

BACKGROUND

The Cheshire and Warrington 4.0 (CW 4.0) project has been supporting an array of SMEs across the region for learning more about Industry 4.0 technologies and developing seamless pathways for digital adoption.

Innovative technologies such as AI, virtual reality and machine learning have helped an array of manufacturing SMEs in developing greater resistance to ever-changing industrial challenges, whilst supporting growth and further investment.

Business leaders have gained access to unique capabilities from an array of project partners in addition to utilising the world-class facilities available to them for exploring innovative technologies that can help in developing new and existing products, evolving business strategies and upskilling their teams.

IMPACT

Since launching in early 2021, the CW4.0 project has supported over 131 businesses, with 10% of all businesses so far being classified as start-ups. CW4.0 has helped these businesses to capture the opportunity to start on the right foot and improve business planning and investment from an early stage of their development to offer the confidence to move on.

Some examples of the projects that have taken place so far include Autac who used scanning technologies for developing interactive simulations to help in decision-making for developing the new layout for their new factory to ensure their product line and efficiencies remain as high as possible, particularly during a transition period.

Collectively the businesses have generated over 18 new jobs, creating new and local opportunities whilst upskilling their current workforce through a greater understanding of in-house digital skills and capabilities. To date, the project has also seen a number of new product developments with 29 new products being launched to market and an additional 52 products being launched internally.

Currently, businesses of all sizes have had to readapt and respond to several changing variables including that of environmentally conscious consumers as Faraday Battery has reached out to CW4.0 to support the development of their larger electric batteries, aimed at supporting larger vehicles in addition to utilising machine learning for improved predictive maintenance, streamlining any repair or replacement work needed on their vehicles in the future.

Other businesses who have taken advantage of the funded support include flavour experts, dental studios, canal boat manufacturers and life science experts, all learning more about innovative technologies and the bespoke opportunities they can provide in addition to helping to overcome industrial challenges.

“Since it started in 2021, the Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub have seen the benefits and results for local businesses who have worked with CW4.0. For SMEs, being able to access the expertise, cutting-edge research, and latest technology through this programme, has allowed them to safely explore opportunities that they may otherwise have not pursued. CW4.0 has helped these businesses develop their understanding and confidence in utilising the latest technology for tangible business benefits.”

– Paul Chapman, Growth Hub Manager at Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub