

Western New York Regional Council Work Group Meetings

Professional Services Work Group Meeting Report

Meeting #2

Friday, September 9, 2011

Attendees:

Tom Kucharski	BNE (Work Group Chair)
Steve Bell	Eric Mower & Associates
Paul Bonaro	Yahoo! Data Center
Dr. Nan DiBello	SUNY Empire State College
Dr. Sonja Given	SUNY Empire State College
Therese Hickok	Uniland Development
Kevin Kelly	I-Evolve Technology Services
Michael Murray	Ernst & Young LLP
Peter Ronca	Shatter I.T.
Jeff Tredo	Bryant & Stratton
Diego Sirianni	ESD
Lorrie Abounader	BNE (Work Group Leader)
Rachel Teaman	Regional Institute (writer)
Aaron Lepsch	Facilitator

Summary of Meeting:

The goal of the second meeting was to clarify the key issues identified from the SWOT analysis and narrow down their definition as it pertains to our specific industry. Then we were to define strategies to address these critical issues.

The group identified six areas of need:

- Anticipating the needs of the industry
- Capitalize on the proximity to Canada and NYC
- Maximize the available infrastructure of the area
- Align education with workforce needs and strengthen skills in certain socioeconomic populations.
- Change the perspective of downstate groups on upstate needs
- Reform the regulatory environment

Workforce development and downstate/update and regulatory/tax issues were deferred due to concerns that these might be repetitive of what other work groups are addressing or focusing on. That said, professional services' interests are not necessarily represented in those work group and may be open for further discussion.

The other issues were addressed and the following is a highlight of the strategies that were selected by the group that could be the most effective:

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Top Strategies and Related Drivers/Conditions

1. How do we capitalize on the emerging needs of the sector?
 - Form a professional services council for Buffalo Niagara
 - Align curriculum in schools with employer needs
 - Form sister-city relationship with those doing it right
 - Engage industry experts to quantify advantages of locating data centers in the area
 - Establish annual award for “best new ideas” in industry
 - Survey Canadian and NYC businesses to identify their experiences in the area
 - Create a central resources website

2. How do we become the back office of NYC and Canada?
 - Create unique incentives
 - Set up satellite attraction offices of kiosks in NYC and Toronto
 - Identify ex pats working in those locations in industry to make intros
 - Aggressively recruit back office jobs from companies that already have a presence
 - As cost of operating in major metros increases, promote comparable costs in this region
 - Exploit quality of life in region as second to none
 - Develop a marketing plan directly on NYC-based companies
 - Use those companies that made the move as ambassadors

3. How do we use existing infrastructure as an asset?
 - Allocate inexpensive hydropower as incentive for future data centers
 - Inventory of near-ready sites and buildings
 - Promote cooler temperatures as asset
 - Promote readily accessible fiber optic infrastructure
 - Identify areas in the region that have the capacity to sustain different types of development in this area
 - Assess public transit as resource
 - Highlight stable climate/natural disaster profile
 - Create incentive for building owners to update their properties
 - Develop 3D models of different types of developments possible on the site and make it viral
 - Create interactive map with search criteria