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IN MY WORK WITH DOZENS OF COMMUNITIES, I have learned some important lessons that I want to share with you, both because I have come to care deeply about Greater Akron and because nothing would make me more proud than to see the Greater Akron Chamber be wildly successful in its journey to attract and retain talent.

Lesson 1: All great strategies require three things: (1) vision, (2) persistence, and (3) energy.
The Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce has a measure of all three, but a talent attraction and retention plan of the scope called for in this document is a shared venture. At any moment, the Chamber—its leadership, staff, or key investors—may get sidetracked, fall short, or run out of steam. AND THAT’S OKAY. Because when there are enough stakeholders all pulling in the same direction, a single one can occasionally slow down to catch their wind without hurting the progress of the whole. To make deep and lasting change, this plan must call forth the best efforts of multiple stakeholders because the vision, persistence and energy it requires cannot be generated by the Chamber alone.

Lesson 2: The Chamber must focus on its highest and best use (HBU).
Attracting and retaining talent to Greater Akron is an ambitious undertaking. The Chamber must focus its energy and resources on what I call its “highest and best use” (HBU). There are some things that the Chamber does extremely well, and which no other entity can do. These are your HBU’s. Occasionally, the Chamber may be inspired or asked to do things which are not its HBU. When ideas arise, ask yourself, “Is this the Chamber’s HBU?” If yes, focus there. If no, courteously excuse yourself.

In my opinion, the Chamber’s HBU’s in this talent attraction and retention effort are: (1) to STAFF key initiatives (i.e. the Young Professionals’ Network); (2) to CONVENE decision-makers, influentials, and creatives around specific talent-attraction and retention initiatives (i.e. Boomerang Campaign) or events that serve the Chamber’s mission; and (3) to inform and impact policies that make Greater Akron an even more attractive place for young professionals.
Lesson 3: I can’t do this for you.

“Rebecca, I read about what you’re doing in Akron and I just want to tell you to keep up the good work. You’re really making an impact here!” When I receive an email like this, I always want to ask, “What are YOU doing to make an impact in Akron?”

We are coming to the time in our relationship where I’ve taught you all I can about fishin’. Now it’s time for Akronites to pick up the pole and cast. While the City of Akron is the core, I challenge and encourage the communities throughout the Greater Akron region to explore these recommendations—the entire area will reap the benefits.

A lot of my heart has been invested in Greater Akron in the past year. I know it’s not traditional to preface a report by telling you how much I have come to care about your community, your Chamber, and your young professionals. But if I didn’t share that, I wouldn’t be telling the truth.

In a couple of years, I expect I’ll be bragging about Greater Akron’s success from every platform on which I have the privilege of speaking. And I want those audiences to respond, “Oh yeah, Akron. I’ve heard about what they’re doing...”

To your success,

Rebecca Ryan
Next Generation Consulting
Madison, Wisconsin
August, 2005
Project Rationale

Brain Drain in Greater Akron. “Brain drain.” Everyone is talking about it. What does it mean? How does it impact Greater Akron? And what can be done about it?

Broadly, “brain drain” is used to describe a net out-migration of knowledge workers from a geographic region. If a region or state suffers from “brain drain,” it is understood that more educated, talented workers are leaving than entering.

By focusing on “brain drain,” regions and states acknowledge the importance of attracting and keeping knowledge workers. Knowledge workers are critical to U.S. economies because they fuel sustainable economic growth.

What is a “knowledge worker?”

This report uses the term “knowledge worker[s]” as originally coined by Peter Drucker in the 1960’s to describe participants in an economy where information and its manipulation are the commodity and the activity. Knowledge workers use information and ingenuity to solve problems. Contrast this with industrial age workers whose primary function was to produce a tangible object.

There are two ways to evaluate “brain drain.” The first is to compare gross in-migration to gross out-migration of certain populations. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics uses an incoming-versus-outgoing calculation to predict that by 2012, 23 million knowledge workers will be retiring, while only 10 million new knowledge workers will enter the labor force.¹ Richard Florida uses a similar gross in-versus-out calculation to report that ninety percent of the largest U.S. cities suffered a net loss of knowledge workers in the 1990’s.²

Certainly, calculations like these sound alarm bells across the country. And to some degree, they should.
But a more measured reading of “brain drain” is in order. First, regions and states suffering from “brain drain” have not necessarily failed outright to attract and keep talent. When 71 million Baby Boomers retire, and there are only 59 million Gen X’ers to replace them, a pure talent shortage is created. Even the most innovative economic development policy cannot fully redress such a shortage.

Why are there fewer Generation X workers?

Between 1961 and 1981, four factors depressed U.S. birth rates:

1. the pill;
2. Roe v. Wade (1972);
3. Women’s increased labor-force participation;
4. The “DINK” mentality (double income, no kids).

But there is another—and this report argues, a better—way to calculate “brain drain.” Inspired place-based economic development must scan for its inherent best opportunities to create wealth and then work to attract the knowledge workers central to those opportunities.

Specifically, Greater Akron must identify the kinds of knowledge workers required to grow its economy, and then strategically work to attract and retain them.
Since the late 1970’s, Greater Akron’s economy has faced new realities:

1. Low-skill jobs are being commoditized, going to the regions and countries that compete on wages. Developing countries with lower wages take lower-skilled jobs from the Greater Akron region, as the exodus of rubber jobs showed beginning in 1978;

2. Companies slow to innovate in products, services and distribution can lose to start-ups of any size; and

3. White collar jobs like software programming and customer service—formerly immune to international competition—can be off-shored to India, Pakistan and Eastern Europe.

Economists are now in global agreement: Economic development strategies that invest in innovation-based companies and industries will outperform their competitors in job creation and wealth creation. The “new economy” is an innovation economy.

“Innovation will be the single most important factor in determining America’s success in the 21st Century.”

—Innovate America, Council on Competitiveness, Dec. 2004
Greater Akron’s economic development initiatives—including Advance Greater Akron and TeamNEO—are keenly aware of these trends and work diligently to expand and attract innovation-based companies. To their credit, the Greater Akron region boasts a flurry of awards and recognition for their business attraction and retention efforts.

But attracting business is no longer enough. For the first time in Ohio’s history, the predictable economic development equation—[1] Incent companies to relocate to Greater Akron; and [2] workers follow—is being turned inside out. Today, companies that demand knowledge workers—including Hewlett Packard, GE, Oshkosh B’Gosh and others—follow knowledge workers.

**Talent Capitals Are “Cool Communities”**

For the first time in history, knowledge workers have discretion in where they live and work. The shortage of knowledge workers gives employees greater options to first pick a place to live, and then find a job. Armed with the power to choose, young knowledge workers vote with their feet, moving to “talent capitals” that have the quality of life amenities they prefer.

“Young people today place much more emphasis on the city they live in. It was the opposite for my generation: we got a job, and moved to wherever the job was.”

—Mayor Pat McCrory, Charlotte, North Carolina

While previous generations focused on finding a job and then settling down, the next generation of employees does it differently. Today, young professionals say that where they live is as important as where they work. This “live first, work second” ethic is becoming so prevalent among the next generation of knowledge workers, that companies are beginning to relocate based on where their needed talent lives. Since knowledge workers can live and work anywhere, communities must differentiate themselves in order to attract them. Denver, Atlanta, Florida, Oregon and Michigan are just a handful of the regions and states investing millions of dollars to attract talent.
If the knowledge workers who fuel Greater Akron’s innovation economy can live anywhere in the world, how does Greater Akron differentiate itself as a talent magnet? The research included in this report addresses that question and many others.

