

MFGCON SPEAKERS/ABSTRACTS

May 13, 3-4 p.m.

Room A:

Partnering for a Successful Apprenticeship Program

This presentation will discuss the importance of relationship building in the community to create a successful apprenticeship program. It will identify the steps taken internally by Machine Specialties to make the program work.

Speaker:

Jay Simmons, Apprenticeship Program Manager, Machine Specialties

Speaker Bio:

Jay Simmons is the Apprenticeship Program Manager for Machine Specialties. He previously worked for ettain group where he served first as a technical recruitment and later as a business development manager. He also worked as a teacher in the Guilford County Schools. Jay received his bachelor's degree in English and Education from Guilford College. He earned a Project Management Professional certificate from the Project Management Institute.

Room B:

Journey to Manufacturing Excellence

This presentation will illustrate improvements to Lenoir's Operating system over the last several years which elevated our performance to new levels. Those levels and accomplishments were recognized as we applied and were granted the AME (Association of Manufacturing Excellence) Award in 2023. We were 1 of 3 companies to receive this award in the country for 2023. We are the first compression molding company in the world to receive this award.

Speakers:

Ryan Biddix, Continuous Improvement Manager, Teijin

Tracy Gray, Plant Manager, Teijin

Mark Parsons, Operations Manager, Teijin

Speaker Bios:

Ryan Biddix is the Continuous Improvement Manager for Teijin - Lenoir and was instrumental in the development and deployment of our Operating System. Ryan has an associate degree from CCC&TI in Mechanical Engineering and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Western Carolina University.

Tracy Gray is the Plant Manager for Teijin Automotive Systems-Lenoir NC Operations- Tracy has been with the company for 32 years. Tracy studied Design Engineering, and has many certifications: Six Sigma, Lean Enterprise, Daily Management Systems, Process Walks, Data Analysis, 5S Workplace Organization, GD&T, and Strategy Deployment to name a few. Tracy is currently enrolled with Cornell University's Executive Leadership Program. Recently, Tracy led a team of great employees through a journey to achieve the Association of Manufacturing Excellence Award being the first compression molder in the world to receive this prestigious award

Mark Parsons is the Operations Manager for Teijin – Lenoir and has been with company for 8 years. Mark studied Business Administration at Lenoir Rhyne University, Electrical Engineering at Clemson University and completed his Six Sigma Black Belt Certification at NC State. He is currently enrolled in Cornell University's Executive Leadership Program.

Room C:

Food Safety & Security and Cybersecurity for Manufacturing Firms

Manufacturing Companies have become prime targets of cyber criminals in recent years. Learn from the President of Raleigh based IT company, Technology Associates, what you should do to protect your company against a costly cyberattack. Additionally, hear from 2023 MFGCON Innovation winners Michael Druga & Tyler Brown of Sinnovatek & FirstWave on the importance of safety and security in food manufacturing technology.

Takeaways:

1. 2024's Most Dangerous Cybersecurity threats for Manufacturing Companies (explained)
2. Action Steps a Manufacturing firm should take to protect their company
3. Security & Compliance requirements & information specific to manufacturing companies
4. The importance of food safety and security in food manufacturing & brand new innovative technology and processes that change the landscape of food manufacturing and packaging

Speakers:

Eric Hobbs, President, Technology Associates

Michael Druga, President and CEO, SinnovaTek and FirstWave Innovations

Tyler Brown, Vice President of Operations, SinnovaTek and FirstWave Innovations

Speaker Bios:

For the past 25 years, **Eric Hobbs** has served as President of Raleigh headquartered, full-service technology solutions firm, Technology Associates, specializes in providing outsourced IT services, security, strategy, guidance, and support for manufacturing companies. Over the years, Eric has served as an advisor to hundreds of business owners across the state of North Carolina.

Michael Druga, President & CEO, B.S. Electrical Engineering from University of Central Florida. Michael has more than 20 years of experience in technology commercialization and more than a dozen internationally issued patents. Since co-founding SinnovaTek in 2016 and FirstWave Innovations in 2019 he has raised more than \$30M to grow into a full-scale aseptic manufacturing operation utilizing their proprietary microwave technology.

