

Case Study

Volkswagen Group of America, Chattanooga, TN

Training and higher education create well-qualified, technologically-skilled workforce for successful opening of new automotive manufacturing plant.

Challenge

When Volkswagen (VW) announced plans to open a new \$1 billion production facility in the United States in order to help achieve its goal of tripling US sales, almost 400 cities contacted the German automotive giant to promote the benefits they had to offer as potential homes for the new plant.

Thanks in large part to attractive infrastructure, including interstate highways, a nearby airport and a ready-to-use brown field site, and attractive incentives from local and state government, Chattanooga, Tennessee won the bid and immediately began working with VW to lay the groundwork to make sure the new facility has every chance to be successful.

VW maintains a very robust workforce training program in Germany. As such, the company was interested in developing a comparable program in Chattanooga that would help take the plant's estimated 2,000 American employees from the standard new employee orientation content and continue through to highly technical courses on LEAN manufacturing, robotics and shop floor equipment maintenance and the Volkswagen Production System.

Solution

To develop the comprehensive training program, Volkswagen partnered with the city of Chattanooga, as well as Chattanooga State Technical College (CSTC), a local technical college and major

Facility	Automotive manufacturing
Scope of Services	Workforce training
Start date	2010

suppliers, including Siemens, to create Volkswagen Academy, a state-owned facility to house and deliver the VW training programs.

Siemens Cooperates with Education (SCE) program is specifically designed to help educational institutions get access to the advanced curriculum, technical training and equipment that helps prepare their students for work in the manufacturing sector. Working with CSTC and VW, Siemens was a full partner in helping to get the VW Academy up and running. Siemens helped define the training plan, identify what software and equipment was required, develop and provide staff for the train-the-trainer programs for CSTC staff, and equipped the CSTC Technical Center and the VW Academy with Siemens training simulators, software and peripherals which help provide the hands-on element that makes the Academy program so useful.

Customer Benefits

The Volkswagen Chattanooga Assembly Plant was formally inaugurated in May 2011 and followed the opening of the company's 163,000 square-foot Academy in June 2010. Every new VW employee must attend a detailed training regimen at the Academy, which is owned and operated by Volkswagen and the state, covering all the skills and knowledge they need to know about their new company.

The Volkswagen Academy is home to a conference center, a LEAN center, an automotive center, a automation center and a vocational skills center. By taking a multi-track approach that includes both classroom time and hands-on work in labs that simulate all the features of the actual manufacturing facility on a smaller scale, the curriculum is simulation labs, workers are fully prepared as experts in their fields the minute they arrive on the manufacturing floor.

VW officials call the academy a "gateway" to their goal of producing 150,000 new midsize sedan vehicles per year for the US market. This educational strategy exposes individuals to critical and essential automotive manufacturing concepts and equipment with a goal of developing an exceedingly well-qualified, technologically-literate, and highly-skilled workforce. As well, the training facility and curriculum promote personal employee growth and provides opportunities to ensure that local talent are exposed to Volkswagen early on and have an increased opportunity to be hired.

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