

Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce Strategic Marketing Plan

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Objective

- **Analyze the employment and business needs of Allegany County and to develop a strategic marketing plan to attract needed professionals to the area**

Marketing Strategies

- **Taking steps to be less reactive and more proactive in attempts to promote and create economic success in Allegany County**
- **Ultimate goal is to support existing businesses and attract new businesses and professionals**
- **Reviewing what skilled professionals value reveals the best way to reach these target markets**

Types of Places Young Professionals Would Live

- **When they do move, college-educated young people are not making drastic changes**
- **Many college-educated young people stay within their geographic comfort zone**
- **College-educated young people who are married and/or have children tend to gravitate toward suburban, small town and rural areas more do than those not married**

Source: CEOs for Cities

Why Young Professionals Relocate

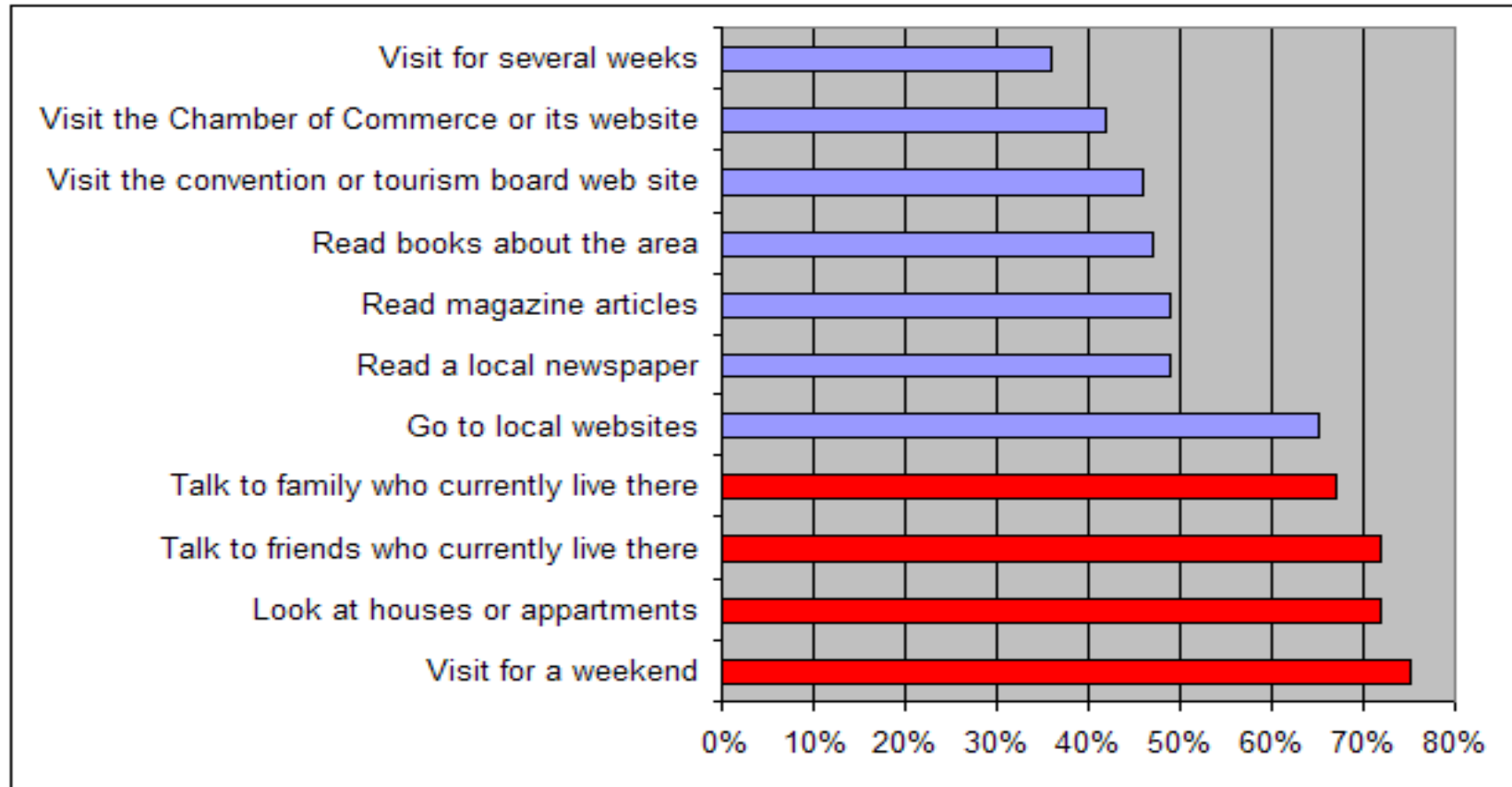
Reasons Why Young Professionals Stay in a Community

