

An Inside Perspective

Something that is always a great experience, and chock-full of learning, is taking a tour of a business. If you have a fascination for business like I do, going into and getting a hands-on tour of a business, especially by the founders, is an amazing learning tool. We do this with the Entrepreneurs Organization EO at our conferences in the different cities that host us. We also do this in the local chapters, getting in to see businesses where our members may have connections, which allows us to get the quarter tour, instead of the nickel tour.



We have done this in Knoxville with the owners of Jewelry Television, with Michael Strickland, founder of Bandit Lights, and with Jim Clayton, of Clayton Homes. These all have been amazing experiences and I always come away with something that is profound with each one. Well, we did it again this past week when my EO Forum group went on our annual retreat in Chattanooga, TN, where we visited the Volkswagen Plant that was finished and went online there a few years back.

This tour was extra informative and exciting, even though we didn't get the founder or owner perspective. All of us in the Forum were pretty much blown away at what they are doing there to be classified as the most technologically advance plant in North America. I will give you a few bits of the highlights that I got out of the tour and perspective as to why it was so impressive.

This 2 million square foot plant is LEED Certified, which

means that it meets the highest standards in many areas, cost less to operate and increases the efficiency of the building. They reduce water and energy consumption, which was apparent to us because they don't use air or heat in the building. The insulation they use is extreme and the roofs are made with some light-colored, reflective coating that allows this to happen. We were very comfortable in the plant when the temp outside was 85.

In addition, they use their rainwater to flush all the toilets and the toilets flush at .8 of a gallon. The tiles on the floor are made out of recycled coke bottles. They have their own special academy that is connected to the college programs in the area, and when you graduate from the academy, you are guaranteed a job. The plant comes with a fitness director to set up workout programs, and provide yoga and other boot camp type of workouts. The plant pushes out 150,000 Volkswagen Passats a year and has the capacity to make three different models and up to 230,000 cars.

Lastly, the plant is not unionized, which according to the tour guide, the people are very adamant about remaining non-union. A few have left Germany to work in this plant to get away from union structure. The plant has more 33,600 solar panels on 65 acres that can generate up to 12.5 percent of the plant energy. The most exciting thing about walking around was seeing the people work with the robots, which at times, felt like we were in the movie Transformers, given the size and sounds. They have dashboards everywhere to allow the teams to see exactly where they stand in their respective area of staying on track.

This was a great learning experience to see high performing teams in action and to see how technology and people working together can create a solid energy and environmentally conscious productive environment.

Bounceit!™ update: We got an [article](#) this week in [Nibletz](#), and

we have been working to get in front of more people to expose them to the new app and to get feedback to help improve it. We are working to raise money to continue to improve the app and market it our target audience.