



SMART GROWTH STRATEGIES

for rural communities. _____





WHAT ARE SMART GROWTH STRATEGIES?

Smart growth strategies look different from one location to the next. For rural communities, it's imperative that it involves an overall approach to development which includes quality of life, jobs, remote work opportunities, diverse housing, transportation options, community engagement, and more.



QUALITY OF PLACE

Quality of place is a must-have. It becomes a virtuous circle; quality of place attracts talented workers; corporate site selectors seek talented workers. Quality of life and availability of talent are two of the biggest drivers for success for rural communities.

January 2022 research by The Brookings Institution has found that community amenities such as recreation opportunities, cultural activities, and excellent services (e.g., good schools and transportation options) are likely more prominent contributors to healthy local economies than traditional “business-friendly” measures.

Talent is the key to attracting companies that are considering an expansion or relocation. Talent is more important than ever before: Corporate decision-makers look at the quality of life in a community or region when considering an expansion or relocation because they know today's top talent wants to live in a community or region with a quality of life.





REMOTE WORK

The economy of rural America is changing, and so must rural economic development. We must embrace the era of remote work or get left behind! Remote work is here to stay because it allows people the flexibility to live where they want, and more.

The desire for freedom is especially strong among younger generations. In a U.S. survey, nearly half of Millennials and Generation Z said if told to return to an office full-time, they'd leave their jobs.



KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Who wants to live in a rural community? People, who want affordable housing and a place to raise their children where they can play outside in their yard without fear of harm, or people wanting their children to grow up near grandparents and extended family.



Millennials are coming to America's small towns partly they're being drawn to hiking and the great outdoors. According to the latest report from the Outdoor Foundation, U.S. participation in outdoor pursuits has increased, with millennials showing the largest boost among all age groups. Millennials search for more affordable housing, larger lots, quality schools, and lower costs all around.

Keeping young people in rural areas has been a topic of concern to rural leaders for years; a Center for Rural Entrepreneurship in Nebraska survey results show that about 50% of youth can picture themselves living in their hometowns in the future. Two of the top reasons given were family ties and that the community was a good place to raise a family. The most-common reason shared for not returning was lack of opportunity.





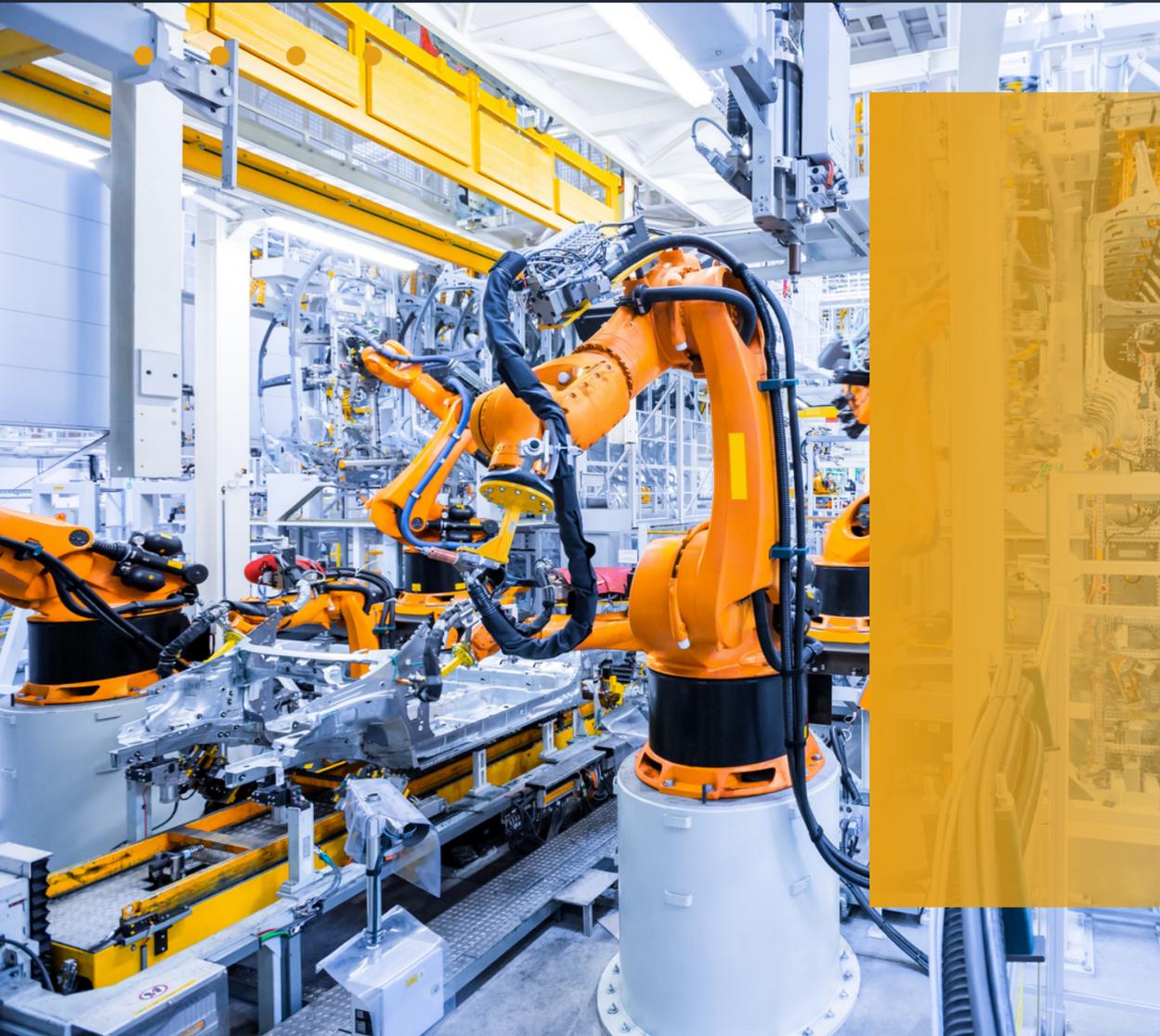
ATTRACTING YOUNG COLLEGE EDUCATED WORKERS

