

Bringing Industrial Innovation From Romania to America: Strategic Expansion Analysis of RAPTronic

Executive Summary: EBS & RAPTronic

Raptronic Process Engineering (RPE) is a Romanian engineering company with over three decades of experience delivering turnkey process and project management solutions for clean industries — including the food, beverage, and chemical sectors. The firm specializes in the design, integration, and implementation of customized systems for raw material handling and processing. Supported by a team of more than 130 professionals and a growing portfolio of international projects, RPE has built a reputation for technical excellence, customer focus, and sustainable growth.

RPE's collaboration with the European Business Society (EBS) at Duke University began in Fall 2024 through the InnovX MoonShotX accelerator, where EBS consultants supported participating companies with U.S. market expansion research and strategic analysis. What started as an accelerator engagement evolved into a dedicated consulting partnership — including EBS's participation alongside RPE at the SelectUSA Foreign Direct Investment Conference in May 2025 — and continued through Fall 2025 with an extended research and advisory project focused on U.S. market entry and state selection strategy.

Background & Objectives

At the start of EBS's engagement, Raptronic Process Engineering (RPE) operated across Europe and maintained prior experience in the U.S. market before the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of its renewed growth strategy, RPE aimed to enter the U.S. industrial sector in force and sought support through the InnovX MoonShotX accelerator.

EBS was assigned to assist RPE in the market research and strategic evaluation process, providing structured analysis to guide decisions on U.S. re-entry, location selection, and expansion feasibility.

Client Objective: Identify and assess the most promising U.S. entry points by comparing economic, regulatory, and logistical factors.

EBS Objective: Provide a structured framework for evaluating U.S. state attractiveness, industry clustering, and market access feasibility.

Challenge Highlights:

- Limited Brand Awareness outside the EU
- Navigating varying state-level tax incentives and industrial regulations.
- Understanding local workforce and logistics infrastructure needs

Methodology

1. RPE General Analysis
EBS worked with RPE to understand their business, its objectives for US expansion, key success metrics, and other pertinent metrics.
2. Preliminary Screening
50-state macroeconomic and sectoral filtering.
3. Incentive & Tax Analysis
Review of state corporate tax regimes, FDI incentives, workforce programs.
4. Logistics Infrastructure & Mapping
Access to necessary industrial corridors, supplier & client proximity, travel times, state-by-state worker compensation expectations & RPE-relevant expertise.
5. Strategic Recommendation
Synthesis of opportunity risk and incentive data with 3 state recommendations.
6. SelectUSA Conference Support
Accompanying RPE to meetings with States' D.O.C. representatives.
7. RPE Comparative Growth Analysis
Comparison of RPE's prospective growth under the following scenarios: EU only growth, EU growth vs US growth across different states & using different entry strategies. The objective was to determine both whether a US expansion makes sense relative to no US expansion, and to determine if indeed a US expansion is recommended which states to prioritize.
8. US, EU Market Growth Analysis
Broader US & EU market growth analysis over near future to evaluate macroeconomic landscape.
9. Conclusion
Final delivery of findings, key states & market entry strategies identified.

Throughout this process EBS & RPE worked closely together, learning continually about RPE's needs and adapting our research to best fit their use case.

Findings & Insights

The Great Lakes states offered conditions well aligned with RPE's operational profile, combining strong industrial bases with competitive incentive programs. Among them, Ohio emerged as a leading candidate due to its business-friendly regulatory environment, central location, skilled workforce, and robust logistics infrastructure.

Outcomes & Impacts

- RPE's research into US market expansion was accelerated at no financial cost as a result of its partnership with EBS, achieving EBS' external mission.
- EBS achieved its internal mission, providing its members with invaluable work experience and exposure to European markets and innovation.
- EBS strengthened its expertise in evaluating state-level incentive programs and understanding the complexities involved in the international expansion of a business.

Reflections & Broader Implications

This project stands as a significant success for EBS and a model of effective collaboration between academia and industry. We are deeply appreciative of our partnership with Raptronic Process Engineering and remain available to support the company's continued international growth.

Our engagement was strengthened by the professionalism and insight of RPE's leadership, whose openness and collaboration were instrumental in achieving impactful results. At EBS, we recognize that successful project delivery depends on a strong, transparent partnership — a principle fully reflected in our work with RPE.

About the European Business Society at Duke

The European Business Society (EBS) at Duke University is a student-led, pro-bono consulting organization dedicated to connecting Duke students with Europe's business landscape.

Internally, EBS provides its members with hands-on exposure to international business through applied consulting experience.

Externally, EBS delivers world-class research and advisory services to its clients, supporting initiatives such as U.S. market expansion, site selection analysis, pitch deck development, translations, and strategic consulting across diverse sectors.