Tyler Brown is the Vice President of Operations at SinnovaTek, a leading innovator in food technology solutions. With over 15 years of invaluable experience in the food manufacturing industry, Tyler has held pivotal roles at renowned CPG giants like ConAgra and Hostess Brands. Prior to his current position, he served as the General Manager at YamCo, LLC, a prominent industrial ingredient manufacturer. Throughout his distinguished career, Tyler has honed his expertise in aseptic microwave process technology, amassing over a decade of hands-on experience in this field. He played a pivotal role in managing three manufacturing facilities utilizing this cutting-edge technology, with FirstWave being the latest addition to his portfolio. His profound understanding of food manufacturing intricacies, coupled with his mastery of aseptic microwave processing, uniquely positions him to spearhead the expansion efforts at FirstWave. Tyler's track record speaks volumes, having successfully led and completed five aseptic validations for LACF processing lines and fillers. His unwavering commitment to excellence and relentless pursuit of innovation continue to drive SinnovaTek's success in the ever-evolving food industry landscape.

May 14, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Room A:

An Innovative Model for Addressing Skilled Labor Shortage

This session will share details on how the Catawba Valley Furniture Academy was created to address skilled labor shortage in the area. The industry-driven training program prepares students for jobs in the furniture manufacturing industry and serves as a model for other organizations in workforce development across the state. Bill McBrayer will share the five essential elements needed to create an academy to address skilled labor shortages.

Speaker:

Bill McBrayer, Human Resources, Safety, Health and Environmental Manager,
Lexington Home Brands

Speaker Bio:

Bill McBrayer was born and raised in Forest City, NC. He holds degrees from Isothermal Community College and Lenoir-Rhyne University. For more than 35 years, he has worked in the state's furniture manufacturing industry in Hickory, including the past 30 years with Lexington Home Brands. He was instrumental in the creation of the Catawba Valley Furniture Academy at Catawba Valley Community College. The industry-driven training program prepares students for the technical skill demands of North Carolina's modern furniture manufacturing industry. The academy serves as a model for other organizations in workforce development across the state. Mr. McBrayer was elected by the NC House in 2015 to serve a six-year term on the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges. In 2021, he was reappointed by the House for another six-year term. He served four years as Vice-Chair of the State Board and currently serves as Chair of the Personnel Committee, Chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee, Chair of the Staff of the Year Award, and is a member of the Finance Committee the Work Force Development Committee and is the Liaison to the NCACCT. Mr. McBrayer has served on numerous boards and commissions in Catawba County and the City of Hickory. He currently serves as Chair of the Hickory Regional Planning Commission. In 2022, Mr. McBrayer received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Room B:

GE Aerospace: Our key to manufacturing success: Exceeding customer expectations through teaming and consensus.

How a modern manufacturing facility has embraced a organizational environment in which the team always seeks to exceed customer expectations by creating a climate of high integrity, mutual trust, simple & effective communication

Speaker:

Ed Zimmerman, Leading Edge Aviation Propulsion (LEAP) Program Leader, GE Aerospace – Durham Engine Facility

Speaker Bio:

Ed Zimmerman is the Leap (Leading Edge Aviation Propulsion) Program Leader at GE Aerospace – Durham Engine Facility. GE Aerospace is a world-leading provider of commercial, military and business and general aviation jet and turboprop engines and components as well as avionics, electrical power, and mechanical systems for aircraft. Ed is responsible for overall program leadership in Safety, Quality, Delivery, and Cost oversight for CFM LEAP commercial Turbofan engines and subassemblies with 10 assembly teams containing 205 FAA licensed aviation technicians during LEAP engine assembly. He also leads improvements in manufacturing capacity through investment management, lean, manpower allocation, and productivity projects. Ed has held previous roles in GE focusing on Materials, Manufacturing, Process Improvement, and Quality. Ed currently holds certifications in Apollo Root Cause Analysis, and Six Sigma White, Yellow, and Green Belt's. Ed is also a member of the facility Medical First Responder team and is currently certified as an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), with the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services. A Military veteran with over 25 years of service, Ed served in both aviation and ground billets in the United States Marine Corps, most recently serving as the Intelligence Chief, G2, 4th Marine Division (Reserve). After retiring from the Marine Corps Reserve in 2018, he has continued serving the veteran community through the GE Veterans Network (GEVN). The GEVN was created to help veterans build successful civilian careers at General Electric and provide support to guard/reservists and their families during deployment and periods of duty. Ed earned his BBA from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, and a Master of Business Administration at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Room C:

Using TWI (Training Within Industry) as a Foundation for Standardized Work

By incorporating TWI principles into Lean methodologies, organizations can establish a strong foundation for continuous improvement, employee engagement, and the creation of standardized, efficient processes. The combined approach enhances the effectiveness of Lean initiatives and supports sustainable improvement efforts.

Takeaways:

What is TWI Training Within Industry.

How does TWI training affect our work, quality, continuous improvement, and people within our organization?

How does a company provide TWI in a multi-state organization utilizing outside support, such as Universities, Colleges, and the MEP.

Speaker:

Dan Grimsley, Training & Development Corporate Manager, Chatsworth Products, Inc.

Speaker Bio:

Dan Grimsley has worked for over 36 years in Manufacturing and Post Secondary Education. Dan served as a Dean of Edgecombe Community College, North America Director of Quality for Voith, Inc., International Consultant with Cp-Koncepts, Inc., and currently Corporate Learning & Development Manager at Chatsworth Products, Inc.

May 14, 11 a.m.-Noon

Room A:

Sustainability and the Circular Economy Panel

This panel will share real world examples of how their companies have developed and implemented sustainability strategies.

Speakers:

Roland Butzke, Enterprise Account Executive, Sustainable Energy Management, Siemens Industry, Inc.

Matthew Flowers, Corporate Purchasing Manager, Unifi

Kevin Martin (MODERATOR), Executive Director, Carolina Utility Customers Association

Speaker Bios:

Roland Butzke has more than 25 years in the energy supply, demand, and sustainability fields. He has developed over \$100 million in energy and sustainability management solutions, providing energy, operational and financial solutions for the public and private sectors. He specializes in the ability to develop and implement energy management, decarbonization and sustainability strategies by coordinating resources for data collection and analysis, as well as analyzing virtual and physical opportunities. Mr. Butzke is passionate about partnering with organizations on the management of energy and sustainability at the enterprise level and how to optimize the results of an enterprise program. Mr Butzke attended WPI with a BS in BioGenetic Engineering.

Matt Flowers currently serves as the Corporate Purchasing Manager for Unifi Manufacturing, Inc. in Greensboro, NC and has held this position for three years. In his current position, he leads a team that manages indirect materials and services for Unifi, including packaging, manufacturing equipment and services, facilities management, energy and maintenance. His team emphasizes continuous improvement, cost savings, sustainability and creating competitive advantages through strategic opportunities. Previously, he spent ten years at John Deere in Kenersville, NC where he has served in the positions of Buyer, Product Development Buyer, Freight Specialist and Supply Base Manager. Matthew received a BSBA in Management from Appalachian State University and a degree certificate in Supply Management from UNC-Greensboro.

Kevin Martin is the Executive Director of the Carolina Utility Customers Association, a position he moved into at the beginning of 2020. Prior to his current role, he spent five years at the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality as the Renewable Energy Program Manager and as the Weatherization Assistance Program Manager. Kevin has also worked at the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at N.C. State University and as a consultant on energy matters. He has an M.B.A. from Averett University and a B.A. from the University of Virginia.

Room B:

Navigating the Digital Transformation Journey

Join us for an insightful journey through our presentation on Navigating the Digital Transformation Landscape. We will begin by exploring the evolution into Industry 4.0 as well as the driving forces behind this revolution, from technological advancements to shifting customer expectations, while discovering the benefits of implementing this type of transformative mindset. Additionally, we will review various strategies that can assist with vision development, partner and technology selection, and change management while exploring a compelling example of a NC manufacturer's transformative journey and the challenges, solutions and processes they utilized to deliver on the promise of technology. Lastly, we will wrap up your experience with a roadmap review and lessons

learned for your continued journey toward digital excellence. Join us as we navigate the digital landscape together, empowering your organization for a successful Transformation.

Takeaways:

- o The criticality of a strategic vision (readiness, landscape, goals and objectives)
- o Teamwork is the dreamwork (fostering a culture for innovation, adaptability and continuous learning)
- o Criteria for selecting technology and partners (that align with your objectives and culture)
- o Continuous monitoring and adoption (it's a journey, not a destination)

Speakers:

Steven Airoidi, General Manager, Vision33

Other Speaker TBA

Speaker Bios:

Steven Airoidi, East Region General Manager at Vision33, is an SAP veteran that is known for driving innovation and excellence in enterprise solutions while guiding businesses into a new era of efficiency and growth. With his experience in overseeing operations, strategic planning, and client engagements, Steven is an integral part of Vision33's commitment to empowering businesses and delivering on the promise of technology. Leading a dynamic team in the Eastern-US, he combines a deep understanding of client needs with technical acumen to ensure that Vision33 and SAP solutions not only meet but exceed expectations of businesses navigating the complex landscape of digital transformation. In this trusted advisor role, Mr. Airoidi utilizes a passion for collaborative client relationships and an unwavering dedication to businesses seeking to leverage cutting-edge technology for long-term, sustainable growth.

