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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REGION’S EMPLOYERS

Young Professionals (YPs) are the future of the business community in Buffalo Niagara. But who are they? What do they envision for their careers...for their lifestyles...for Western New York? And what can the business community do to strengthen Buffalo Niagara as the place where YPs want to work, live and play?

BN360 – Buffalo Niagara’s premier YP program – wanted to find out and conducted an online survey between May and August of this year to answer these questions. Several areas of the survey are encouraging and reaffirm our region is on the rebound, while others serve as a call to action to address future concerns now.

We placed the survey respondents into three main profiles: lifelong residents; boomerangs, those who left the area and then returned; and transplants from other parts of the country. The majority are lifelong residents, have a Bachelor’s degree or higher, and share a positive outlook for the region and would recommend Buffalo Niagara.

It is clear, however, that we must act to ensure that Buffalo Niagara remains a career destination for YPs. Addressing this issue is made all the more important in light of workforce trends happening now in Western New York. According to U.S. Census data, the Buffalo Niagara region has been outpacing the nation when it comes to the YP population, adults ages 25-34, since 2012. However, trend data indicates that over the next five years the region will lose almost one percent of its YP population while the nation grows the same age group by almost four percent.

This national trend data serves as a wake-up call for employers and government leaders. Collectively, we are going to have to work together to recruit and retain young professionals.
YPs like Buffalo Niagara. They want to stay. They want to be engaged in the community.

1. Over 97% of survey respondents said they would recommend the Buffalo Niagara region as a place to live, work and play. This was uniform across industry, marital status, lifer/boomerang/transplant and race.

2. 88% of YPs see themselves living in the region in 10 years, however only 76% believe the region provides opportunities for growth in their career. Some of the most cited reasons for this claim were that respondents felt there were not enough businesses in the region or not enough businesses in their industry sector.

3. YPs of color in Buffalo Niagara are much more likely to say that they don’t see themselves living in the region in 10 years. While YPs of color made up just 7% of respondents, they were four times more likely than their white peers to say they don’t see themselves in the region in 10 years. Although they universally would recommend the region, just under 60% said that they feel the region provides career growth opportunities compared with 83% of the white respondents.

4. The most important issues to YPs in Buffalo Niagara are community engagement/involvement, education and civic vitality. YPs who responded to the survey indicate the three most important issues facing the region are community engagement/involvement, the robust participation of the public in regional issues, education and civic vitality.

Note: Survey numbers are rounded and may not sum to 100%
DEMOGRAPHICS

The who, the where, and the why.

Over 60% of survey respondents are lifelong residents of Buffalo Niagara. The next largest group include those who moved here from another area. These transplants make up 21% of all survey respondents. More than 51% of transplants to the area came from other parts of New York State. The bulk of the rest are from the states that surround New York (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey and Massachusetts), though respondents did come from as far away as Korea and Turkmenistan. Forty seven percent of respondents said the motivation for moving was family and 34% said it was for work.

Where Our YPs Are Coming From

The State of Young Professionals

- City of Buffalo had nearly 7,800 more young professionals in 2014 than it did in 2007.
- Through 2017, the population of 25-34-year-olds is outpacing the rest of the nation.
- Our region is outpacing the national average in almost every category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YP Ethnicity</th>
<th>Buffalo Niagara</th>
<th>Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDUCATION & INDUSTRY


Sixty percent of respondents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. In fact, the educational attainment of survey respondents exceeds that of the general population of Buffalo Niagara. Survey respondents are twice as likely to have a bachelor’s degree and more than three times as likely to hold a graduate degree. Fifty percent of respondents are employed in various aspects of the professional service sector. The other larger employment sectors are healthcare and life sciences, manufacturing, education and retail.

DIVERSITY

Some different experiences and beliefs.
The percentage of minorities and, in particular, Black/African-American and Asian respondents, is not reflective of the racial and ethnic make-up of the larger community. The survey results for people of color indicate that their experiences are quite different than that of their white peers. They are more than twice as likely to work in the non-profit sector and four times more likely to say that they will not be living here in 10 years. This might be explained by the fact that 50% of the people of color who responded were transplants and thus may not have an affinity for the region in the same way lifelong or returned expats would. However, only 57% said they feel the region provides opportunities for career growth compared to 83% for whites.

Belief There is Opportunity for Career Growth

source: 2017 BN30 YP Survey
VALUES AND PERCEPTIONS

YPs are interested and engaged.
The survey asked respondents to rate what issues are most important to them, what are the region’s biggest opportunities for improvement and what topics they would like to learn more about. They were provided with the following nine options and asked to choose their top three:

- Arts and Culture
- Civic Vitality
- Community Development
- Community Engagement
- Education
- Inclusivity/Diversity
- Innovation/Entrepreneurship
- Multi Modal Transportation
- Public Engagement

The issues deemed most important to the survey respondents are civic vitality, community engagement and education. These are closely mirrored by the top responses for the biggest opportunities for improvement as well.

![Young Professional Interests Graph]

**Young Professional Interests**

- Most Important
- Opportunity for Growth
- Want to Learn More

NEXT STEPS

Where we go from here. How we can get there.

BN360 plans to take these survey results and implement actions to address the issues Buffalo Niagara’s YPs told us were of most concern. Such actions include:

1. **Diversity and Inclusion** - develop a platform to promote inclusivity throughout the BN360 community and across the Buffalo Niagara region. Our engaged/BN360 YPs are predominately 25-34, female, white and educated which does not represent the makeup of our YP community.

2. **Civic Engagement Programming** - Develop programming that includes civic vitality, community development and community engagement to give YPs the information, hands-on experience and opportunity to engage in community growth.

3. **Professional Development** - Continue to provide the most up-to-date and current resources to help retain and develop young talent in the region.
ABOUT BN360

Connect. Develop. Empower.
BN360 is Buffalo Niagara’s premier Young Professional program offering more than 15 events annually focused on networking, professional development and community engagement. BN360 aims to create an inclusive and collaborative network of resources that can empower talented individuals to achieve their goals for professional growth and success.

Get Connected:

@BN360
Buffalo Niagara 360
thepartnership.org/bn360
bn360@thepartnership.org

2018 EVENT SCHEDULE

2018 KICKOFF HAPPY HOUR
- Presented by Oath
Start off with a bang & meet the Spotlight Professionals.
Thursday, November 9 - The Barrel Factory

MONEY MATTERS
- Presented by Alliance Advisory Group
This program will help you learn more about making your money work for you.

LEGAL BRIEFS
- Presented by Harris Beach, PLLC
Looking at legal issues through a business lens to help protect you and your organization.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS
- Presented by Niagara University
Elevating careers to the next level by learning leadership skills from the expert speakers.

JUMPSTART
Refine and refresh essential business skills with this morning series.

HAPPY HOUR FOR A CAUSE
Blending networking and giving back (to local non-profits) in a laid-back, social setting.

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