

STRATEGIC REGIONAL MARKETING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Partnership for Knowledge Entrepreneurship
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BRIDIE GARCIA
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Abstract

As we advance into what is termed the new “knowledge economy,” businesses have broken away from the traditional way of thinking and changed to attract and accommodate new bodies of talent. One way businesses have changed from the traditional sense is through their location decisions. Businesses now consider quality of life as an essential construct when determining their company’s location. The Greater Binghamton Region has been marketed to outside businesses as a breeding ground of growing minds and as an excellent source of human capital. With the help of the Broome County Industrial Agency (BCIDA), the Greater Binghamton Coalition, the Broome County Economic Development Group, as well as many others; news of the region has reached thousands as the ideal place to work, live, and play. Binghamton is the home to innovation and has been rated as an area with a high quality of life. With low housing costs, an excellent infrastructure, and talented youth, it can attract and accommodate many businesses. With Broome County and Binghamton University implementing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as a way to capture aspects of quality of life; the region is reaching newer levels as technology advances. Binghamton can soon become a demanding location of prestige, creative and innovative workers, and a magnet for greater talent.

Keywords: Regional marketing; Quality of Life; Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Binghamton Keywords: Broome County Industrial Agency (BCIDA); Greater Binghamton Coalition; Binghamton University; Strategic partnership for Industrial Resurgence (SPIR); Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce; Virtusphere; Binghamton Neighborhood Project; Binghamton Data and Disaster Recovery Plan

Part I: Introduction

Traditionally, the decisions of businesses when it came to location were driven by factors such as labor/land costs and accessibility to material (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). Businesses were eager to locate to an area where these raw materials could be readily available. Today, businesses use a wider variety of criteria when searching for a location; especially for knowledge-based industries. In the new knowledge economy, knowledge, rather than resources, is the important raw material. As the economy devolves, so too must the landscape. The landscape then was about making and moving tangible materials, and today it is more about generating and transporting ideas. As Thomas Friedman said, “The world needs crazy ideas to change things because the conventional way of thinking is not working anymore.” According to Richard Florida, thriving places will have a high velocity of idea, a high density of

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talent, and a landscape that accommodates and accelerates invention, innovation, and creation (Florida, 2005).

One important construct that gets incorporated into the decision of a location is the quality of life (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). Most empirical research suggests that traditional methods of attracting businesses, such as fiscal incentives, are not as effective as other methods (Salvesen & Renski, 2003, cited by, Blair & Premus, 1972). Pouring money into creating incentives may drain resources that could be spent on other areas of development such as education and infrastructure. Tax credits and other incentives are often misunderstood when determining the location decisions of offices (Pittman, 2006). Most incentive programs last only 5 years and the dollar value is smaller compared to continuous costs such as labor and transportation. Quality of life is an essential factor in the location decisions among businesses. Since the 1980s, many local officials have followed a quality of life centered agenda in order to improve and revitalize their cities to attract outside businesses (Salvesen & Renski, 2003).

When determining prospective office locations, businesses go through a site selection process that involves many rounds of elimination (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). The first round had a broad array of information while the last rounds go into more detailed information. A site selection team gathers information on the company and creates a list of criteria that the company needs to operate. The list contains things that are "must haves" and "would likes" for the firm (Salvesen & Renski, cited by, Blair & Premus, 1987; Pittman, 2006). Must-haves are essential for the company to operate while would-likes include criteria that are desirable but not necessary. The next step of the decision making process is to gather data about potential locations and compare them against the lists they created. The locations that do not satisfy the must-haves are automatically eliminated. The location search is carried out into different stages geographically as well. The beginning stages examine broad regions. During the final stages, the amenities and attributes of certain communities are examined. Many economic professionals are beginning to see that marketing entire regions is more effective than focusing on just towns and cities. These localities are most likely to be in competition so improving the quality of life for an entire region is becoming popular when aiming to attract businesses.

Location decisions are actually rare events for many companies (Pittman, 2006). New offices are usually looked at every few years or so. Many companies even hire site selection consultants since location decisions require often tedious analysis. These analyses include calculations of costs, benefits, and associated risks. There are many reasons why companies decide to relocate or expand their location. These reasons are generally divided into product/market and non-market reasons (Pittman, 2006). Examples of product/market reasons are demographic shifts, development of new regional markets/products/services, and growth of existing products/services; examples of non-market reasons include unfavorable business climates, enhancing the company's image, improving the quality of life for their workers, and problems with recruitment or retention. The decision makers and influencers involved in location decisions are usually the CEO, outside consultants, real estate agents, location committees, central staff departments, and executives.

