



NORTH CAROLINA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (NCMEP)

The North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP) provides manufacturing extension services that enhance the productivity, innovative capacity and technological performance of US-based manufacturing firms. It also works to strengthen the global competitiveness of small- and medium-sized manufacturers. NCMEP's team of professional regional extension agents and experienced technical specialists engage and provide solutions to hundreds of manufacturers across the state. NCMEP links its manufacturing partners to a network of national expertise and suppliers, creating an innovation hub and knowledge base for the state of North Carolina. NCMEP is administered by the NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) as a National Institute of Standards and Technology Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership center for the state.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2023



\$250.9 Million

Total Increased/Retained Sales



2,472

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



\$360.8 Million

New Client Investments



\$18.8 Million

Cost Savings

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3C STORE FIXTURES EXCELS WITH A MARKETING SYSTEMS REVAMP THROUGH THE NC STATE UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY EXPANSION SOLUTIONS MARKETING LAUNCHPAD PROGRAM

ABOUT 3C STORE FIXTURES. 3C Store Fixtures of Wilson, North Carolina, once known as Carolina Cabinet Company, is renowned for providing high-quality store fixtures and display solutions. With a commitment to enhancing the shopping experience, 3C Store Fixtures offers a comprehensive range of products designed to meet the diverse needs of retailers like Massage Envy, Orange Theory, UPS, Walgreens, and more. Their fixtures, including shelving units, display racks, and signage solutions, are crafted with precision and attention to detail.

THE CHALLENGE. When NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) regional manager, Anna Mangum, approached the company in 2020 with the opportunity to participate in the marketing support program with the assistance of the Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) grant, President Michael Jones reluctantly accepted, saying, "I was willing to check the program out with the help of a grant but was wholly opposed to spending our money on it. I didn't think marketing was necessary and you're going to have a hard time convincing any company meeting their goals with no marketing why they need it. Now, you'll have a hard time convincing me to stop."

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. With help from NC State University IES, part of the MEP National Network™, 3C Store Fixtures created an extensive marketing strategy through the Industry Expansion Solutions Marketing Launchpad program. This initiative provides a proven process for North Carolina businesses to continually improve their marketing programs, including advertising, promotions, social media and reputation building. 3C repurposed their website and redesigned collateral materials to reposition the brand. 3C now launches regular social media ad campaigns, creating marketing pushes that bolster customer relations and build brand awareness. Return on investment (ROI) engagement data is collected on each campaign to validate the time and expense.

Jones says his perspective on marketing did a complete 180° with the Marketing Launchpad program. The strategic optimization of algorithms and targeted advertising campaigns amplified their exposure and generated direct feedback. Jones remarked, "Marketing matters because people see it. The exposure we've achieved has increased exponentially. We have fine-tuned the algorithm and the ads are hitting the exact people we want to be our customers. I get phone calls saying they saw an ad or a video. If we stopped marketing today, we would lose all the momentum we'd built."

"It's hard to imagine where we are today versus where we came from; it's an entirely different company. My advice to other companies with the opportunity to participate in the Industry Expansion Solutions Marketing Launchpad program is to listen. You don't know what you don't know. I advocate for this marketing program because I've seen our success from it."

-Michael Jones, President



RESULTS



\$150,000 in new investment



\$32,000 in cost savings



\$15,000 in training

