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June 2007

# Economic Development Newsletter

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### As I See It

*Qualities of the Best E.D. Websites*  
 By Bob Ady



The truth of the matter is that websites are more important than ever to economic development organizations, and increasingly, if you don't have a website, if we can't find it, or if it doesn't have the type of information we're looking for, your community is eliminated before the race even begins. But what makes a good E.D. website?

First of all, you need to make sure that site selectors can find your website. If you happen to be from a community, region, or county with a popular name (Adams, Green, Madison, Washington, etc.), you've got to be smart about your URL and even smarter about search engine optimization (i.e., coming up high on Google's search results page when I type in the name of your city or county and your state). When's the last time you conducted a search like this on your own community?

Organizations with innocuous names like "The Valley Partnership" or "M-9" have another hurdle: while your name may have high recognition within your own region, it may not impart any meaning whatsoever to a professional site selector. Site selectors want the facts: make your name meaningful to us.

Another surprising gaffe is communities that don't include what state they are located in on their home page or those that don't include any maps showing their location relative to neighboring states. Oftentimes, if there is any map at all, it's

a close-up of the county. Keep in mind that companies looking to expand or relocate may not be familiar with your state, let alone your county. Provide maps that place your community in the context of how you are trying to position yourself (e.g., if you think your location would make a great transportation hub, show a map with what cities are within 500 miles of your location). There are a number of excellent mapping services available specifically designed to meet the needs of economic development organizations.

Once we make it to your website, we want data, not fluff. Over the course of auditing dozens of community economic development websites, we've seen the gamut. The key is to understand the process that professional site selectors use, as this drives when we research communities over the internet and what information we are looking for each time. As the site selection project progresses, our information needs become more and more specific until finally, we contact you.

## **Ady International Webinars**

### **Webinar: The Keys to a Successful E.D. Website**

Tuesday, June 19, 10:00 am CST

Sixty-percent of site selection consultants first look to a community's website to find out about your community. If they can't find the information they're seeking on your website - or worse, can't even find your website - your community will be out of the running before the race even begins. And most times, you won't even know that you missed the opportunity.

During this webinar, learn what it takes to develop a winning E.D. website. This webinar is focused at economic development management, not technical audiences (although technical requirements will be explained in an easy-to-understand manner). Discussion will bridge the void between website development best practices and the unique requirements of economic development websites. Topics will include the following and many more:

- How often does the content on my website need to be updated?
- What information should be included in a community profile?
- Should we promote our high (low) unemployment rate? How about our favorable rating in an industry or business publication?
- How important is it to have certified, shovel-ready sites on our website?

- Should my community provide links off my website to state agencies and others? When and how?
- What are the most common mistakes made with regard to maps shown on the website?
- When in the site selection process do site selectors go to our website? What are they looking for during each visit?
- Should we list target industries on our website?
- What information do we need to provide about incentives?

This 60-minute webinar will include a presentation, question and answer session, and a copy of the presentation content downloadable in PDF format after completing a brief, anonymous post-webinar survey.

#### **Bob Ady**

Bob Ady is president of Ady International Company, a leading site selection consultancy. Over his career, Bob has located more facilities in the US than any other individual. Although most of his career has been on the site selection side, Bob was also co-founder/co-managing director of World Business Chicago, a nine-county regional economic development entity, giving him a unique perspective to understand the site selection process from both sides of the negotiating table.

#### **Janet Ady**

Janet Ady is president of [Voltedge, Inc.](#), a branding, marketing, and communications firm. Her firm helps clients develop websites and other marketing communications. In conjunction with Ady International Company, Voltedge has consulted with economic development entities of all sizes regarding website development, the identification and the sourcing of data required on e.d. websites. Her firm has conducted website audits on dozens of e.d. websites nationwide.

Price: \$150.00

[Register now, seats are limited.](#)

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#### **Webinar: Marketing to Site Selection Consultants**

Tuesday, September 25, 10:00 am CST

Site selection consultants lead the majority of site selection projects today. How can a community best communicate to and build relationships with these expert intermediaries? Bob Ady, who has located more facilities in the US than any other individual, will share with you the inside story of how a site selector thinks, what they care about, and how to reach them. Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear Bob tell it

like it is - so you can make the most effective use of your marketing budget.

During this webinar, Bob will address the following and related topics:

- How important are websites versus personal visits, mailings, gifts, receptions, newsletters, trade advertising, and other marketing tactics?
- What's the single greatest marketing opportunity that communities involved in a site selection project most frequently overlook?
- How important are testimonials in marketing your community? When is the most effective time to use them?
- Do site selectors care if a new building or commercial/industrial site becomes available in my community? If so, how should we let them know about it?
- How many site selection consultants are there? Is there a directory of them? Who else gets involved in corporate site selection?

This 60-minute webinar will include a presentation, question and answer session, and a copy of the presentation content downloadable in PDF format after completing a brief, anonymous post-webinar survey.

Price: \$150.00

[Register Now, Seats are Limited](#)

Ady International Company is the authority on site selection. Our principal, Robert M. Ady, has conducted more corporate relocations in the United States than any other individual. He brings a wealth of experience to your site selection project, as well as longstanding relationships with economic development organizations nationwide.

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