"Once upon a time there was a new generation of talent who placed as much value on where they lived as where they worked. Asked to choose between 35 years of workaholism in return for predictable promotions, a nice parking spot and a corner office OR living in a diverse, progressive community with oodles of occupational options and a solid scene, today’s young talent pick ‘B,’ thank you very much.”

—Rebecca Ryan

Talent Capitals: The Emerging Battleground in the War for Talent

**Project Scope**

Understanding that it must retain and attract knowledge workers, the Greater Akron Chamber hired Next Generation Consulting (NGC) to complete a five-part scope of work to:

1. Identify the talent Greater Akron needs to broaden and strengthen its economy in the coming 2-4 years (Executive Summary);

2. Index the Greater Akron region’s assets, plot them on a “handprint,” and contrast Greater Akron to benchmark communities (p. 35–40);

3. Consult and/or advise on Greater Akron’s brand development (p. 30–36);

4. Plan and advise on the implementation of a budget-friendly communication and/or marketing strategy to both reinforce Greater Akron’s brand and position Greater Akron as a “cool community” for its targeted knowledge workers (p. 26–30);

5. Educate Greater Akron about the need to retain and attract the next generation of talent (ongoing).
The Greater Akron Chamber chose Next Generation Consulting because NGC is the only U.S. firm with a proprietary indexing system to assist communities in their talent attraction and retention efforts. NGC has conducted interviews and focus groups with over 6,500 young professionals since 1998. From these interviews, NGC identified that young professionals—who have many options in where they live and work—migrate to communities that have distinct and measurable characteristics.

NGC clusters these characteristics into seven indexes displayed on a “handprint” (above): Vitality, Earning, Learning, Social Capital, Cost of Lifestyle, After Hours and Around Town. The greater a community’s scores in the seven indexes, the “cooler” the community is considered by young professionals. A community with above-average scores in each index is more likely to attract and retain young professionals.

Attracting young professionals has a spin-off benefit. Site selection professionals who are tasked with selecting communities for business expansion or relocation are increasingly asking about BOTH labor availability and quality of life amenities. NGC has discovered that the “quality of life” amenities are predictors of labor force availability. Therefore, communities with a breadth and depth of certain community amenities have a greater likelihood of attracting both talent AND companies that are expanding or relocating.
To complete this project, NGC conducted both qualitative (subjective) and quantitative (objective) research. The qualitative research included focus groups, web surveys, and telephone interviews conducted September—November 2004. These methods informed us of the perceptions that young professionals have about Greater Akron. Qualitative responses did not determine Greater Akron’s handprint.

NGC also completed a rigorous quantitative analysis of Greater Akron, measuring the region in 42 areas. These 42 metrics are sub-grouped into the seven indexes NGC uses to determine a community’s “handprint” (above). The seven indexes reflect the amenities that young professionals consider and value when relocating to a community.

More details on the research methodology and results are included on pages 33–36.
Key Findings of the Research

1. 4,726 employees with mid- to high-level skills and experience are needed by Greater Akron employers to meet or exceed their organizations’ goals by 2007.

In a web-based survey of 1,200 Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce members, respondents said that retirement, job growth and attrition will create nearly 5,000 positions.

To fill these positions, respondents said they had skill needs ranging from “Moderate” to “Urgent” in the following areas:

- 83% Management skills (to supervise people and/or projects)
- 80% Clerical skills
- 75% Marketing and Sales skills
- 70% Technical skills

Employers cited the most common skill gaps as:

- 54% Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making
- 50% Communication (writing, speaking, comprehension)
- 45% Follow-through, taking responsibility for actions

Akron Job Creation

The positions that Greater Akron’s employers will create are important for two reasons. First, the jobs are management-level jobs that provide family-supporting income. Second, the talent that Greater Akron’s employers need to fill these positions are “mid-careerists”: young professionals who left the Akron area, cut their teeth on their first four or five jobs elsewhere, and are ready to move back home to put down roots and start their families. Focus groups in Greater Akron and Kent were clear: the area’s “boomerangers” want to come back. And Greater Akron’s employers confirm that the jobs are here for them.
2. Greater Akron’s “handprint” beats the national average in the Vitality, Learning, and After Hours indexes.

Communities with above-average scores in any index should focus their marketing and communications messages on their strengths. Therefore, the Vitality, Learning, and After Hours amenities should be used in marketing Greater Akron to knowledge workers and young professionals, who value those attributes.

3. Greater Akron scored competitively both nationally and versus its benchmark communities in ALL SEVEN INDEXES that young professionals use to evaluate a community’s “coolness.”

Greater Akron’s history as a “rubber capital” and its internalized perception that its best years have been written in the pages of history does not match the reality of its scores in the seven indexes. In fact, Greater Akron is competitive against the national average in all indexes and beating the national average in three indexes.
Next Generation Consulting measured 42 attributes in seven indexes that young professionals value in “cool communities.” Greater Akron’s results (see “Handprint” above) are conclusive: Greater Akron is on par or better than the national average in every index.

For further explanation of each index, please turn to pages 29–30.

4. Young professionals in Greater Akron are strong, growing, and committed.

Over 65 percent of focus group participants report that they plan to stay in Greater Akron ten years or more. This indicates a base of young professionals vested in the region’s future.

Word of Greater Akron’s engagement with young professionals is leaking out. Cleveland’s young professionals recognize it. The Akron Beacon Journal’s David Giffels calls it “the moment.” The bottom line? There’s something brewing: a sense of hope and perfect timing, when the opportunities for which Greater Akron’s leaders have been preparing are met head-on by a capable and engaged next generation.

For more information on the focus groups conducted in Kent and Greater Akron, please turn to pages 36–37.

Plan to Stay in Akron Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 7 years</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 10 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here for life</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No clue</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater Akron’s strong base of young professionals is one of its signature attractions for other young professionals. When young talent move to a community, they want to connect with people like them. Greater Akron’s current young professionals groups must figure prominently in the region’s talent attraction and retention game plan.
5. Young professionals say that Greater Akron’s “Social Capital” and “After Hours” indexes are most important.

When asked to force rank the factors that most matter to them, Greater Akron’s young professionals indicated that Social Capital (23%) and After Hours (19%) are the two most important “cool community” factors. In other words, to attract and keep young professionals in Greater Akron, the region must consistently address Social Capital and After Hours.

![Bar chart showing values of factors young professionals value]

**Social Capital**

"Do you hear, friends, the dreams... the sighs... the prayers for a loving community that holds and nurtures everyone? That turns no one away? That feeds, clothes, houses, and respects all?"

—Intern Minister Sofia Betancourt

The Social Capital index measures both a community's inclusiveness and its involvement. Greater Akron scores on par with the national average in involvement, with respect to charitable giving and volunteerism. But both the data and young professionals tell a different story about Greater Akron’s inclusiveness.
Young professionals prefer to live in a community where all people are valued, a city where women, diverse professionals, and young professionals are actively engaged in corporate and community decision-making.

**After Hours**

Young professionals rank “After Hours”—the things to do after 5 PM and on weekends—as the second most critical index in Greater Akron. In this case, Greater Akron’s score is greater than the national average, indicating many options for live music, arts and culture, sports and recreation. However, there is a disconnect in how young professionals access and experience those amenities. Specifically, young professionals say that they prefer after hours events and venues to be clustered in walkable “stroll districts,” and that comprehensive events listings be offered on the web.

“ Akron has a better music scene than Cleveland but it is difficult to be in the know.”

—Focus Group Respondent

With these key findings, scores and analysis, Greater Akron has an opportunity to position itself as a community of choice for the next generation, using real data, the language and the factors that are relevant to young professionals. The moment is now. The momentum is building.
We are the ones we’ve been waiting for, and the moment is now. Based on the research findings and rationale presented in this report, we strongly recommend the following ambitious action plan in three areas:

1. **Enhance the product.** By “product,” we mean the region itself. How do we enhance Greater Akron’s natural, physical, and other amenities, so that it becomes a talent magnet for young professionals?

   Certainly the Akron region could do many things to enhance its product. Our recommendations focus on the “After Hours” and “Vitality” Indexes for two reasons: (A) these indexes ranked #2 and #4 in focus groups indicating that young professionals place importance on them; and (B) Greater Akron has above-average scores in these indexes, which allows it to build from a place of strength. We believe it is more productive to leverage your strengths than focus on your weaknesses.

2. **Market the region.** What is Greater Akron’s story? How do we tell it? And to whom?

   These recommendations focus on a comprehensive “boomerang” campaign targeted at young professionals who grew up, interned, or went to college in Greater Akron and then left. Why? Because after young professionals turn 28–30 years old and are ready to start raising their own families, they are most open to “boomeranging.”
back, to be close to family and to raise their children in the same environment in which they were raised. Therefore, the marketing recommendations included in this report are focused on the messaging and mediums best suited to re-attract Boomerangers back to the Akron area.

(3) Leverage current initiatives. The Greater Akron Chamber, Greater Akron’s four young professionals groups, and other community and regional partners are already doing a lot to enhance Akron’s image and attract the next generation. Which initiatives and events should be enhanced, supported, and how? These recommendations focus on what’s already happening, and how to build greater momentum for the initiatives that will enhance Greater Akron’s ability to attract and retain young talent and knowledge workers.

All of these recommendations are provided in narrative form (pages 15–25) and in matrix form (pages 32A–C).

Part 1: Recommendations to Enhance the Product

1. ENHANCE GREATER AKRON’S VITALITY INDEX

Greater Akron’s “Vitality” index—the number of miles of parks, trails and recreation areas, and the ability for young professionals to be “out and about” in Greater Akron—is one of the area’s greatest strengths and differentiators. As one young professional eloquently stated, “Akron is not a city with a park. It’s a city in a park.” [Elizabeth Sheeler, ArtCetera].

No other city in the U.S. has the natural environment that Greater Akron has. This asset must be fully engaged and leveraged to attract and retain young professionals to the area.

Following are action steps to help Greater Akron build and differentiate itself from its competitor cities on its VITALITY index:

1.1.1 Build a stacked loop system onto the Bike and Hike Trail. While the current bike and hike trail is 32 miles long, is level, and is in good condition for easy running, hiking, biking and skiing, its attractiveness could be enhanced dramatically by adding
a stacked loop system to it. The key benefit of a stacked loop system is that it appeals to many popular outdoor sports and activities favored by young professionals: mountain biking, scrambling, cross-country races, and endurance events.

Adding three to four “loops” of varying lengths and levels of difficulty would lengthen the trail’s total distance, attract athletes of varying skill levels and interests, enable the trail to be used for races and special interest events, and make the trail a “third place” where athletes of various backgrounds meet and make connections.

**QUOTE**

“Don’t build a public trail system that only five percent of the public can or wants to use. Instead, build a diverse trail system that provides for the varying desires and abilities of all potential trail users. A stacked loop system facilitates diverse trail styles.”

—International Mountain Biking Association

**1.1.2 Connect every resident of Greater Akron to a public park, trail or recreation area.**

When the Mayor of Nashville declared that he would put every citizen within a ten-minute walk of a public park, trail or recreation area, he made a bold statement about the importance of connecting Nashville’s people to her public spaces. Nashville does not have near the inventory of public park space that Greater Akron has. If every citizen were within a five-minute walk of a public park, trail or recreation area, we could truly say that *A Akron is a city IN a park.*

**1.1.3 Complete the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail.** Although the concept of the Towpath Trail is noteworthy for its ambition, its completion totals only twenty miles from the Cuyahoga Valley to downtown Akron. If the trail was completed and ran through downtown and to the south, it would bring visitors from both the north and south to the
region, in turn bringing more after hours spending and options for more walking/endurance events to Greater Akron.

The Importance of Connections

One of the most common mistakes we see in communities is disjointed, detached public walkways and bikeways. Public hike and bike trails are physical indicators of how connected the city and her people are. How can a city expect to connect its people to each other when its public pathways are disconnected?

1.1.4 Create protected bike-and-blade lanes in downtown Akron. Many cities that attract knowledge workers have protected lanes throughout the city, which makes commuting to work by bike or rollerblades a safe option for young professionals. Minneapolis-St. Paul, Portland, OR and Madison, WI are just a handful of cities that have made this commitment. For a full discussion of protected (bike) lane planning, see Dilemmas of Bicycle Planning from MIT press13.

1.1.5 Outfit city buses with bike racks so that commuters can “bus and bike.” Again, many communities know that to attract knowledge workers, they must offer multiple safe forms of commuter transportation. By attaching bike racks to the front of city buses, Greater Akron sends a message that it honors and accepts people who prefer public and human-powered transportation. Cities such as Madison, WI and Portland, OR have made this commitment.

1.1.6 Attract nationally televised outdoor events to Greater Akron. Outdoor and individual sports are growing among weekend warriors, young talent, and baby boomers, all of whom value fitness and activity.14 There are many growing, outdoor sports looking for hospitable, suitable cities to host their annual—and sometimes global—events. The “X Games”15, the Great Outdoor Games16, national archery championships, canine agility competitions, paralympics road races, and national wheelchair races are all events growing in popularity and for which Greater Akron could effectively compete. Hosting events like these exposes competitors to Greater Akron and showcases the region to the rest of the world.
1.1.7 Start an annual U.S. or World Golf Challenge for children. This idea leverages the new First Tee course at Mud Run Park and FirstEnergy’s tradition of launching superb inaugural community events and then turning them over to other sponsors. The World Golf Challenge would expose thousands of families from across the globe to the area, and secure a national television appearance for Greater Akron.

2. ENHANCE GREATER AKRON’S AFTER HOURS INDEX

Young professionals are clear: Greater Akron must do just two things to enhance its After Hours index: (1) list its after hours events in an easy-to-navigate, easy-to-access website, and (2) create several distinct and dense “stroll districts.”

What Is a Stroll District?

A stroll district is a walkable multi-block area rich in authentic, locally owned retail, restaurants, entertainment options, galleries, and boutiques. Stroll districts appeal to both tourists and locals alike. State Street in Madison, WI and Pearl Street in Portland, OR are two mid-sized city examples.

1.2.1 Develop a true web-based portal for all of Greater Akron’s “After Hours” activities.

Today, young professionals reach for their mouse—not the newspaper or even the remote control—to access After Hours information. Yet, in Greater Akron, young professionals come up short, because there is no single web site that collects and organizes the data for them. Recent Google searches for “Akron after 5” and “Things to do in Akron” turned up static directories of information lacking local flavor or any sense of an “insider’s track.” The result? Akron’s young professionals feel unplugged and left out.