When identifying a search area, the company will create a checklist that includes things like purpose of the new location, type of building, transportation, tax consideration, labor requirements, location of competitors and quality of life (Pittman, 2006). Site selection criteria also get broken down into country, state, and local factors. At the local level, the following is

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often considered: business support services, labor availability/cost, quality of education, cost of living, the environment, and arts, recreation and other facilities.

Consultants working on site searches often develop a Request for Information (RFI) document (Pittman, 2006). It contains information on project parameters and provides information on the company's must-haves and wants. Once the RFI is complete, the consultant distributes the document to economic development agencies and other organizations that screen for sites. The communities that best fit the companies' desires then submit their packages to the consultant.

Once the checklist and RFI is complete and distributed to the organizations, the search area is identified, community information is received and the site decision process is then ready to begin. This process usually occurs in three phases. Phase one consists of reviewing the submitted information and eliminating locations that fail to meet the selection criteria. This often consists of hundreds of communities that get drastically cut down to about 10 to 15. In the second phase, the calculations of operating costs and profits come into play. Costs such as facilities and equipment investment, annual operating costs, transportation, and site preparation are examined. The company or consultant usually visits these remaining sites or communities during this middle phase. During the last phase, the final communities are looked at in greater detail. This phase requires a great deal of time and involvement by economic developers, local government members and elected officials after the final site is then chosen. What makes things quite difficult in this process is the qualitative rather than quantitative factors. Criteria like work ethic, labor-management relations, and receptivity to new companies are not quantifiable. In the last phase, subjective factors are usually the deciding factors.

High-technology industry has been fast growing and is seen as essential to the growth of the economy. The availability of a workforce, who possesses knowledge in this industry, is seen as one of the most important factors when determining the location of these high-tech companies. The proximity to universities is also a crucial factor (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). The presence of skilled labor and a university engineering program are also crucial factors in site selection. Universities usually provide cultural and recreational amenities that attract knowledgeable and talented workers. Close proximity to universities also means that research between industry and faculty can transpire (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). Companies have shifted from the dependency on cheap labor to dependency on skilled labor. Areas that are likely to attract these knowledgeable workers are most likely to be successful in the future. Areas with a high quality of life are likely to attract these pools of talent. By remaining in the area, knowledgeable workers reinforce the quality of life by advocating policies that continually improve crime, pollution, recreation, education, and public services. Included in the determination of the quality of life are economic factors such as employment opportunities, cost of living, climate, education, and recreational opportunities. Crime and safety issues are also included. As long as a community does not hold large crime rates, a company is likely to gravitate to sites that have cheap taxes and property costs. However, small businesses owned by a single owner are the exception. The location decision is usually based on where the owner resides. Studies have suggested that cities have successfully attracted businesses and workers through revitalization of their communities (Salvesen & Renski, 2003).

A pilot study was conducted to determine and identify the business location decisions in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina. This study sheds some light on the importance of quality of life in the location decisions of these businesses (Salvesen & Renski,

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2003). Ten firms agreed to be interviewed; most of the firms were small with less than 50 employees. Several of the firms were started by entrepreneurs who were already working in the area and others relocated from states such as Georgia, Kentucky, and New York. Some of the survey questions asked were how long the firm had been in its current location, what the main reasons were to relocate to the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area, how important was quality of life in the selection process, and how they define quality of life. While none of the firms stated that quality of life was the ultimate factor in their location decision, most stated that it was a very important factor. Other factors that influenced their decision were the proximity to an international airport, accessible hospitals, universities, and cultural/recreational amenities. Two firms stated that they located to the "Triangle" because a university in the area had a program that made office space available at low rates. Most businesses said they came because of the high quality work force.

