



## BUFFALO NIAGARA SUCCESS STORY

# Sentient Science

Investment: \$10,500,000 Jobs: 86

### COMPANY OVERVIEW:

Sentient Science is a materials informatics software development company originally headquartered in Idaho. Founded in 2000, the company invented a testing technology that replaces the physical testing of materials and components used in the manufacture of helicopters, bridges, medical devices, wind turbines and other products. Sentient's process uses simulators and sensors to determine how the materials will react under various stresses and determines when they will need replacement. Its sensors and software perform these tests in the virtual realm, saving clients time and money.

### PROJECT CHALLENGE:

After years of research, Sentient was ready to commercialize its technology and relocate to a new community offering a large qualified workforce, specifically PhD and Masters graduates in engineering, software development and materials science. Finding suitable space for the company's headquarters was another key concern. For both customer and staff recruitment purposes, Sentient desired an elegant, noteworthy building -- not simply utilitarian. The company also required a location near a reputable university in order to form a strategic partnership. These factors led Sentient to consider either relocating to Buffalo Niagara and a partnership with the University at Buffalo or to West Lafayette, Indiana and a partnership with Purdue University.

### PROJECT SOLUTION:

The real key to this project's success was finding suitable space for Sentient's headquarters and to engage with Empire State Development (ESD) for incentives to help with the planned undertaking. Invest Buffalo Niagara assisted Sentient to become a "Priority Project" as part of the Regional Economic Development Council's strategic plan to Governor Cuomo.

During this phase, UB announced plans to establish a new Center of Excellence in Materials Informatics (CMI), exactly the field in which Sentient established itself as an industry leader. The university indicated industry partnerships would be a key component to the new CMI. When Invest Buffalo Niagara facilitated Sentient's introduction to UB leaders, it was evident that both parties stood to benefit from the partnership.

Shortly after its CMI announcement, the UB Foundation-owned Butler Mansion was vacated by UB's Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and it was suggested that Sentient might occupy the space for a limited period of time. The space met Sentient's exacting criteria and ultimately became its new home.

It was the business relationships with the local community, the opportunity to partner with UB, and the unique and elegant space that made Sentient choose Buffalo Niagara for its new headquarters. The project represents the creation of approximately 86 new, high paying technology jobs, many of which requiring PhD-level education. Ultimately, the company will invest between \$10-18M dollars locally for equipment and building improvements over the next 3-5 years.



*"We believe we can make more money faster, we can grow faster, we can hire people—and we can participate in the economy—faster by being here in Buffalo than any other city in the country."*

– Ward Thomas, President and CEO Sentient Science