Room C:

Utilizing Kata for Improvement

At Correction Enterprises we believe in utilizing LEAN manufacturing, continuous improvement, and Toyota Kata to improve our daily production. We have Toyota Kata training classes for offenders in our manufacturing plants. We may be operated by the State of North Carolina, but we are not funded by the state. Our mission is to provide marketable job skills and transitional opportunities for offenders in a professional and safe work environment while providing quality goods and excellent service to our customers at a savings to the citizens of North Carolina. This is one reason why we

think continuous improvement is so important to our mission. It gives our offenders an advantage when they return to society. By developing a habit of scientific thinking, they can be better equipped to solve problems in and outside of their work areas.

Takeaways:

1. Scientific thinking and Kata give offenders a sense of empowerment.
2. How we trained incarcerated offenders to use the Toyota Kata Improvement method.
3. How we are moving our organization forward using 21st Century LEAN
4. How we can create a standard, continuous improvement mindset within our company of 28 different plants and 20 different industry types.

Speaker:

Brandon Bunn, Kaizen Promotion Officer, Correction Enterprises

Speaker Bio:

Brandon Bunn is the Kaizen Promotion Officer for NC Correction Enterprises. His career began in the printing industry in 1997. In 2019, Brandon began working at the NCCE Print Plant at Nash Correctional where he supervised and trained offenders in the plant. He was assigned a Toyota Kata class taught by NCSU IES. In that class Brandon realized that he had a love for Kata and CI. Brandon began training on the Toyota Kata Improvement method. In Sept. of 2023, he was promoted to Kaizen Promotion Officer. Brandon is currently creating training plans for all of their staff and offenders.

May 14: Morning General Mini Sessions:

Topic 1: Supplier Matching

Do you have a supplier need or would you like to become a supplier to another company? Supplier matching is a powerful tool that can help North Carolina manufacturers connect with suitable suppliers. Manufacturers can streamline their operations, improve product quality and ultimately drive business growth by finding suppliers who align with their specific needs and goals. This session will provide information on the program, the types of opportunities available and how to access these no-cost supplier sourcing and matching services. You'll also learn how program participation can help companies differentiate themselves, offset global risks, strengthen supply chains in NC and the country and most importantly, grow your business.

Speaker:

KeAnne Hoeg, Director, Data Management Systems, Supplier Matching and Reporting, NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES)

Speaker Bio:

KeAnne Hoeg is the director of data management systems, supplier matching and reporting at NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES). She describes her job as "playing with data." Her data and reporting group is responsible for managing required reporting to stakeholders, several internal applications, including the Salesforce CRM system, reporting development, and data analysis and visualization. In addition to overseeing required stakeholder reporting and systems, KeAnne manages the Center's supplier Matching program. Her supplier matching team oversees the Manufactured in North Carolina (MNC) online supplier matching database; works with manufacturers to assess their needs, identify possible matches and create and respond to opportunities national supplier matching program; and mapping key supply chains within North Carolina. KeAnne has worked at IES for 23 years; prior to moving into her current position, she worked in IT and marketing as a web developer and social media manager. KeAnne has a B.A. in English from Meredith College and an MSLS in library science from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Topic 2: Streamlining Success: How Software Modernization Elevates Manufacturing Efficiency and Scalability

This topic highlights two critical outcomes—efficiency and scalability—which are top priorities for manufacturers looking to adapt and thrive in a digital landscape. It suggests a direct link between modern software solutions, improved operational performance, automation, and getting ready for the future of AI.

Speakers:

Eric Lawrence, Director of Growth and Partnerships, Imaginovation

Speaker Bios:

Eric Lawrence is the Director of Growth and Partnerships at Imaginovation. Eric is responsible for fostering business growth and shaping dynamic partnerships. Prior to joining Imaginovation, Eric was the Director of Sales for Bootstrap Brands. He also previously worked at ROI Revolution in sales and marketing roles. He holds a degree in electronic media from High Point University.