In a survey conducted by the National Park Service, most CEOs said that quality of life for their workers was the third most important deciding factor when locating their business. This was behind access to markets and skilled labor (Kotval, 2004). Studies have shown that parks and vast space are elements to a high quality of life which in turn attracts businesses and residents. Community preservation is seen today as a key to economic growth. When deciding to expand or relocate, employers are now greatly taking into consideration where their employees would like to live and work. Businesses want to locate to an area that will attract the best human capital. Firms such as Fluor Daniel Consulting and the Fantus group of Deloitte perform quality-of-life appraisals of different sites across the county and provide this information to companies seeking to relocate. According to a survey done by Area Development Magazine, housing availability and costs ranked among the top 5 indicators of quality of life. Housing costs were essential to 67.6 percent of the corporations surveyed and 66.1 percent stated that the availability of housing was an important factor. Low crime rates, good hospitals, and good schools were also ranked highly. The most crucial aspects of a good location for the average business, according to Deloitte and Touche, are large management and technical pools, opportunities for communication and transportation, office parks and space, and a "good housing mix" which includes availability, low costs, and the type of housing in the community. Binghamton was recently announced on NBC's the Today Show, as number one in the nation's housing market where money can be made. Home prices are going up because of businesses. Mayor Matt Ryan has helped create 22,000 jobs in the last 3 years by attracting small and large businesses to the city; while many other cities are losing jobs (Today Show, 2009).

Many people fail to consider the great economic impact that housing has on the community (Kotval, 2004). A study was conducted by the Center for Economic Development at the University of Massachusetts to examine the impact of housing in the City of Boston. The National Association of Home Builders developed a model that could estimate the economic impact of home building; everything from construction to the end when the home becomes inhabited. The model is divided into three phases that include the cost of construction in (phase 1); the profits for local residents during construction in (phase 2); and the local jobs, income, and taxes created as a result of the newly constructed homes in occupation in (phase 3). The study shows that there is a significant impact to the community when single and multifamily homes are constructed. There are many direct and indirect impacts to the construction as well. Direct impacts being on and off- site construction work and the jobs created in retail and professional services. In-direct impacts included ripple effects for the local residents. The money earned for the residents during construction was then spent on community goods and

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services so there was a continuous cycle of income that would benefit the community. A community that implements a good housing strategy spurs economic development.

A study was conducted surveying 174 businesses that recently relocated to Colorado. The businesses' reasoning in relation to their decision to relocate or expand in the area was examined. The study was conducted to assess the role of quality of life amongst their decisions. One third of the businesses that relocated, were originally from outside Colorado, 28% were from California, and the remainder were from surrounding states. They were given a list of elements and asked to rank the elements according to their level of importance in their location decision. The 50 items were then factor analyzed and distributed under 1 of 5 different factors: quality of life, labor and cost issues, government involvement and taxes, daily living concerns, and proximity to relevant public services. The results of this study indicated that the most common factors involved in location decisions were labor and costs issues and daily living concerns (Love & Crompton, 1999). The individual elements that were rated the highest were the cost of the office and business operating costs. Companies that relocated from outside the state however rated quality of life more highly than start-up companies or companies who were expanding. The possible reason for this could be that companies who were already in Colorado took for granted the high quality of life. Quality of life was not important to the companies already situated in the state because they were used to it. Companies outside of Colorado were more grateful for the amenities that could be offered to them once they relocated. Companies who had a greater number of executives and professionals were also more likely to rate quality of life as their top reason for relocation to Colorado as opposed to companies with fewer professionals.

According to analysis of business activity after September 11th, security has become a major factor when locating a business (Security director's report, 2007). Researchers have even found that issues of safety were major factors for office vacancies in urban areas. One study found that vacancy rates in Chicago of 3 office buildings, increased from 28 percent to 67 percent after September 11th (Dermisi & Baen 2005). The study also found that these companies relocated away from central business districts. The cost of security is a lot higher in major cities. In 2006, the average cost for a class A building was \$0.93 per square foot and \$0.71 for class B and C buildings (Security director's report, 2007). The national average is only \$0.63 per square foot. This average was lower at \$0.41, prior to the attacks on September 11th. Despite many years without a serious attack, there is still a greater risk for businesses to remain in central business districts. Researchers have found 21 possible threats to security for offices and they are more likely to occur in urban settings. There are also security measures that businesses must now adhere and spend money on such as sprinkler systems (Dermisi & Baen, 2005). Businesses may have to pay higher salaries to appeal to employees and to be perceived as a safe office location. Even after these studies on security were conducted, researchers still felt that the benefits of locating in a central business district outweighed the benefits of being in the suburbs. However many experts do say that another attack is likely and urge businesses to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of security when searching for an office location (Security director's report, 2007). Luckily, Binghamton was recently named in 2007 by Farmer's Insurance, as the 11th "Most Secure Place to Live" among mid-sized cities (Farmer's group, 2007). Taken into consideration were aspects such as crime, extreme weather, risk of natural disasters, terrorism threats, life expectancy, and job loss.

Part II: Best Practices

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The town of Vallejo, California implemented a website in 2008 using GIS technology for site selection to attract businesses to the area (Kasper, 2009). Geographic Information Systems allow users to gain information about a region using interactive digital maps. It cuts down the site selection process dramatically and is very appealing to outside businesses. The Wall Street Journal even announced the launching of the website. It brought much publicity and attention to the area because the system was so novel. The website received an award from the Council for Urban Economic Development, and even brought attention to the US Department of Commerce. They named it one of the most innovative local economic development programs in the country. Oklahoma City used their GIS website to in an attempt to attract Dell and successfully did so. Dell used their website during their site selection process and chose a 120,000 square foot facility in the city. Their corporate real estate manager, Peter Kaharl claims that the process was so much easier by using this technology than it normally is and that it was a great tool for searching available properties. Dell had looked at 122 cities in North and South America and chose Oklahoma City as their number one site.

Binghamton University has implemented a facility right on campus dedicated to the use of GIS. Their mission states the following: to foster the educated use of Global Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for basic and applied research (Heard, 2009). It was created in 2001 because of the increased need in GIS training. They provide short courses and one on one help to those seeking funded research. The Department of Geography created a Census Mapping Project in 2002 that made it easier to access information from the 2000 U.S. Census (Smith, Plummer, Lewin, 2003). The U.S. Census database is widely used but not very user friendly; so Binghamton University created an Internet Mapping Service. It provides information according to the university's research interests and needs such as population, race, migration, employment, socio-economic, and housing. These variables can be selected and mapped according to theme and they are downloadable and printable. The project was created to explore the newest trends in GIS technology and to support the strong research mission of Binghamton University. The map server is broken down into different frames which include a map frame, legend frame, a layer frame, and the outer frame. The layer frame lets you choose features such as hospitals, highways, airports, schools, and retail centers. The user can also choose from 5 different variable categories which are Citizenship, Employment, Migration, Population, Socio-Economic, and Housing. The user also has the ability to select which Geographic level they would like to map; State, MSA, County, Census Tract, Zip Code, and MSATract. Binghamton University has also partnered with the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development to provide aerial imagery of the town of Vestal which is accessible right on the website of the U.S. Census 2000 Map Server.

With the help of GIS technology, the Binghamton Neighborhood Project was created which is collaboration between Binghamton University faculty and community partners to understand and improve the quality of life in the region. It is being done under the Evolutionary Studies Program and its home is the University Downtown Center. The BNP project is based on social research investigating people from "all walks of life" (Wilson, 2008). They partnered with the Search Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of communities. In collaboration with the Binghamton City School District a survey called the "Developmental Asset Profile" was given to approximately 2,000 students from grades 6 to 12 back in 2006 (Wilson, 2008). The survey asked for the student's residential location which was then all compiled to create GIS maps. These GIS maps contain data on the student's social preferences and factors about their environment such as family, school, recreational opportunities, religion, and

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neighborhood. They also tied data with the Broome County Police Department for information on juvenile crime, the Broome County Health Department for a list of health variables, and of course the Binghamton University GIS center which provided data on aspects of the environment such as housing and landscape variables as well as census statistics. This collaboration of community and the university data under one GIS site makes it easier for the university to access information and conduct further community-based research.

Another best practice in Binghamton was the promotion of the Greater Binghamton Region through U.S. Airways Magazine. According to James DiMascio, formerly the Executive Director of the Greater Binghamton Coalition, U.S. Airways offered this great opportunity which only took about a month to put together. U.S. Airways gets about ten thousand readers a day which means that news of Greater Binghamton touched a massive audience. The magazine was featured on international flights as well during the month of August 2007. The magazine covered information on the history of Greater Binghamton, airline avionics, electronic simulation, higher education, health care, and leisure and entertainment. There were advertisements for the Greater Binghamton Airport, Binghamton University; companies like Endicott-Interconnect, Rockwell Collins, BAE, and Lockheed Martin. This was such a brilliant way of advertising the region since it had the ability to reach thousands of potential tourists, visitors, homebuyers, and companies. The magazine is so widely read since there are a limited amount of things to do on board while people are traveling. It can draw people from diverse backgrounds and interests, while also sparking promotion through word of mouth once passengers leave their flight.

Binghamton is lucky to be a site where high-technology firms are the norm, and virtual simulation is its home. The simulation industry began its mark in Binghamton just 80 years ago (Doyle, 2009). This region was a large part of the development of the simulation industry in general. Edwin A. Link created the first simulator in aviation entitled "Blue Box," right here in Binghamton. Other companies that have an office in the region include: Binghamton Simulator Company, Diamond Visionics, L-3 Link Simulation and Training, Rockwell Collins Simulation and Training, RPA Electronics Solutions, Inc., Simulation and Control Technologies, Inc., and Virtusphere. Most of these companies were able to attend the 2008 Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference last December, in Orlando Florida (Doyle, 2009). The purpose of this show was to build a cohesive relationship between education, the armed services, industry, and government agencies to further training programs across the globe. Virtusphere will be attending a conference at the end of April in Washington D.C. entitled the Federal Consortium for Virtual Worlds. This will be a wonderful opportunity for Virtusphere to promote their company and their product. It also allows for promotion of the Greater Binghamton Region as well since Virtusphere has a home here.

Virtusphere is a company that develops quality simulation systems so customers can fully immerse themselves in virtual training, entertainment, and walk-throughs. James DiMascio, the Chief Operating Officer of Virtusphere, wants their products to be used as a tool for business and not just entertainment; to be used by companies, the military, research centers, and universities across the globe. It is an international product that must be promoted in a way that reaches the global market. They make use of web based networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook; and have a demonstration of how the sphere operates on Youtube. On their website, they have downloadable brochures that target different consumers. One brochure is geared toward the military and highlights the sphere's use for training and preparing for

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dangerous environments (Virtusphere, 2009). The other brochure is geared towards audiences interested in the entertainment aspect of a virtual world. Their products can be applied to areas such as gaming, health and fitness, museums and education, architecture and construction walk-throughs, special events, and virtual travel.

According to Darcy Fauci, the Director of Economic Development for Broome County, the Greater Binghamton Coalition is working on promoting the area as the home of simulation through brochures and conferences and they are even working on a video to display for the Department of Defense. The video is being worked on in conjunction with Patrick Doyle from the Broome County Industrial Development Agency (BCIDA). The video will highlight the modeling and simulation in the region. They plan to post it on Youtube, SIM TV, the BCIDA website; as well as play it during conferences once it is complete.

Last year, the New York State Economic Development Council (NYSEDC) awarded the Greater Binghamton Coalition, the Broome County Industrial Development Agency, and the Broome County Economic Development Department, first place in their efforts to promote the region through Data Disaster Recovery marketing (County News Release, 2008). Their presentation was intended to attract the financial businesses of New York City who were looking for suitable areas outside the city for backup data operations if a disaster were to strike. Students enrolled in Binghamton University's Entrepreneurship class, headed by Angelo Mastrangelo, assisted with the initial research of this project. Many businesses are now looking into co-location recovery sites (Binghamton DDR Business Plan, 2006). Several Wall Street businesses were interviewed and stated that there is a demand for disaster recovery sites outside of New York City. The reason for this is because their current data centers are running out of space and power. The SEC currently recommends that large financial firms should choose a location for their recovery sites no greater than 200 miles away from the financial district so that way it is still easily accessible. Binghamton is an ideal location because is 180 miles away from New York City. Many employees of these firms know and like Binghamton because their children attended the university or have been to IBM. Binghamton also offers a wide variety of incentives and Empire Zone benefits. Including discounts on electric and gas as well as discounts from your phone bill. Firms could also have access to Binghamton's Integrated Electronics Engineering Center (IEEC) and the Strategic partnership for Industrial Resurgence (SPIR) for assistance in their electronics, products, research and they provide manufacturing and service technologies.

As far as travel goes, even though the Greater Binghamton Airport has less flights leaving than most airports, it is a great option to travel to and from New York City and to other major airports in Philadelphia, Detroit, Washington-Dulles, and Atlanta (Binghamton DDR Business Plan, 2006). There is light traffic and few delays and the airport is easily accessible from the major interstates. The airport also offers wireless internet, a business center workplace, a conference center, and electronic check in kiosks for smoother check ins.

According to the Data and Disaster Recovery feasibility study, Greater Binghamton got a 5-star Quality of Life rating from the Expansion Management Journal. In today's times, companies are looking to expand and relocate to areas that were rated highly in quality of life (Salvesen & Renski, 2003). One of the reasons Binghamton was rated so highly was the reasonable cost of living as compared to many of the major cities (Binghamton DDR Business Plan, 2006). Binghamton also has excellent education system. Binghamton and Vestal high

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schools have been rated in the top 1000 in the nation in that category according to Newsweek. Binghamton University has been rated by Kiplinger's Personal Finance in the Top 5 Best Value Schools in the country and in the Top 50 of the nation's public universities according to Newsweek. The high school drop -out rate is half of the national average and SAT scores are above the national average. Thirty two percent of the population in Greater Binghamton holds an associate degree or higher and 10.1 percent have higher degrees. Binghamton has a low travel time, estimated to be 14 minutes, with low traffic. Also under the heading of Quality of Life is Binghamton's wide array of events, entertainment, sports, and other attractions. It is named the Carousel Capital of the World and is home to the Tri-Cities Opera. Binghamton is also a stop on the PGA tour and is rated number 13 for golfability according to Golf Digest, due to its accessibility and affordability.

The DDR feasibility study also showed that Binghamton's costs were half to those of New York City and lower than many other competitors. Binghamton seems like the ideal location for Data Centers. New York City's rates are about \$500 per square foot while a similar floor space will cost \$7-9 dollars per square foot in Greater Binghamton (Binghamton DDR Business Plan, 2006). Binghamton is also an ideal location since we have fiber optic connections and at a lower cost than New York City. Many of our competitors like Pennsylvania, do not have the infrastructure needed for a data center while Greater Binghamton has a solid infrastructure. The Greater Binghamton region should continue to be marketed to the financial firms of New York City and elsewhere, as the ideal area to implement a Data Center. We have the technology, infrastructure, quality of life, space affordability, and incentives available to make many Data Centers operate and flow smoothly.

According to Amy Shaw, the Vice President for Member Services at the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber offers a Quality of Life guide to get outsiders to relocate to the area. It is printed annually and is distributed to all companies who are members of the chamber. Many of the larger companies will purchase these publications in bulk in order to hand them out to prospective employees for their company. Realtors also purchase many of these publications to give out to clients who are seeking to relocate to the region.

According to James DiMascio, there are four things that companies look for in a region. One is quality of life, the second is quality of workforce, third is entertainment, and fourth is infrastructure. Binghamton has received high ratings on the quality of life scale due to our excellent public schools at the high school and university level; and the housing affordability. As far as quality of workforce goes, Binghamton's productivity has been rated one of the highest in the county per capita. Binghamton offers a wide variety of entertainment being the Carousel Capital of the World, having a fantastic art scene, as well as being the home to Spiedie Fest, and a variety of other unique annual events. As far as infrastructure, Binghamton has reliable electricity, internet and phone, and affordable fiber optic connections that many regions are lacking.

Part III: Recommendations

When researching the marketing and promotion of Greater Binghamton, I came upon more press releases, reports, rankings, news spotlights, articles and publications than I had expected. Binghamton is truly a gem and in time will hopefully be seen to more companies as the ideal location to do business.

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What could be done within the university to attract a greater number of businesses is to design a marketing class geared towards the regional marketing of Greater Binghamton. It could be offered through the School of Management and be taught by one central professor as well as have guest lecturers from the community. Students enrolled in research through the School of Management could also take part in the project as well. The class could work in collaboration with the Broome County Industrial Development Agency, and the Broome County Economic Development Group to research and investigate what efforts have already been made to promote the area. The students could also work with the Geography department to learn how to use GIS technology as well as learn about the data that has been gathered about the community through GIS maps. This would allow students to gain insight on census data as well as quality of life factors in the area before and after they conduct research outside the university. As the end of the semester approaches, the students could then be graded on a final project which displays their marketing strategy which could be in the form of a brochure, a video, a publication, or a poster/powerpoint for all ideas that cannot be displayed by the former items. All visuals must also be accompanied by a paper highlighting all they have researched and an explanation of their visual. Those projects that seem the most feasible could be forwarded by the professor to the BCIDA, Broome County Economic Development Group, Greater Binghamton Coalition, or any other organization that could put the students plan into action. Any other community research that they have done could also be used to implement on the university GIS site. This would benefit the students since they would be getting hands on, valuable experience as well as the organizations in the area dedicated to attracting more companies. It would be the students and the economic development organizations in the area, working in partnership toward the same underlying goal; to attract more businesses and make Greater Binghamton the ideal place to live, work, and play.

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