Get Involved

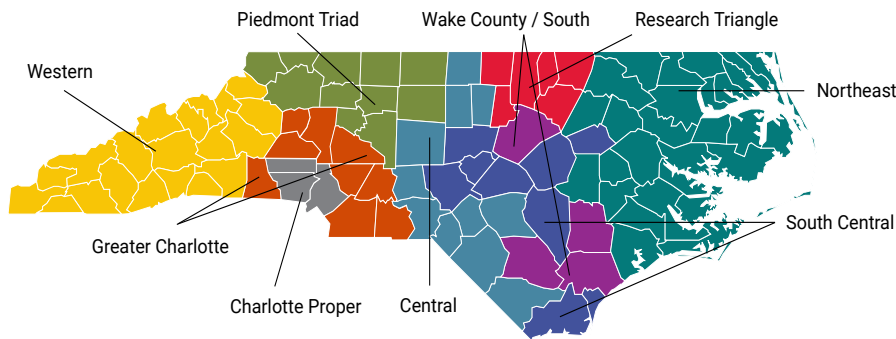
For manufacturers considering support from NC State IES, his advice is straightforward: engage deeply. “Get involved,” encouraged Grimsley. “A lot of companies reach out for one need, complete it, and move on. But if you really start understanding the connections IES has and what’s available, it brings a lot more to the table than just a class.”

For organizations managing multiple sites or scaling operations, the value goes beyond training alone. “The coordination, networking, and standardization support bring a lot of value to our organization,” Grimsley said. “It makes things easier to manage.”

As Chatsworth Products continues to expand its operations and advances smart manufacturing capabilities, the partnership with NC State IES remains an important part of the company’s growth strategy—helping to ensure that employees, systems, and processes evolve together.



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