

## **Job Attraction – Getting to the Short List**

My last column explained how to get a *prospect* (a new company or even a talented individual) *interested* in growing their business in our region. Today I will discuss what we can do to get these prospects to the *short list* of potential communities they are considering for their business expansion or relocation. As was discussed last month, the pipeline of new prospects begins when a prospect expresses interest in our region and then contacts someone at the state or EDawn for more information.

Once we have a prospect in the pipeline we start with the initial exchange of information. If we stay competitive in the project, we make the short list of communities they are considering and expect a site visit. That visit is followed by the analysis of incentives and other deal closing factors and finally concludes with an announcement of new jobs. Our initial response to the prospect is vitally important and may range from the prospect's use of our website to a more formal request for information, often managed by a site selection consultant. These consultants are very important to the process and can influence the decision makers in numerous ways. It is their job to eliminate communities that do not fit the general requirements of the prospect, such as the size or location of the community. However, they also use their personal knowledge of the communities to get the list to a manageable size so the prospect can focus on a few qualified communities that would meet their needs – *the short list*.

It is important that these site selectors have accurate information regarding our region or we may end up eliminated long before we have the chance to offer the correct information. That's why EDawn works to develop and maintain our relationship with the top national site selectors. This requires a site selector friendly website, regular updates and annual visits to most of the top 150 site selectors in an effort to ensure they have the most current information when the Reno-Sparks-Tahoe area is considered. Additionally, it is important to determine if they have a misperception about our region. If so, we then present information to them to set the record straight, as well as query them about our strengths or qualities that make our region uniquely attractive. Based on this information we can adjust our marketing messages to correct the misperceptions and highlight our exceptional assets.

Getting to the short list is the most difficult piece of the job attraction process. Our region has some branding issues and misperceptions that if not corrected, can easily get us cut from the long list of community candidates. Your promotion of our region in a positive way, in concert with our aggressive marketing efforts, can make a real difference. If the prospects understand why you have chosen to live here and grow your family or business here, they are sure to give us a closer look. Once we're on that short list we can then work to close the deal. We'll discuss that final phase of the pipeline process next month.