



How to Create More At-Bat Opportunities

“If we can stay in the game longer, the more at-bats we get and the more likely we are to win the project,” says Phil Smith, senior location solutions manager for JobsOhio. “Site selection is a process of elimination. If you can’t answer potential customers’ questions with certainty, your site will be eliminated. Consultants and companies simply don’t have time to wait for answers.”



Getting to market faster, better, smarter, cheaper

“The timeframe for clients to select a site for a new facility is so fast and furious,” says Tonya L. Crist, site selection consultant and owner of InSite. “Companies are pressured by demands from their clients and everybody is trying to get to market faster, better, smarter, and cheaper. That puts even more pressure on the economic development sector to have sites ready for immediate use.”



Ohio has U.S.’s most stringent and comprehensive site authentication process

Three years ago, JobsOhio launched SiteOhio, a one-of-a-kind site selection evaluation program that takes the typical site-certification process several steps further, putting potential project sites through a comprehensive review and analysis just like an actual client vetting process, and granting authentication only to sites that meet specific criteria.



SiteOhio authentication guarantees that:

- All due diligence studies have been completed, including Phase I Environmental Report, Geotechnical Study, Wetlands Delineation, Phase I Cultural Resources Study, and Endangered Species Analysis
- Authorizing state and federal entities have reviewed and provided concurrence with the findings of the due diligence studies
- All major utilities (electric, gas, water, sewer, and fiber) are on-site with verified excess capacities
- The site is free of incompatible uses, with no limitations or insurance liability based on surrounding properties

Authentication delivers speed, risk reduction, and cost-saving benefits

SiteOhio authentication means that a site is ready for a company to begin construction on day one and is guaranteed to minimize risk, increase speed to market, and save companies time and money. The SiteOhio program eliminates the need for companies to spend time and money to analyze a location and push it through the approval process. With SiteOhio authentication, companies are taking on less risk while streamlining development and alleviating stress on the company's timeline and bottom line.

Rock Mill site reaps benefits of authentication process

Rock Mill Industrial Park was in the second wave of 20 sites selected for the SiteOhio program. Located in the Fairfield 33 Corridor, Rock Mill was initially developed in the 1990s, encompasses more than 500 acres, and was already Ady-Austin Certified Shovel Ready. Years of successful development had reduced Rock Mill's developable land to 185 acres, which was the portion included in the SiteOhio authentication program.



Magna Seating selected a SiteOhio authenticated site at Rock Mill Industrial Park in Lancaster, Ohio, for construction of its new automotive parts manufacturing facility, which will employ 300 workers.

and assembly, primarily for SUV second- and third-row seats. The first phase of investment includes approximately \$10 million for building construction and \$15 million for equipment. Projected employment count is 300.

JobsOhio's site authentication made it easy for Magna to find Rock Mill

Crist remarks, "Magna found Rock Mill because it was ready. Lancaster's leadership was willing to do what it took to get the dirt and the infrastructure ready." Justin T. Bickle, director, project management for Columbus 2020, notes, "Companies are not coming to sites because they are authenticated, it's because of the readiness of the site. Lancaster had already done an incredible job of establishing tools to prepare real estate product for client consideration, and that facilitated a smooth SiteOhio authentication process." Bickle further explains that the SiteOhio authentication process is a valuable tool because it uses the same process and requirements that site selection consultants apply.

"From an economic development standpoint, site authentication provides intel on the site—we know everything about it, what it can and can't do," says Michael Pettit, director of economic development for the City of Lancaster. "The customer's fears are gone. They know the site has gone through a rigorous process and trust that it's a good site."

Automotive parts manufacturer selects Rock Mill site

The first site developed after Rock Mill achieved SiteOhio authentication is Magna Seating's new manufacturing facility, which is projected to perform stamping, welding,



Spec building helped seal the deal

Not only did Lancaster have industrial sites ready for immediate development, the Lancaster Port Authority had an adjacent 50,400-square-foot spec building that Magna Seating is using to house a production line that needs to start up immediately.