To reach the next generation, Greater Akron’s community events and after hours activities must be listed in ONE PLACE that’s fresh, dynamic and well-publicized. This web-based portal should:

- “crawl” published sources of information for news and events (consult www.wistechnology.com for the “crawl” capability);

- Allow venue owners to submit their own events directly (see www.onmilwaukee.com/event/submit.html for an example);
• Feature weekly columns on “what not to miss this week” written by a young professional with expertise in the local scene;

• Offer a free e’zine (email newsletter) to subscribers who want to have the week’s events—or just reminders—emailed to them (www.thedailypage.com);

• Be easy to navigate;

• Be searchable by date, genre of activity, and venue;

• Feature the “best of” guides and awards as published by other sources (i.e. Akron Life and Leisure) with an option for users to add their own comments on their experiences;

• (optional) Feature reprints of local restaurant reviews;

• Pay special attention to the local restaurants;

• Include links to young professional organizations and events (i.e. Jaycees, TorchBearers, YPA, and ArtCetera);

• Be technically supported by the local high-speed internet provider;

• Be promoted by the young professionals organizations, convention and visitors bureaus, and the Chamber;

See screen shots on the following pages for examples of good “After Hours” websites.

(Note: As of July 31, 2005, the domain names www.AkronAfter5.com and www.AkronAfterHours.com were both available.)
THIS WEEKEND

THURS.  8/18

CKY (concert) - *Big Easy*
Beach House Party (event) - *Big Easy*
Sukii (play) - *CenterStage*
Shippin' Out! (play) - *Civic Theater*
Mordenball (film) - *Met Theater*
Karaoke Party (FREE) - *Bourbon Street*
Argentina Tango! (FREE) - *CenterStage*
Bob & Doug (jazz) - *Peycock Room*
Nicholson/Carruthers Trio (jazz) - *Ella's*
DJ Emcee2 (dance) - *Pub Club*
DJ Silent J (dance) - TailorTits 2/1
Flee the Century & others - *Rock Coffee*
Studebaker Car Show - *Riverfront Park*
Canned Music (FREE) - *Browes Addition*

FRI.  8/18

Horse & Carriage Rides (event)
Shippin' Out! (play) - *Civic Theater*
Mordenball (film) - *Met Theater*
Footloose Friday (salsa) - *CenterStage*
Live Improv (comedy) - *Comedy Sportz*
Joe Kios/ Carruthers Trio (jazz) - *Ella's*
Club Mardi Gras (dance) - *Big Easy*
DJ Emcee2 (dance) - *Pub Club*
Jupiter Effect (rock) - *B-side*
Live Music (jazz) - *Arkenys*
Helfax & others (rock) - *Fat Tuesday*
Big Pill (rock) - *Blue Spark*
Belt of Vapor & others (rock) - *Fat Tuesday*
Billy Joel Royal (concert) - *Northway*

SAT.  8/20

No Quarter (concert) - *Big Easy*
Shippin' Out! (play) - *Civic Theater*
Mordenball (film) - *Met Theater*
Live Improv (comedy) - *Comedy Sportz*
Nick Herman/Carruthers Trio (jazz) - *Ella's*
Club Fusion (dance) - *Big Easy*
DJ Loud Richard (dance) - TailorTits 2/1
DJ Emcee2 (dance) - *Pub Club*
Live Music (jazz) - *Arkenys*
Vertigo (film) - *The Shop*
Clinch & All Parallels (rock) - *B-side*
controlled Burn (rock) - *Rock Coffee*
Left Hand Smoke (rock) - *Blue Spark*
Glass on Grass (FREE) - *Arbor Crest Winery*

SUN.

Mordenball (film) - *Met Theater*
DJ Emcee2 (dance) - *Pub Club*
Open Mike (rock) - *The Blvd*
Sidhe (folk) - *Europa Pizzeria*
Glass on Grass (FREE) - *Arbor Crest Winery*

Upcoming Concerts & Events
Fresche pizzeria tosses gourmet pies on Jefferson Street

Earlier this summer, the former owner of Cucaky's popular Primavera Pizzeria moved his place into an open and well-lit space that allows downtown diners to sample a wide array of homemade pizzas below street level.

» Story in Diring

TheRep

Discover the finer things in life. Become a season ticket holder today. Click here for details.

Latin rock tradition trumpeted in new book, concert

Milwaukee gets a rare dose of Latin rock as Latin Music Fest presents the Voices of Latin Rock concert on Saturday, Aug. 27. The celebration is fueled by a new book, "Voices of Latin Rock," published by Milwaukee-based Hal Leonard.

» Story in Music

Serbian Fest: Aug 26-28

Get a taste of Serbian culture at this great neighborhood church festival. There's ethnic dancing, Serbian food, games and other events and much more fun for the whole family.

» Story in Festival Guide

Super size your gaming night at a local theater

That's right. You and your friends can rent a movie theater and have the get-together you've been dreaming of while playing your favorite Playstation, Xbox or Gamecube titles on the big screen, as well as the classic systems such as original Nintendo or Nintendo 64.

» Story in Movies

MAM fundraiser exhibits experimental film and music

Experimental film and music are the honored guests at the Milwaukee Art Museum's upcoming fundraiser, "It's all wrong, right" on Friday, Aug. 26. Def Harmonic, DJ Joe Blow and filmmaker Tate Bunker are a few of the artists involved.

» Story in Entertainment
### Akron’s Hot Spots for Young Professionals

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<tr>
<th>Highland Theatre</th>
<th>Café Moms</th>
<th>Akron Civic Theatre</th>
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<tr>
<td>West Market Antique Row</td>
<td>Don Drumm Studios</td>
<td>La Maison Accessories &amp; Interior Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akron Zoo</td>
<td>Harris-Stanton Gallery</td>
<td>Chez Del Home Furnishers &amp; Interior Design</td>
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<td>Jacob Good Restaurant</td>
<td>Fuel</td>
<td>E.J. Thomas Hall</td>
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<td>West Point Market</td>
<td>LeFever’s River Grille</td>
<td>The University of Akron Student Recreation and Wellness Center</td>
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<td>Beside the Point Café</td>
<td>Portage Lakes</td>
<td>Quaker Square</td>
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<td>Swenson’s</td>
<td>Hibachi Japan</td>
<td>Rage Gallery</td>
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<td>Aladdin’s</td>
<td>Golden Dragon</td>
<td>Ken Stewart’s Lodge</td>
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<td>Coco’s Coffee Bar</td>
<td>Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail</td>
<td>Two Amigos</td>
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<td>Angel Falls Café</td>
<td>Buckeye Bookstore</td>
<td>Jasper’s</td>
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<td>Stan Hywet Hall &amp; Gardens</td>
<td>Summit Artspace</td>
<td>Cleveland’s Warehouse District</td>
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<td>Akron Airdock Blimp Hangar</td>
<td>Ken Stewart’s Grill</td>
<td>Beau’s Grill</td>
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<td>Canal Park</td>
<td>The Bucket</td>
<td>Northside</td>
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<tr>
<td>The University of Akron James A. Rhodes Arena</td>
<td>Lock 3</td>
<td>Lime Spider</td>
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<td>Rubber Bowl</td>
<td>Greystone Hall</td>
<td>Diamond Grille</td>
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<td>Shulan’s Jewelers</td>
<td>Akron Art Museum</td>
<td>Blossom Music Center</td>
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<td>Henry B. Ball Jewelers</td>
<td>Denis Conley Gallery</td>
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<td>Strickland’s</td>
<td>Gasoline Alley</td>
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<td>Luigi’s</td>
<td>Bricco</td>
<td>Plato’s</td>
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<td>Riviera Lanes</td>
<td>Carousel Dinner Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>The NEC at Firestone Country Club</td>
<td>Weathervane Community Playhouse</td>
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</table>
1.2.2 Support municipal legislation for *al fresco* (open air) dining. *Al fresco* dining is simply dining outside, and is one mark of a truly livable city. To date, Kent has had success in passing legislation allowing for ease of obtaining permits for *al fresco* dining. The City of Akron has permitted outdoor dining at Two Amigos, Fuel, and Jacob Good under its sidewalk ordinance. Currently, the City of Akron’s service director controls the public right-of-way and on a case-by-case basis has permitted these entities to construct outdoor fencing and install seating. We must make it easier for restaurants to gain *al fresco* dining approval.

Currently, the Mayor of Akron’s office is drafting legislation that will require a permit, require proof of insurance, require the area to be kept free of debris, and provide for restoration of the sidewalk once the activity is abandoned. Cleveland already permits “temporary right of way occupancy permits for outdoor restaurants.” (Sec. 513, Cleveland codified ordinances.) The Greater Akron Chamber and the area’s young professionals organizations should support this legislation with letters, testimony and appearances at city council meetings in all of the cities within the region for whom *al fresco* dining is relevant.

1.2.3 Develop Lock 3. To create a truly dense and walkable “stroll district” in downtown Akron, the University of Akron’s new Spicer Village development must be anchored by another development. Lock 3 is the answer. Although this area has been under development for some time, with numerous relationships already built, the Chamber’s strategic support and interest in this project could help push it over the top.

1.2.4 Support the development of “stroll districts” in neighborhoods with high densities of young knowledge workers. Kent State University’s College of Architecture and Environmental Design is already using its urban design expertise to work in the region’s “shrinking cities,” helping them re-invent themselves for the future. Working with Kent State, cities within the region have an opportunity to actually build that dream. In the map below, you can see that the region’s young knowledge workers live in clusters. To create the “live/work” neighborhoods that young professionals value, cities must build safe, multi-modal transportation paths between these areas and the downtown’s strolls AND must be thoughtful about planning and zoning walkable “stroll districts” within these neighborhoods.
1.2.5 Support zoning and licensing for “controversial” tenants and/or applicants. In order for Greater Akron to thrive and become truly inclusive (which supports the social capital index), “controversial” retail tenants (like tattooers) and controversial zoning (like skateboard-friendly spaces) must exist. These sorts of ordinances generally get the loudest outcry from citizens in the name of “traditional values.” The Greater Akron Chamber should create several thoughtfully worded position statements on why such places are important to attracting and retaining talent...even those with green hair.
Part 2: Recommendations for Marketing The Region

This strategy addresses the following questions:

- Who is our target?
- What is our story?
- How do we tell our story (in what form, through what media)?
- Who else wants to tell Akron’s story?

Who is our target market? Greater Akron’s employers are emphatic: their greatest needs are for experienced professionals with management, sales, and technical skills. By “experienced,” employers mean they are looking for individuals with 3–7 years of real-world work experience. We call these people mid-careerists.

What Is a Mid-Careerist?

We define a mid-careerist as someone in their late 20’s to late 30’s with 5–10 years of real world work experience. At work, mid-careerists have probably had numerous jobs; Time Magazine reports that by the time they’re 32, young professionals have had 9 jobs. Personally, mid-careerists are pushing back their adulthood; 28 is now the average age of a first marriage for an educated young professional. As a young professional enters their 30’s, they are beginning to think seriously about putting down roots. Many mid-careerists, as they begin to think about starting their own families, strongly consider moving “back home” to be closer to their parents, and to raise their children in the same environment in which they were raised.

The Akron area’s employer needs are perfectly aligning with the relocation considerations of mid-careerists. In focus groups of young professionals, 22 percent of respondents said they’ve “boomeranged” back to Greater Akron. This means they grew up or went to school in the region, left, and eventually came back.

The timing of these two trends—employers needing mid-careerists and former Akronites who are considering “boomeranging” back—is perfect. The trick is to develop the right message, put it in the right place, and reinforce it with the right collateral material.
Greater Akron’s target market is boomeranging mid-careerists.

What is our story? To attract mid-careerists to “boomerang” back to Greater Akron, the message is simple: “Come home to Greater Akron.” This message works for several reasons:

A. It’s emotional. Although we’d like to believe we make choices based on rational judgment, it’s not the case. How else do you explain increased Hummer sales when gas prices soar? People choose based on emotion, not reason. The same holds true for relocation. “Come home to Greater Akron” is a compelling, emotive message that renders nostalgic memories of their childhoods. Mid-careerists want to secure these same childhood memories for their children.

B. It’s redundant to what young professionals are already hearing. “Come home to Greater Akron” is a message young professionals are already hearing from their parents and grandparents who still live in the Akron area.

C. It taps into a consideration that young professionals have already made.

D. It’s simple.

E. It has multiple “hooks” for multiple users. Universities can use it with alumni. Employers can use it for former employees and interns. Parents can use it with children.

(Note: As of March 31, 2005, the domain name www.ComeHomeToAkron.com was available.)

How do we tell our story? We recommend that Greater Akron tell its story through a compelling “Come Home to Greater Akron” message and campaign, targeted to boomerangers, that contains the following elements:

2.1 Invite Greater Akron’s creative class—including all professional agencies, freelancers and amateurs—to submit design ideas for Greater Akron’s “Come Home to Greater Akron” campaign. Display these ideas at a local art gallery, and invite the public to view and vote either at the gallery or online at the ComeHomeToGreaterAkron website for the design they like best.
2.2 After the public has voted, the design ideas should be taken to a “jury” of professional marketers (or the Chamber’s marketing committee) to determine the winning submission. If there is no suitable winning submission, the Chamber should appeal directly to Greater Akron’s creative agencies and request design ideas for the “Come Home to Greater Akron” campaign. Be clear that there will be no remuneration for the mark, but that it will be used in the campaign as outlined in the following pages.

2.3 Develop a “Come Home to Greater Akron” website to include:

- Multimedia (video) vignettes of successful Akronites who’ve “boomeranged” back to Greater Akron (include their local high school or university affiliations and years of graduation). Vignettes should focus on the emotional reasons to move back (i.e. “I wanted to raise my children in the Midwest, where schools are good and streets are safe.”), the hard truth of moving back (i.e. “I never thought I’d want to come back to Akron, but I’ve had amazing experiences in Boston, Ireland, and Portugal, and now it’s time to put down roots. I can’t think of a better place to do that than near my family...”), and the news about Akron (i.e. “When I left Akron, people were losing their jobs, unemployment was high, and everyone seemed to be leaving. But Akron has bounced back (pun!). They have a brand new state of the art library, incredible nightlife, some very cool urban developments, and some real momentum.”)

- “Top Ten Reasons to Come Home to Greater Akron”;
- Links to the young professionals groups;
- Full text and links to the Chamber’s new relocation guide;
- A free e’zine (email) to notify potential Boomerangers about weekly events (i.e. from the After Hours web portal described on p. 19 and news links from ohio.com;
- A place to submit their resume for area employers’ consideration.
2.4 **Execute a targeted direct mail and email campaign.** NGC currently has database information from the University of Akron and Kent State. From these databases, we should:

A. Determine where the largest concentrations of Akron grads in their late twenties to mid-thirties are currently living;

B. Design a series of playful, full-color jumbo-sized postcards with a “Come Home to Greater Akron” theme contrasting their city (i.e. San Jose) to the Akron area to be mailed to alumni in the targeted regions;

C. Point Akron area alumni to the Come Home to Akron website, where they will be encouraged to subscribe to news and event information.

