

Manufacturer picks Triangle for HQ; CEO predicts 500 jobs

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HZO CEO Simone Maraini

A manufacturer whose waterproofing technology is already featured on big name products from brands such as Nike, Motorola and Dell is relocating its headquarters from Salt Lake City, Utah to Morrisville – a move that could mean 500 jobs in the next four years.

Initially, it means Utah's HZO will be relocating 50 jobs to the new Morrisville facility.

“But we’re going to grow dramatically in the next year,” says CEO Simone Maraini in an interview, predicting 300 employees in 2020.

“And, in 2023, I would say close to 500.”

And it's the area's rich engineering talent pool that won HZO's interest over other locations on the east coast, he says.

HZO develops protective nano coatings aimed at safeguarding and waterproofing electronics – and the rise of the Internet of Things is creating more demand for that mission. And keeping up with that demand requires a tech-centric talent pool, Maraini says.

"In the next two years there will be more than 30 billion devices in the IoT space," Maraini says. "So protecting these devices becomes critical."

John Boyd of The Boyd Company in New Jersey says HZO's pick of the Triangle “really underscores not just the talent assets for the RTP and the high concentration of the IT skill sets,” but also the regions proximity to both automotive and aerospace manufacturing. Applications exist in pharma and medical devices, too, he says – pointing to the proximity of major players in that space as well.

“The reality is, Salt Lake City was a nurturing environment for HZO’s growth, but I think they feel like they have outgrown that market,” he says.

In addition to organic growth, HZO has been growing through acquisitions in recent months. In October, the company announced the acquisition of U.K. waterproof technology firm Semblant. At the time, the firm said the deal would enable HZO “to more quickly introduce additional protection solutions to current and future customers of both companies.” And in January of 2018, the firm announced the acquisition of ZPL Technologies, a Hungarian and U.S. based coating equipment design and manufacturing organization.

HZO expects to be fully operational in Raleigh by late summer.



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