Demonstrating your talent 'pipeline' is essential for your investment promotion strategy. Young college-educated workers need quality jobs, and companies that create quality jobs need talented workers. That begins with workforce development, which first starts with the community leaders and the local high schools and colleges.

The goal is to strengthen the talent pipeline employers need to grow their businesses and to help your workforce build relevant skills and connect to good careers that increase their economic opportunity. When remote workers move to rural areas, they improve the local economy. This stimulates local economic development, supports small businesses, increases tax revenue, and creates more jobs.



MANUFACTURING



The United States is now on track to bring 350,000 overseas manufacturing jobs back to the states, according to a new report from the Reshoring Initiative. Supply chain issues caused by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine are pushing many executives to bring their businesses closer to home.

Robotics and Automation has changed the skill set for manufacturing. The future is going to look like more and more robots working alongside an existing, highly trained workforce. Jobs are evolving, and workers must be aware of that and stay abreast of the trends and necessary skills.

MANUFACTURING



A recent Wall Street Journal article by Austen Hufford states that college-educated workers are seen on the American factory floor. This means new manufacturing jobs are now requiring more advanced skills and degrees as opposed to that of factory workers in previous generations.

To be clear, manufacturers aren't necessarily requiring college degrees, but more companies are offering what the National Skills Coalition calls "middle-skills careers" or jobs that require education that falls between a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree.

OUR SERVICES



- We can do “Boots on the Ground” site visits to take an in-depth look at each community to assess areas of opportunity, determine assets and develop the most strategic program to attract investment.
- We can create a target industry analysis, which is an analytical method to identify a community’s best fit with traded-sector industries – those industries that would most benefit from the community’s assets and be willing to expand and/or relocate to the area – and those industries that bring value to the community in the form of investment, jobs, payroll, and local purchasing.
- We can do a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity.
- We can help you by designing a website specifically for attracting talented workers and corporate site selectors. You only get one chance to make a first impression, and it can be difficult to recover from a negative one. People are visual, and they remember what they see, so your website must be visually appealing, easy to navigate and have content they can find in 3 clicks or less.



SMART GROWTH STRATEGIES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES



“Companies of all sizes now factor quality-of-life variables into their location decisions. Increasingly, talented workers expect to live in communities that have recreational and cultural amenities, are safe, accessible, attractive, and vibrant. It becomes a virtuous circle: Firms seek talented workers, who seek quality places, and quality places continue to attract new residents, jobs, and investment.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN



TRADE SHOWS

Trade shows offer a cost-effective means to meet with key executives from exhibiting companies in your target industry. Attending trade shows and exhibitions is a key activity for almost every economic development organization. We can deliver your message to key executives in exhibiting companies and schedule meetings with those interested.



MARKETING STRATEGY TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Digital outreach campaigns touting your quality of life, outdoor recreation opportunities, and partnerships with colleges and universities providing workforce training, your workforce, and state and local incentives, we vet companies that express an interest, and if they meet your criteria, we will schedule a Zoom meeting.



SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Social media and digital marketing can grow prosperity by both attracting new businesses, and talented workers.