2.5 **Throw “Come Home to Akron” events in 3–5 cities with the highest concentrations of Akron-area alumni.** To complete this event:

A. Enlist Mayor Plusquellic to host “Come Home to Akron” parties in cities with high concentrations of alum.

B. At these Akron parties, Mayor Plusquellic would talk about what he’s excited about (5-10 minutes) and greet the alum.

C. Jumbo postcards with the “Come Home to Akron” website would be handed out.

D. Major employers (HR folks and recruiters) could also be present to talk about career opportunities and begin the interviewing process with interested and qualified professionals.

2.6 **Host “Come Home to Greater Akron” events at Thanksgiving when many former Akronites come home for the holidays.** Young professionals groups in Greater Akron are already planning events that might include:

- a “Rubber Bowl” football game between the area’s former football elite (i.e. Mayor Plusquellic) vs. more recent football elite (i.e. Greater Akron’s young professionals);

- college reunion events;
• “Job´apalooza:” a 2-hour “speed-dating” job fair for boomeranging mid-careerists interested in moving back to Greater Akron;

• Young Professionals organization events to which Akron-area alumni are specially invited;

• Local Akron area high school reunion events;

• Akron area church-sponsored “Come Home to Greater Akron” events;

• “Come Home to Greater Akron” banners displayed at the airport, on high traffic overpass bridges, and “Come Home to Greater Akron” light displays shone at key locations around the city (i.e. malls, Quaker Square, etc.) See “Screenshots” for photos of how these lights are used in other communities.
Part 3: Recommendations to Leverage Current Initiatives

There are many things that the Greater Akron Chamber, Greater Akron’s young professionals’ groups, and regional stakeholders are already doing to attract and retain talent. Which of these initiatives are critical to the strategy outlined here? This section recommends the most critical organizations and projects to support:

3.1 Staff a full-time executive director to serve Greater Akron’s Young Professionals’ groups. Without someone waking up every day asking, “How can we connect young professionals to each other and to our community?” Greater Akron’s chance to retain young talent will be greatly diminished. Currently, three of the area’s four young professionals groups are volunteer-based. This is not sustainable. Over time, volunteers will tire and the young professionals groups will disband. In other cities including Milwaukee, Racine, and St. Louis, measurable increases in membership and impact were recorded after a full-time staff person was hired.

Although this part of the plan requires much more discussion, we recommend that an Executive Director—accountable in some capacity to all four groups and to the Chamber—would:

A. Be responsible for fundraising (memberships and sponsorships), database management, event planning, and staffing Action Teams.

B. Develop a corporate sponsorship plan in which, for example, ABC Corp pays $3500 per year for full identity recognition on the YP web sites and at events. In return, ABC Corp can send an unlimited number of young professionals to YP events. Corporations are generally anxious to join such an organization, as they want to plug their young professionals into the community.

C. Serve as a liaison between the four YP groups and the Greater Akron Chamber.

D. Be accountable to a “YP Council” comprised of representatives of the YP groups, the Chamber’s workforce development taskforce, and other key stakeholders.

E. Be housed at the Chamber.
3.2 Develop multimedia tools that Greater Akron’s employers can customize for their talent-attraction efforts.

3.3 Convene employer roundtables in the industries (i.e. utilities, health care) in which the talent needs are the greatest. Working together, these employers can leverage their messaging, advertising, and recruiting strategies.

(Note: the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce has convened a Health Care Roundtable similar to this with limited success.)
Action Plan Overview

Objective | Actions | Lead | Support | Priority | Start up Funding* | Ongoing Funding*
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
1. ENHANCE GREATER AKRON'S VITALITY INDEX | 1.1 Build a stacked loop system onto the Bike and Hike trail. | Metro Parks serving Summit County | Greater Akron Chamber, City of Akron | 16 | 100,000 | 10,000
| | 1.2 Connect every resident of Greater Akron to a public park, trail, or recreation area. | City of Akron, Mayor’s Office | Metro Parks serving Summit County | 5 | 400,000 | 25,000
| | 1.3 Complete the Ohio and Erie Canal towpath trail. | City of Akron, Mayor’s Office, Cuyahoga Valley National Park | Metro Parks serving Summit County | 12 | N/A-fed’l funds | N/A-fed’l funds
| | 1.4 Create protected bike-and-blade lanes in downtown Akron. | City of Akron, Mayor’s Office | Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Bicycle Federation, Akron Bicycle Club | 4 | 40,000 | 10,000
| | 1.5 Outfit city buses with bike racks so that commuters can “bus and bike.” ($890/bus) | City of Akron, Mayor’s Office | Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Bicycle Federation, Akron Bicycle Club, www.akronbike.org | 7 | | |
| | 1.6 Attract nationally televised outdoor events to Greater Akron. | Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau | Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau | 18 | 0 | 0
| | 1.7 Start an annual U.S. or World Golf Challenge for children. | Mud Run Golf Course | Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau | 17 | 200,000 | 500,000
2. ENHANCE GREATER AKRON’S AFTER HOURS INDEX | 2.1 Develop a true web-based portal for all of Greater Akron’s “After Hours” activities. | Rubberbuzz.com, Ohio.com | Young Professionals Organizations | 1 | 85,000 | 20,000
| | 2.2 Support municipal legislation for al fresco dining. | City of Akron, Mayor’s Office | Greater Akron Chamber, Akron Area Restaurant Association | 10 | 0 | 0
| | 2.3 Develop Lock 3. | Local developers, City of Akron | Greater Akron Chamber | 11 | 0 | 0
| | 2.4 Support the development of “street districts” in neighborhoods with high densities of young knowledge workers. | Developers | Greater Akron Chamber | 14 | 0 | 0
| | 2.5 Support zoning and licensing for “controversial” tenants and/or applicants. | Greater Akron Chamber | Greater Akron Chamber | 15 | 0 | 0
3. MARKETING: TELLING GREATER AKRON'S STORY | 3.1-3.4 Design a compelling “Come Home to Akron” message and campaign. | Young Professionals Groups | Greater Akron Chamber | 2 | 120,000 | 25,000
| | 3.5 Throw “Come Home to Akron” events in 3-5 cities with the highest concentrations of Akron area alumni. | Kent State University, University of Akron | Kent State University, University of Akron | 3 | 175,000 | 17,500
| | 3.6 Host “Come Home to Akron” events at Thanksgiving. | Young Professionals Groups | Greater Akron Chamber | 4 | 22,000 | 14,000
4. LEVERAGE CURRENT INITIATIVES | 4.1 Staff a full-time executive director to serve Greater Akron’s Young Professionals’ groups. | Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce | Young Professionals Organizations | 8 | 45,000 | 45,000
| | 4.2 Develop multimedia tools that Greater Akron’s employers can customize for their talent attraction efforts. | Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce | Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce | 9 | 75,000 | 0
| | 4.3 Convene employer roundtables in the industries (i.e. utilities, health care) in which the talent needs are the greatest. | Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce | Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce | 13 | 0 | 0

