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September 2007

Economic Development Newsletter

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As I See It

The Million Dollar Question: How Do We Market Our Community to Site Selectors?

By Bob Ady



Of all the questions I get asked each year, the question of how to market to site selectors is always in the top two or three. Why is this question a perennial favorite? The proportion of searches done by site selection firms is increasing. By my estimate, 30-40% of all site searches today are done by outside site selection firms, and the bigger the project, the more likely this is the case. Although these firms may seem like a pretty big universe given the power they exert over the site selection process, quite the contrary is true. There are probably only about 50 or so site selection firms which do the lion's share of the projects.

So we have a situation where there are relatively few site selection firms and literally thousands of community, regional, state, and other economic development organizations, such as utilities vying for their attention. While that may sound daunting, **remember that site selection firms need the economic development organizations as much as the economic development organizations need them.** A successful location project requires an effective relationship between the two.

So, how do economic development organizations reach these firms, or do they wait and hope that the consulting firms find them? I know of no progressive economic development organization that does not have site location firms as an integral part of its business attraction strategy.

There are three primary approaches for achieving this goal. First and most important are personal meetings with the consulting firm. Not necessarily the principal, but the individual consultants that are the project managers. Preferably this should be in the site selector's office, but events and conferences are other effective venues.

Another effective approach in creating top-of-mind awareness for your community is through the use of e-mail to individuals in the consulting firm. Focus on what site selectors want to know, not just what you want to push. Key among the information in the e-mail should be new plants locating and new buildings/sites becoming available.

Finally, your website offers the first portal to your community. It may not offer the advantages of a personal meeting but the majority of site searches start with data gathered from your website. Make sure it is easy to find and loaded with the type of information site selectors need. And make sure the strengths of your community or region come through loud and clear, to help make your community worth remembering.

It seems pretty straightforward, but relatively few economic development organizations are consistently good at establishing and maintaining ongoing relationships with site selection consultants. It may well be one of your marketing activities with the greatest return on investment if you follow the simple rules of thumb I've outlined here.

Ady International Webinars

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 your community? If so, how should you 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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