Survey Question	Value
Cost of Lifestyle: I want a community where I can afford to live, work and play	97%
Earning: I want a broad choice of places to work and an environment that is friendly to entrepreneurs	90%
Vitality: I value a vibrant community where people are 'out and about' using public parks, trails and recreation areas, attending farmer's markets and living in a healthy community	92%
Learning: I want to plug into a community that offers life-long learning and values being 'smart'	86%
Around Town: I want to live in a community that's easy to get around in; I don't want long commute times	93%
Social Capital: I value living in a diverse community, where people are engaged and involved in community life	88%
After Hours: I want to be able to find authentic local places to have dinner, meet for coffee, hear live music, or just hang out. I want to be able to attend art openings, theatre, and cultural festivals	89%

Source: Next Generation Consulting¹⁴

Where Young Professionals Get Information

Sources of Information



Source: CEOs for Cities

Why Entrepreneurs Relocate

- **Five main reasons for moving businesses:**
 - Labor and work force issues
 - Accessibility to new markets
 - The need to upgrade equipment and facilities
 - A desire to increase cash flow or decrease costs
 - Quality of life considerations

What Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Look For

If a county wants to attract professionals to the area, they must:

- Not be unduly expensive in relation to wages
- Provide good and affordable housing
- Ability to upgrade skills needed (colleges & universities)
- Ability to recruit a quality workforce
- Available real estate for rental or purchase
- Favorable government support
- Available financing
- High return on investment
- Have good schools and recreational/cultural attractions
- Low crime rates
- Shopping availability
- Physical characteristics of geographical area
- Have a reasonable climate

Entrepreneurs

- **Tax incentives**

The Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development offers several tax incentives to Maryland Businesses:

- **Biotechnology Investment Tax Credit**
- **Brownfield's Tax Incentive**
- **Empowerment Zone Incentives**
- **Enterprise Zone Tax Credits**
- **Job Creation Tax Credit**
- **One Maryland Tax Credit**
- **Research and Development Tax Credit**

- **Age: 25 - 34 years**

- **Gender: male**

- **Level of education: technical school/professional business school**

- **Household income: \$40,000 - \$50,000 and \$100,000 and above**

- **Ethnicity: African-American, Hispanic, and unclassified**

Business Development Resources

- **Strategic Assistance Consulting Fund**
 - Counseling
 - Training
 - Financing and certification
 - Programs
- **Western Region Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**
 - Training
 - Counseling

Allegany County

Strengths

- **Unemployment rate is consistent with the U. S. average**
- **Cost of living is about 25% lower than the U. S. average**
- **Air and water quality are high**
- **Crime rates are low for violent and property crimes**
- **More money spent per student on education versus the U. S. average**
- **The pupil/teacher ratio is similar to the U. S. average**
- **Community offers a range of outdoor activities**
- **FSU and AC offer opportunities for life-long learning**
- **FSU and AC also offer access to recently graduated young professionals**
- **Western Maryland Region SBDC is headquartered in LaVale**
- **Thriving arts district in Cumberland**
- **Cultural events, especially through Frostburg State University**

Allegany County

Weaknesses

- **Job growth rate is much lower than the U. S. average**
- **Income per capita is lower than the U. S. average**
- **Household income is lower than the U.S. average**
- **Population growth is stable but stagnating**
- **Percentage of people age 25+ with bachelor's degree is 14.1% vs. Maryland which is 31.4%**