TOTALS | 1,154,500 | 668,500

*estimated
### Action Plan by Priority

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<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Start up Funding*</th>
<th>Ongoing Funding*</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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<td>1.2  Connect every resident of Greater Akron to a public park, trail or recreation area.</td>
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<td>Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Bicycle Federation, Akron Bicycle Club</td>
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<td>85,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2.1 Develop a true web-based portal for all of Greater Akron’s &quot;After Hours&quot; activities.</td>
<td>Rubberbuzz.com, Ohio.com</td>
<td>Akron’s web designer community, REALNEG.com, Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1.1 Build a stacked loop system onto the Bike and Hike Trail.</td>
<td>Metro Parks serving Summit County</td>
<td>Greater Akron Chamber, City of Akron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>3.1-3.4 Design a compelling &quot;Come Home to Akron&quot; message and campaign.</td>
<td>Young Professionals Groups</td>
<td>Greater Akron Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1.5 Outfit city buses with bike racks so that commuters can &quot;bus and bike.&quot; ($890/bus)</td>
<td>City of Akron, Mayor's Office</td>
<td>Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Bicycle Federation, Akron Bicycle Club, <a href="http://www.akronbike.org">www.akronbike.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>1.7 Start an annual U.S. or World Golf Challenge for children.</td>
<td>Mud Run Golf Course</td>
<td>Akron-Summit Convention and Visitors Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A-fed'l funds</td>
<td>N/A-fed'l funds</td>
<td>1.2 Connect every resident of Greater Akron to a public park, trail or recreation area.</td>
<td>City of Akron, Mayor’s Office</td>
<td>Metro Parks serving Summit County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>N/A-fed'l funds</td>
<td>N/A-fed'l funds</td>
<td>1.3 Complete the Ohio and Erie Canal towpath trail.</td>
<td>City of Akron, Mayor's Office, Cuyahoga Valley National Park</td>
<td>Metro Parks serving Summit County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*estimated
**Employer Survey Results and Methodology**

The employer survey was designed with input from the Greater Akron Chamber’s Workforce Development Taskforce and emailed to 1,200 Greater Akron Chamber members in September 2004. It was completed by 125 companies for an 11 percent response rate. Full results are available at:


**Focus Group Results & Methodology**

Focus groups were conducted September 20–22, 2004 in Akron and Kent. Fifty-one focus group participants attended; all between the ages of 25 and 43. Of the participants, 4 are currently graduate students. Twenty-five were female; 26 were male. There were 42 caucasians and nine professionals of color.

The goal of the focus groups was to gauge how a diverse cross-section of young professionals in Greater Akron perceive the Greater Akron region as a place to live and work. Please note that focus group results may not be statistically representative of a larger cross-section of respondents. We found the following things noteworthy:

*How Long Do You Plan to Stay in Greater Akron?*

![Bar Chart showing plans to stay in Greater Akron](chart.png)
- Sixty-five percent of participants planned to stay in Greater Akron for more than 10 years;
- 25 percent see Greater Akron as a stepping stone, unwilling to make a long-term commitment to staying (0-3 years or “I don’t know”)
- Overall, young professionals show a strong commitment to stay in Greater Akron. We refer to these young professionals as “vested.”

The majority of young professionals living in Greater Akron are vested in the community.

### What Brought You to Greater Akron?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/friends</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomerangs</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whim</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following is the prioritized rank order of the indexes that young professionals in Greater Akron say matter most to them. Please note that these are the subjective perceptions among focus group participants and were not used to calculate the index scores on Greater Akron’s handprint. Further discussion of each index is included on pages 29-30 of this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>After Hours</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Earning</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Around Town</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cost of Lifestyle</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Focus Groups in Akron and Kent, September 2004*
Handprint Results and Methodology

Greater Akron’s scores in the seven indexes (right) were calculated using a proprietary algorithm which weights 42 measures. In the following pages, each index will be discussed separately.

Please note that qualitative measures (focus groups, interviews, and surveys) were NOT used to determine Greater Akron’s scores in any of the seven indexes.
What do the indexes mean, and what do they measure?

**VITALITY.** Young professionals say they value a “healthy city” where people are active. To calculate Vitality, we measure: air quality; water quality; number of sunny days; life expectancy; miles of public parks, trails and recreation areas; fruit and vegetable consumption; farmer’s markets;* and fitness centers.*

**EARNING.** By the time they’re 32 years old, many young professionals have had up to nine jobs. Additionally, many young professionals start their own businesses. To calculate the Earning index, we measure: diversity of employment opportunities (NAICS code distribution); concentration of designers, artists, authors, musicians and similar per capita,* distribution of executive, technical, sales, clerical, and blue-collar workers; venture capital, entrepreneurship and start-ups, and the unemployment rate.

**LEARNING.** Young professionals value life-long learning. To determine the Learning index, we calculate the number of colleges, number of professional organizations, young professionals network(s), tech schools, number of people who are high school graduates, two-year college graduates, four-year college graduates, and Ph.D.’s.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL.** This index measures how diverse and tolerant a community is, a key consideration for the next generation. To calculate this index, we measure: percent of population ages 18-40; median age; median family size; diversity including metropolitan ethnic and racial change rankings; religious diversity including number of churches and number of denominations within a 20-mile radius; Richard Florida’s gay index including the number of gay/lesbian households; charitable donations; crime rates per 100,000; concentration of designers, artists, authors, musicians and similar per capita.

**COST OF LIFESTYLE.** Young professionals are in the beginning of their earning years, leaving college with an average debt of $19,500. To calculate the Cost of Lifestyle index, we include the following metrics: average income per capita; household index; and national cost of living index (includes average new home cost, food, transportation, utilities, and health care).

**AFTER HOURS.** Of course, young professionals are looking for things to do after 5 PM. This index includes the number of bars and nightclubs per capita; number of art galleries, theater and music venues per capita; restaurants (especially ethnic, locally owned and specialty); and fitness centers.
AROUND TOWN. How easy is it to get around town and to travel to other urban metros? This index measures: commute times, percent of population that commutes individually or in carpool, percentage of folks who walk or bike to work, percentage who take public transit, and proximity to other metro areas by interstate, train or airplane.

*Some factors count in multiple indexes.*

Head to Head Comparisons of Greater Akron vs. Other Cities
How does Greater Akron score against comparative communities in the indexes that matter to young professionals? The following table compares Akron with four benchmark communities. Please note: “4” is the national average on a scale where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>US Average</th>
<th>Greater Akron</th>
<th>Indianapolis</th>
<th>Minneapolis/St. Paul</th>
<th>Pittsburgh</th>
<th>Raleigh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vitality</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Earning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Capital*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cost of Lifestyle</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. After Hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Around Town</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater Akron vs. Indianapolis
Greater Akron outpaces Indianapolis in the Vitality and After Hours indexes. Therefore, when trying to attract talent to Greater Akron from Indianapolis, these indexes should be emphasized. But Greater Akron also has many things to learn from Indianapolis, most notably the collaboration between Indiana University and Purdue University. IUPUI (Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis) is the formal institution formed by IU and PU
in 1969. Since then, IUPUI has become a formidable economic engine. In 2002-2003, IUPUI research income set a record for the campus, with grants totaling $265,922,555, an increase of more than 31 percent over 2001-2002. Funding for research has risen steadily over the history of IUPUI, which leads Indiana higher education institutions in external research funding. These funds allow the campus to generate new knowledge across a broad range of academic disciplines and interdisciplinary areas, to pump new dollars into the local economy, and to enhance students’ opportunities to work and learn at the frontiers of their chosen fields. Greater Akron must take an interest and advocate for research and collaboration between the University of Akron and Kent State University. Independently, each is making amazing contributions. Together, they could be transformative.

