



Columbus Chamber

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The State of the Young Professional

November 13, 2008

The State of the Young Professional

Presenters

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Attracting and retaining young professionals

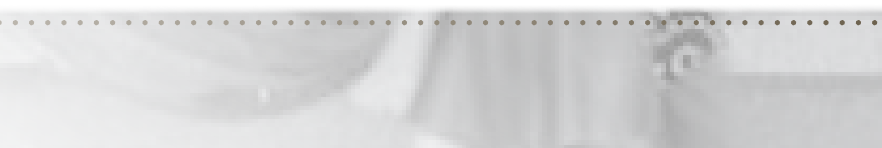
Why?

The Columbus region has grown very well in the last few years and is expected to continue to do so. In addition, the region has gained more than 140,000 people since 2000, and currently stands at more than 1.75 million. In the next 25 years, the region is likely to gain more than a half-million more residents. But as the Central Ohio population ages, the population of the age group between 35- and 49-year-olds will shrink. Ten years from now, due to lower birth rates a generation ago, there will be 16,000 fewer people in that age group in our region than there are today. Moreover, in 10 years, the Columbus Region's prime-age workforce (those between 20 and 60 years old) will be growing at two-thirds its current rate and, in 20 years, one-third the current rate. National-level projections are even more dire. In the 1990s, 90% of American cities lost talent. Only 10% had a net in-migration of talent.

What does that mean? **Our region needs young professionals to sustain its workforce.** These professionals have specific desires from the community in which they live and the companies with whom they work. As a community, we must attract, retain and engage this energetic, educated and highly mobile workforce.

Where does Columbus stand?

- The Columbus region boasts 20 institutions of higher learning.
We grow talent.
- The Columbus region has six Fortune 500 corporations and a strong entrepreneurial spirit.
We have access to jobs.
- The Columbus region has a strong quality of life.
We're an attractive place to live and work.



Background

In fall 2006, The Columbus Chamber, in partnership with Mayor Coleman, Columbus City Council, Franklin County, JPMorgan Chase, Experience Columbus, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and the Ohio Department of Development, launched a three-part strategy to Attract and Retain Talent in the Columbus Region. The strategy focused on building the area's local workforce through internships, attracting and retaining young professionals, and assisting area companies in marketing Columbus to potential employees.

Focus on young professionals

Rebecca Ryan, 2EO of Next Generation Consulting was retained to recommend strategies to attract and retain young professionals. From December 2006 to February 2007, Ryan initiated research of Columbus and its young professionals (age 25 to 34) including: four focus groups with 60 area young professionals; an online survey that attracted responses from the area's young professionals and graduates of area colleges who had moved away from Columbus; peer-to-peer interviews with nearly 60 local young professionals; a review of community assets and opportunities including arts, entertainment, culture, and downtown living; and a review of young professional communication networks such as blogs, the Internet, area media sources, and young professional organizations.

In April 2007 Ryan presented recommendations in the areas of ***convincing*** young professionals to return to Columbus, ***connecting*** the region's young professionals, and developing the ***city*** to be attractive to young professionals. Ryan's research and recommendations are available www.nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/columbus/. In August 2007 the Chamber published a report of activity and results (see www.columbus.org/media-center/publications.php).

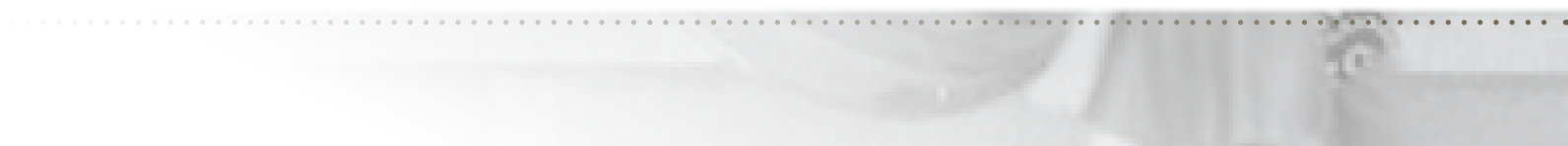
Making progress

As a community we've made even more progress since that report. Here are just a few highlights.

Convince young professionals to return to Columbus

- A Chamber-produced video that highlights “the Best of Everything” Columbus has to offer, was e-mailed to nearly 900 young professionals and former residents who had indicated an interest in returning to Columbus.
- Chamber Web site, www.liveworkplayColumbus.com, provides information a relocatee needs including links to neighborhoods, jobs, demographics, arts and entertainment.

Connect

- A Manager of Young Professionals was hired to help young professionals get connected in Columbus.
 - Presidents of more than 50 local young professionals organizations meet routinely to share information.
 - An online directory of young professional organizations – “Connect with Young Professionals” - and contacts is housed on the Columbus Chamber Web site.
 - Event listings and volunteer opportunities are distributed weekly to almost 1,000 area young professionals.
 - The Chamber is providing individualized services to help local companies to help connect their young professionals.
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City development

- Mayor Coleman appointed a Young Professionals Commission (now Create Columbus Commission) to advise the city on issues. The 34-member group of young leaders has worked on issues including a Franklinton re-development project and downtown recycling program. (This report can be found at <http://www.columbus.org/about-columbus/create-columbus-commission/index.php>.)
- The Chamber launched YP Exchanges to connect young professionals and community leaders in discussions of policy and community progress including Downtown Streetcars, development of the Scioto Mile, a plan for passenger rail in Ohio, and the personal and professional benefits of mentoring.
- Downtown development projects including Lifestyle Communities, Edwards and Arena District initiatives are underway to develop affordable downtown housing options clustered in areas with attractive amenities. Bike paths have been added throughout the community and the first dog park was created.

Next steps

There's more work ahead and the Chamber has a game plan. Want to get engaged? See below for available resources and contacts.

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Young Professionals Connections
www.columbus.org

Rebecca Ryan's Research
www.nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/columbus

Action plan and milestones
<http://columbus.org/media-center/publications.php>

Create Columbus annual report
<http://www.columbus.org/about-columbus/create-columbus-commission/index.php>

Tell Your Story—Upload a 1-3 minute video about why you're here, what you love and what others should know about the opportunities and quality of life in Columbus.
<http://www.columbus.org/tellyourstory>

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