

## GUEST COLUMN

# The Role of Higher Education in Corporate Recruitment and Job Creation

BY THOMAS J. WHITE – Special to  
The Charlotte/Triangle/Triad Construction News

On Monday, March 29, 2010, at the North Carolina JOBS Commission hearing in Cary, Charles Hayes, the president/CEO of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP), stated proudly and unequivocally that 2009 was the best year ever in the history of his dynamic 15-year old economic development organization. Citing \$1.9 billion in announced capital investment and over 10,000 new jobs, Hayes explained that these statistics might well appear counter-intuitive in light of the persistently rising statewide unemployment figures. When queried by Commission members to account for this regional anomaly, Hayes postulated that the first-rate, high performing research universities and community colleges served as a highly effective educational foundation upon which RTRP continued to build its competitive, perennially successful cluster-based economic development models.

Hayes was followed to the podium by NC Secretary of Commerce Keith Crisco who cited empirical evidence that demonstrated the efficacy of having higher education play a prominent role in launching start-up enterprises, helping existing indus-

try with productivity enhancements and retention strategy implementation, as well as assisting his economic developers in courting new corporate prospects. Crisco emphasized the importance of the intellectual prowess throughout the entire UNC System, complemented nicely by some world-class private institutions of higher learning, in making North Carolina a formidable competitor in what has become a truly global marketplace. He noted that higher education can be the key differentiator in winning a project for North Carolina, all other variables being equal.

At NC State University, we have been quite fortunate to enjoy a unique relationship with the Wake County Economic Development Program and RTRP. With support from Wake County, we have crafted an innovative Precision Marketing program that is predicated upon an industry cluster model that targets key clusters of companies with a proven capacity to flourish in this region. The initial cluster analysis was conducted in 2001 by Dr. Michael Porter of Harvard to identify industry targets for recruitment and/or expansion. Ken Atkins, Executive Director of the Wake County Economic Development Program, sought out NC State faculty and staff to help design a unique town-gown partnership dedi-

cated to utilizing the considerable faculty expertise at NC State in clusters such as nonwoven textiles, and biotech/biopharma. Since then, new clusters in serious gaming/digital simulation, and sustainable energy/green technologies, and advanced medical technologies with high growth capacity have been identified.

To buttress the assertions articulated by Mr. Hayes of RTRP (“... as the universities go, so goes North Carolina”), NC State was integrally involved in two major corporate recruitment successes in 2009 that illustrate the distinct value-added by university faculty and staff in economic development projects.

Research Triangle Park’s headquarters facility served as a fitting venue last December at which Madhu Beriwal, founder and chairman of a sophisticated 25-year old risk management enterprise named IEM, publicly announced that she was moving her corporate headquarters from Baton Rouge, Louisiana to RTP, creating 430 new jobs at an average wage of over \$60,000/year. That very same afternoon John Eagleson, senior vice president with Deutsche Bank, presided at a ceremony dedicating their new information technologies operation in Cary, where they will create 319 new jobs at an average annual

compensation of over \$88,000. IEM will absorb approximately 13,000 square feet of multipurpose space on a four-year term commencing June 1, while DB signed a commitment on 35,000sf of Class A office space for five years.

Our NC State Economic Development Partnership is fully committed to not only sustaining this effort to promote and enhance new job creation, but also want to take it to another level as we partner with UNC faculty talent and expertise statewide to attract quality economic development to this great state. Stay tuned as we ramp up and pursue new jobs and new investment that will find a very comfortable home in North Carolina thanks in large measure to the readers of this paper who produce high quality industrial, office, multipurpose, research and development, commercial and residential facilities to house the growth that we expect.

*Thomas J. White is Director of the Economic Development Partnership at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. For additional information on the program to recruit and retain corporate business in the state, contact Tom at [tom\\_white@ncsu.edu](mailto:tom_white@ncsu.edu) or call 919-515-5353.*

## GUEST COLUMN

# The Importance of Google Analytics for Your Website

BY RANDALL GRAHAM – Special to  
The Charlotte/Triangle/Triad Construction News

Most businesses have a website...but can they tell how well it's performing? How many, or even who has visited your site in the last week? Your site may look good to you and your employees, but how effective is it in delivering your message and keeping customers/viewers on your site. I've got some good news and some great news. Good News = Google Analytics. Great News = IT'S FREE!!!

In a nutshell, Google Analytics will allow you to see how visitors found your site and how they navigate through it.

*How visitors navigate your site:* Suppose you're a plumbing contractor, and you've laced your website with specific keywords for the services you provide for SEO (Search Engine Optimization) purposes. With Google Analytics, you'll be able to determine which keywords customers typed into Google's search engine and were directed to your site. Some may have found you by using the phrase "affordable plumber" while others found you by typing in "broken faucet." Also, if you want to get involved with Search Engine Marketing (paid advertisements at the top and right hand side of all search results), Google An-

alytics will help you better determine where to spend those dollars.

*How visitors navigate through your site:* One of the coolest things about Google Analytics is that it provides you with tons of data for anything and everything you would ever care to know. When designing your website, it's always important to keep in mind what your customers want to see. Too often sites are created with the company, not the actual customer, in mind. In looking through the data Google Analytics provides, it shows you exactly what pages within your website viewers are going to more frequently...a key indicator for which ones you should highlight on your site. To learn more about Google Analytics visit [www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics). To educate yourself more on the advantages and how to get the most out of your analytics visit [www.google.com/analytics/education.html](http://www.google.com/analytics/education.html). Make sure when you are designing or re-designing your site, you use this data to enhance the experience of the viewer.

*Randall Graham is Director of Marketing for 123Triad Web Design, headquartered in Raleigh, NC. For more information about Web Design and Web Marketing, visit [www.123triad.com](http://www.123triad.com) or call 1-800-720-0816*

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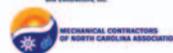
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