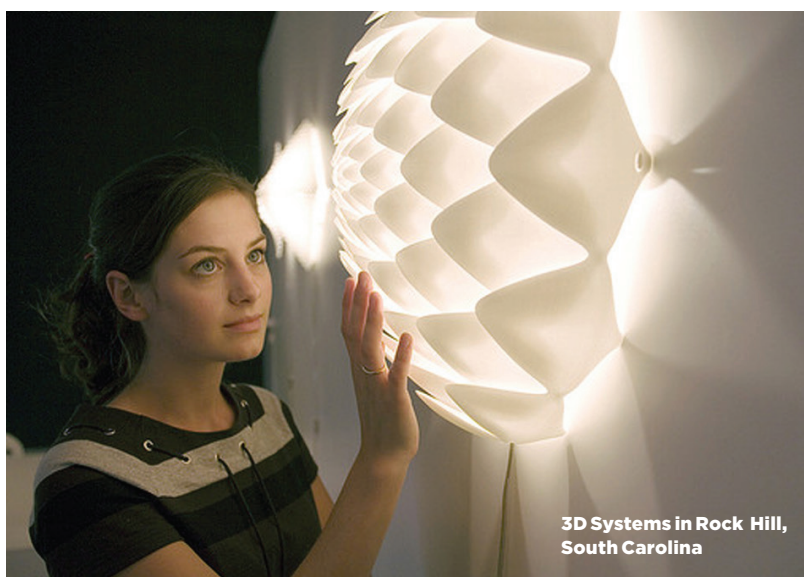


THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

Thanks to advanced manufacturing in Charlotte USA



3D Systems in Rock Hill, South Carolina

By Gina Carroll Howard

★ | Avi Reichental wants to disrupt the status quo “in a good way.” As president and CEO of 3D Systems, chances are he will. After all, Reichental works for the company whose founder literally invented 3D printing three decades ago.

“We are working hard to make the technology simpler, so anyone wanting to unleash their creativity can create in 3D,” Reichental says. “We can offer complexity free of charge.”

Reichental is convinced that advanced manufacturing is a “game changer,” offering what he calls “design without constraints.” He says that for an advanced manufacturing company like 3D Systems to succeed, it must be located in a pro-business climate where entrepreneurial thinking thrives and the overall cost of doing business is competitive. That’s why seven years ago the company relocated its global headquarters from California

to Rock Hill, South Carolina.

“The Charlotte region provided the infrastructure, the entrepreneurial makeup, and intellectual density from which to draw so we can grow,” Reichental says. “It has given us a more competitive platform on which to build our business.”

CTL Packaging USA CEO Manuel Diez agrees that advanced manufacturing is more than equipment, robots, and computers. He says it’s a mind-set involving continuous training, researching, and testing to manufacture products better, faster, and cheaper.

In March, the Spanish company opened the global headquarters of its Easy Supply Tubes line in Gaston County for many of the reasons that 3D Systems chose York County. Plus, Diez

says the Charlotte region has the infrastructure that an advanced manufacturing plastics company needs: the Polymer Center of Excellence, a specialized workforce and tool shops, an international airport, 70 percent of the U.S. market within 1,000 miles, and more than 200 million consumers within a day’s drive.

By 2018, CTL expects to employ 150 people and manufacture about 250 million plastic tubes for the high-end cosmetics industry. And the plant is built for expansion. “We are committed both to growing CTL Packaging and the region in tandem,” Diez says.

The future also looks bright for 3D Systems. The company is developing what Reichental calls Charlotte USA’s “ecosystem” by providing area youth with competitive skills and technology. Since relocating, its business has tripled in revenue, employees, and facilities. And 3D just opened a second manufacturing plant here.

Diez believes that as the economy rebounds, U.S. manufacturing will experience a renaissance. Both CTL and 3D are betting that Charlotte USA will be at its center. ★



3D SYSTEMS PHOTO BY ANJA JAHN