The spec building will become available in February 2020, after Magna moves into its permanent facility. The building features 28' clear height; 1200 amp, 480 voltage existing electric service and 4" gas line (both can be increased); and was one of the first sites designated as AT&T Fiber Ready.

OEC and South Central Power grants bridged funding gap

"To support Rock Mill's authentication effort, South Central Power Company and its generation and transmission provider Ohio's Electric Cooperatives (OEC), together awarded a \$15,000 Site and Community Development Grant, which paid for updated Phase I reports, drone footage, and marketing materials," says Kyle Heavrin, director of energy services and business development for South Central Power Company.

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Power reliability initiatives prepare Rock Mill for future growth

According to Heavrin, the Rock Mill site is currently served by two distribution substations and near the time Magna comes online, an additional source from another distribution substation will be connected for enhanced reliability and redundancy. When improvements are completed, Rock Mill should be a benchmark area for reliability.



To minimize electrical blinks and outages, South Central Power Company engineered the capability to back-feed the industrial park from nearby substations and has a long-standing robust maintenance program to continually upgrade or replace older components and wiring. Overall system capacity is monitored and substations in high-growth areas are prepared in advance for additional transformers and capacity.

Rock Mill sites ready for immediate construction of food and beverage processing, glass-related industries, packaging, and manufacturing facilities

Rock Mill benefits from access to Lancaster's vast water resources, new wastewater processing plant, and very reliable electrical service. The sites are particularly well-suited for food and beverage processing, glass production and other packaging processes, advanced manufacturing facilities, and other users seeking:

- Abundant water from huge underground aquifers with two well fields; 2.0-million-gallon water storage dedicated to the industrial park; 8.0 MGD capacity
- City-operated non-profit gas utility with an 8-inch, 200-psi natural gas pipeline with 18,000 Dth per day capacity and access to multiple interstate pipelines from the Wyoming Basin, Gulf of Mexico, and Utica/Marcellus
- Highly reliable electrical service fed by five substations in the immediate area including three distribution and two transmission
- Solar power – a 4-acre, 650 KW solar farm is located in Rock Mill Industrial Park; the solar project is a collaboration between OEC, South Central Power and the Lancaster Area CIC

- Transportation – immediately-adjacent to limited-access four-lane highway; geographically located within a one-day drive of 60% of the U.S. population

Lancaster readies additional Rock Mill sites

With only 100 acres total remaining in the SiteOhio authenticated portion of Rock Mill and the largest parcel containing 15 acres, Lancaster has the adjacent 122-acre Ruble parcel just one letter away from SiteOhio authentication. An additional 82-acre site is in an early stage of marketing and development.

Authenticated SiteOhio sites see client visits increase 130%, submission rates jump 300%

“The first 18 SiteOhio authenticated sites experienced more than 300% increase in frequency of submission for projects, and more than 130% increase in customer-requested visits when comparing 2015 to 2018,” shares JobsOhio’s Phil Smith. “The JobsOhio stakeholder group and InSite developed this process to be as comprehensive as possible in order to keep Ohio properties on site selectors’ radar, to stay in the game longer, get more at-bat opportunities, and win more projects for Ohio. The SiteOhio authentication program elevates the entire economic development game in Ohio.”

For more information about Rock Mill Industrial Park and others served by Ohio’s Electric Cooperatives, contact Dennis Mingyar at (614) 430-7876 or dmingyar@ohioec.org.

Additional resources:

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Buckeye Power and Ohio's Electric Cooperatives can help with:

- Comprehensive site and building portfolios
- Preliminary site studies
- Site search tours
- Assistance in identifying financial incentives
- Electric rate analyses
- Community profiles
- State and local government contacts
- Contractor introductions

Look for Us:

Site Selectors Guild Fall Forum
September 9-11, 2019
Dallas, Texas

Fall 2019 Industrial Asset Management Council (IAMC) Professional Forum
September 14-18, 2019
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA) Annual Summit
October 7-9, 2019
Dublin, Ohio

National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) Annual Conference
November 6-8, 2019
Kansas City, Missouri



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