Allegany County

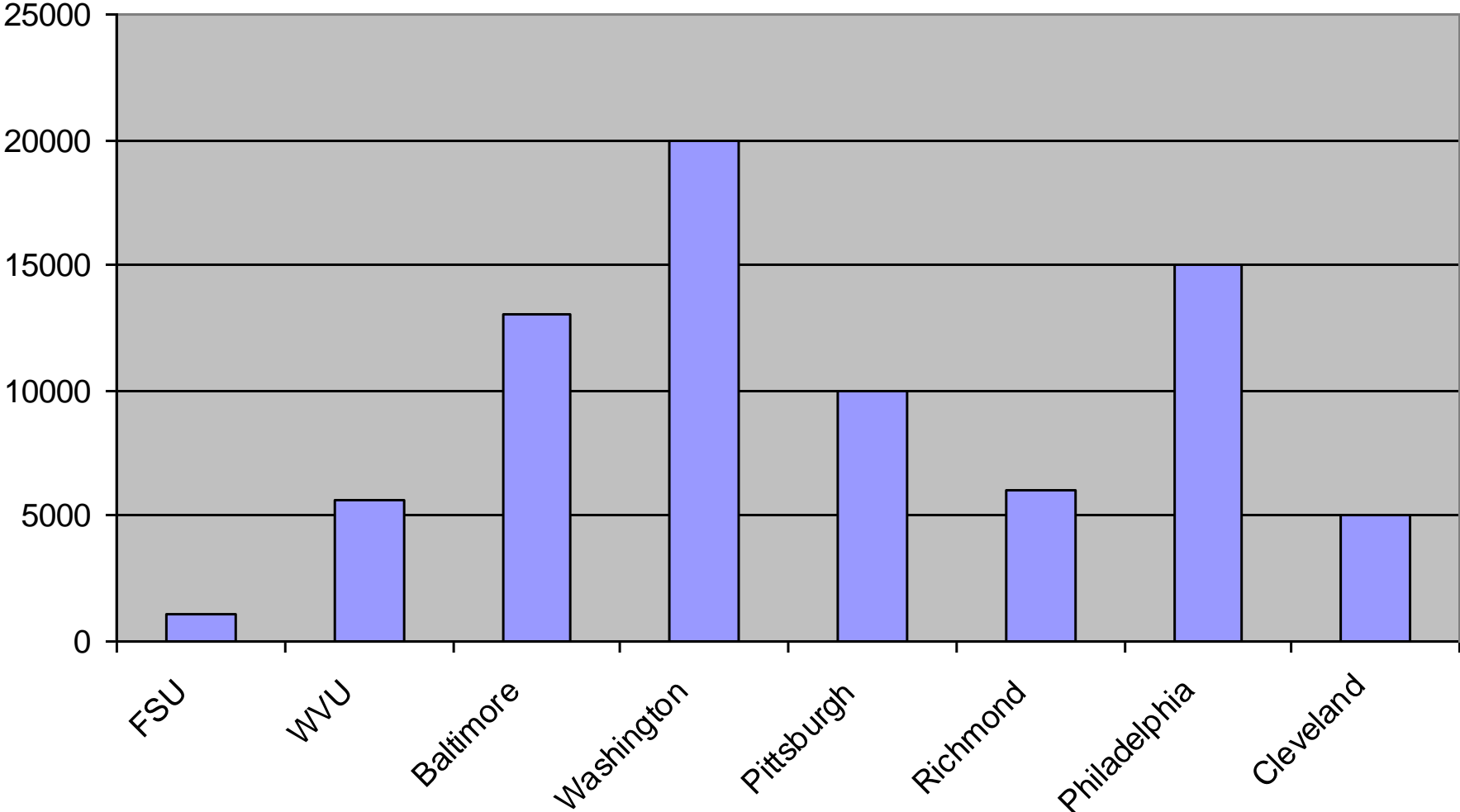
Opportunities

- **Jobs in need include:**
 - lawyers
 - accountants
 - teachers
 - dentists
 - veterinarians
 - engineers
- **Jobs with most openings in Maryland include:**
 - registered nurses
 - office clerks
 - general and operations managers
 - customer service representatives
 - elementary school teachers
 - receptionists and information clerks, etc.
- **Access to cities with postsecondary institutions**

Potential Geographic Market

- **Recruit young professionals and entrepreneurs from a 250-mile radius**
- **Primary Market:**
 - Frostburg State University
 - West Virginia University
 - Baltimore
 - Washington, D. C.
 - Pittsburgh
- **Secondary Market:**
 - Philadelphia
 - Richmond
 - Cleveland