Greater Akron vs. Minneapolis-St. Paul

Greater Akron and the Minneapolis-St. Paul region are tied in three indexes—Vitality, Cost of Lifestyle, and After Hours. In the remaining indexes, Akron lags, most notably in the Earning index. Specifically, Minneapolis-St. Paul simply offers more occupational options for young professionals. Nearly thirty-one percent of the Minneapolis-St. Paul workforce is employed in “knowledge occupations,” identified as managerial, professional, and technical workers. As of 2000, Akron has only 25% of its workforce employed in knowledge occupations. That percentage is expected to rise to 26.0% in 2010, which lags behind not only Minneapolis-St. Paul but also the state of Ohio, which are expecting jumps to 32.8% and 39.2% respectively. For Akron to attract and retain a greater share of knowledge workers, it must sharply focus on developing a diverse, knowledge-based economy supported by scalable entrepreneurial support.
Greater Akron vs. Pittsburgh

Greater Akron leads Pittsburgh in the Vitality index. It ties Pittsburgh in the Learning, Social Capital and Cost of Lifestyle indexes. Greater Akron trails Pittsburgh in the Earning, After Hours and Around Town indexes. Broadly, Pittsburgh shares very similar attributes with Akron: both are traditional “manufacturing towns” hustling to turn the corner into a true knowledge-based economy. In the late 1990’s, Pennsylvania’s governor supported the “Fairy Job Mother” public service announcement, a notable attempt to keep college grads in Pittsburgh. Although memorable, the PSA did not work; it targeted college grads rather than “Boomerangers.” Greater Akron should learn from Pittsburgh’s mistake and concentrate its marketing efforts on Boomerangers: high school and college grads who left the Akron area for greener pastures and who—now starting young families of their own—are open to moving “home” to Greater Akron. Another mistake Carnegie Melon University has made is investing heavily in tech companies which cannot go to scale in Pittsburgh. Millions of dollars have been poured into “tech transfer” and start-up companies which—to grow—must relocate to areas where more venture funding and talent are available. Greater Akron should scale its investments into tech transfer and tech start-ups commensurately with its ability to retain the companies it funds.
Greater Akron v. Raleigh-Durham

Raleigh-Durham is an amazing region, yet Akron holds its own, tying it in the Vitality, Cost of Lifestyle and After Hours indexes. Greater Akron lags in the remaining four indexes, with the greatest point spreads in the Earning and Learning indexes. Part of the reason for the drastic difference between Greater Akron and Raleigh-Durham in the Earning index is similar to the difference with Minneapolis-St. Paul: Raleigh-Durham’s percentage of workers employed in knowledge occupations is greater—36.3% in 2000 compared to 25.0% in the Akron area. But there’s something more. Raleigh-Durham does a world-class job of responding to the needs of its entrepreneurs.

The Council for Entrepreneurial Development conducts a regular “Entrepreneurial Satisfaction Survey” in which it asks entrepreneurs to rank both the importance of the region’s amenities in 26 areas and the region’s performance. Greater Akron could conduct a similar “Satisfaction Survey” of the area’s entrepreneurs to gauge their needs and levels of satisfaction. Raleigh-Durham’s score in the Learning index is truly a reflection of its unique geography. “University towns” generally have good scores in the Learning index. But a region with three universities? Raleigh-Durham benefits from the presence of the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State University and Duke University—its anchor tenants.
The Greater Akron Chamber and Next Generation Consulting thank the Wisdom Council and the Workforce Development Taskforce for their guidance, insight, and support for this project.

TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION WISDOM COUNCIL

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James B. McCarthy  
County Executive  
Summit County Executive Office

Robert Y. Bowman  
Deputy Mayor for Economic Development  
The City of Akron

Donald T. Misheff  
Northeast Ohio Managing Partner  
Ernst & Young, LLP

Carol A. Cartwright  
President, Kent State University

Donald L. Plusquellic  
Mayor, The City of Akron

Lynn M. Cavalier  
Vice President, FirstEnergy Corporation

Luis M. Proenza  
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Rebecca Guzy Woodford  
Vice President, Marketing and Communications  
Greater Akron Chamber

Connie Krauss  
Vice President, Government Affairs  
Greater Akron Chamber
THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE
As a standing committee of the Greater Akron Chamber, this group has special interest in attracting and retaining talent to Greater Akron.

Karen L. Talbott
(Vice Chair of Workforce Development)
President, Visiting Nurse Service & Affiliates

Sandy Auburn
Vice President, Development
The Akron Community Foundation

Rollie H. Bauer
President & CEO, The Cypress Companies, Inc.

Theresa C. Bishop
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Dominion and the Dominion Foundation

Robert Y. Bowman
Deputy Mayor for Economic Development
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Summit County Workforce Policy Board

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William Lowery
President & COO, Annaco, Inc.

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John J. Motuza
Compensation Manager, FedEx Custom Critical

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Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine

James Emore
Richard F. Rebadow, Jr.
Senior Vice President, Economic Development
Greater Akron Chamber

William J. Ginter
Suzanne E. Rickards
President & CEO, Herman Machine, Inc.

continues
### THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph A. Rochford</td>
<td>Vice President, Stark Education Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Rosen</td>
<td>Attorney, Goldman &amp; Rosen, Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence E. Saulino</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward L. Searle</td>
<td>Vice President, Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah V. Sergi</td>
<td>Director, Talent Management Human Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanley B. Silverman</td>
<td>Dean, Summit College, Professor of Social Science, The University of Akron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy L. Stafford</td>
<td>Vice President for University Relations &amp; Development, Kent State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Stroble</td>
<td>Senior Vice President &amp; Provost The University of Akron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Van Duser</td>
<td>Senior Vice President, Human Resources Akron General Medical Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Thanks to:

Erich Hetzel, Labor Market Analyst  
Bureau of Labor Market Information, Akron Region  
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

### Sources used for this report:

- Summit County Parks
- City of Akron website and published documents
- Greater Akron Chamber Website
- Ohio Polymer Study and Roadmap, September 2004
- Angelou Economics
- US Bureau of Labor and Statistics
- US Census Data
- Other sources listed in the Endnotes

### About the Greater Akron Chamber

The mission of the Greater Akron Chamber is to promote economic development to benefit the people of the Greater Akron Region. For more information, see www.greaterakronchamber.org.
About Next Generation Consulting

Next Generation Consulting has conducted interviews and focus groups with over 6,500 young professionals since 1998. NGC has developed a proprietary framework to measure communities based on how attractive they are for young professionals. Richard Florida, author of the best-seller *The Rise of the Creative Class*, calls NGC’s work “cutting edge” and its founder Rebecca Ryan, “a great asset to our country.”

Endnotes


2 Richard Florida, Ph.D. in remarks at the Max M. Fisher Music Center in Orchestra Place, Detroit Michigan (3 March 2004)


5 Paul D. Gottlieb, Ph.D., *The Problem of Brain Drain in Northeastern Ohio: What is it? How severe is it? What should we do about it?* [Cleveland, OH: Center for Regional Economic Issues, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, January 2001], p.4.


9 The full results of the employer survey are available online at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=47593160519

10 Inclusion means all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, economics, age, sexual orientation, education, ability or other difference.

11 To the United Nations, August 9, 1978

12 For a complete discussion of building stacked loop system, go online: http://www.imba.com/resources/trail_building/itn_13_5_technical.html


14 For more on trends in outdoor sports and planning: http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/conference/proceedings/PDF/Probstl.pdf

15 http://www.internationalgames.net/xgamessumm.htm

16 http://espn.go.com/gog04/