Primary and Secondary Geographic Market College Graduates per Year



Marketing Plan

- **Past marketing objectives**
 - Promote the civic, commercial, industrial, and general welfare of the people of Allegany County
- **New marketing objectives**
 - Marketing the county as a place to live, learn, work, and play

Target Market

- **Primary target market:**
 - Young professionals (ages 25 to 34)
- **Secondary target market:**
 - Young professionals between (ages 21 to 24)
- **Associate's Degree or higher**
- **May have other form of post-secondary education or training**

Target Market

- **Desire to live in a small town or rural area**
 - **Greatest interest from married young professionals and those with kids under age of 18**
- **Desire to stay in region close to where they grew up**
- **Young professionals who have had previous positive exposure to the county**

Positioning Strategy

- **Chamber of Commerce should position county as having:**
 - **Exceptional quality of life**
 - **Access to continued education and training**
 - **Favorable area to work or start a business**

Quality of Life

- **Low cost of living**
- **Availability of outdoor recreational activities like**
 - **state parks**
 - **public hiking/biking trails**
 - **camping and skiing**
- **Arts, entertainment and cultural activities**
- **Farmer's Markets**
- **Great place to raise a family**

Continued Education

- **Institutions like FSU and AC offer chances for professional advancement and/or personal enrichment**

Work or Start a Business

- **Allegany County area could allow relocating businesses to decrease costs from higher wage areas**
- **Maryland provides tax credits and incentives for entrepreneurs**
- **“Qualified Distressed County” incentive**
- **Proximity of Western region SBDC**

Marketing Activities

- **Website marketing**
- **Establish a mentoring program**
- **Establish an internship program**
- **Coordinate marketing with Career Development Centers at universities**
- **Establish a young professional organization within the Chamber**
- **Provide Allegany County information on a CD**
- **Attend business conventions within a 250 mile radius**
- **Attend career fairs within a 250 mile radius**

Website Marketing

- **Internet is the most prevalent non-personal medium from which people draw information about communities**
- **Theme of Allegany County - a great place to “live, learn, work and play”**
- **Model after Allegany Arts Council or Washington County Chamber of Commerce**

Mentoring and Internship Programs

- **Low Cost and effective**
- **Ability to try out new talent on a temporary basis**
- **Businesses benefit from learning new practices and theories taught in college**
- **Research has indicated that getting people to spend time in the area is the most effective way to attract professionals to the area**

Career Development Centers

- **Help companies find candidates with the right qualifications, experience, and personal characteristics to fill open positions**

Young Professional Organization

- **Competing Chambers' of Commerce (Columbus, OH and Sarasota, FL) establish groups to connect young professionals**
- **Engages young professionals in the area to network and collaborate**
- **Plan activities like mixers, luncheons, community volunteer functions**
- **YP group could also help the Chamber formulate marketing plans by providing helpful feedback**

CD Marketing

- **Low cost**
- **Allows multiple means of delivering your message such as:**
 - **Video Clips & Pictures**
 - **Audio Clips**
 - **PowerPoint slides or Flash Media**
 - **Text Documents or Spreadsheets**
 - **Links to Websites**
- **Easy to update or change**
- **Information can be tailored to the needs of the customer**

Business Conventions and Career Fairs

- **Inexpensive and effective**
- **Increases awareness of what the county has to offer**
- **Great way to network with young professionals and potential entrepreneurs**

Recommendation

- **Must pursue the most cost effective ways to attract and retain young professionals and entrepreneurs**
- **65% of young professionals look at local websites as a means for gathering information**
- **[Washington County Chamber](#)**

Primary Recommendation

- **Website could highlight other marketing activities**
 - **Calendar of events could be developed to provide meeting times for the young professional organization**
 - **Forms could be created to allow mentors to be assigned to potential recruits**
 - **Business conventions and career fairs where the Chamber will be representing the County could be highlighted**
 - **Link to website on tourism kiosks**

Secondary Recommendations

- **CD marketing**
- **Young Professional Organization**
- **Coordinating mentoring and internship programs with local universities**
- **Attend business conventions and career fairs within 250 mile radius**

Secondary Recommendations

- **Informative pamphlets positioning county as a place to live, learn, work and play**
- **Place in high traffic areas tourists may visit (close to C & O bike path or state park offices)**

Questions?

Thank you for your time!

**For a copy of the full report you may
email:**

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