

## **Recruiting and Retaining Talent in Battle Creek**

A Project 20/20 Leadership Meeting

September 23, 2009

United Way, 7:30 a.m.



### **Welcome and Opening Comments**

Talia Champlin opened the meeting with introductions and project announcements. The Project 20/20 website is live and everyone was encouraged begin using it as the source for information on the project. Talia also announced that the project is accepting applications for the position of Project Manager. Candidates should forward their resumes to the project email, BCProject2020@gmail.com.

The Topic for this meeting was Recruiting and Retaining Talent in Battle Creek. Talia introduced Celeste Clark, Sr. V.P. Kellogg Company.

### **Celeste Clark, Sr. V.P. Kellogg Company**

Celeste spoke on the changes that have occurred at Kellogg over the course of her career. As globalization creates pressure to compete, Kellogg has had to adapt. Understanding changes in industry helps us understand changes in the community. We often reminisce about how things used to be, but we need to ask ourselves what we are going to do differently now. We have to promote what we have today. We need to commit to downtown revitalization.

When it comes to recruiting talent, Kellogg has one goal. That goal is attracting highly educated, skilled talent that will allow the company to win in the marketplace. Factors that arise during recruitment are opportunities for trailing spouses, educational indicators, and the housing market. Candidates look at school programs and consider things like graduation rates, and what level of remediation is required once students are in college. The Math and Science Center is an opportunity that could be expanded to include programs for more students. Celeste commented that the Kalamazoo Promise does sometimes impact decisions to commute from Kalamazoo.

Kellogg wants employees to locate wherever they will be the most productive. Battle Creek isn't a large metropolitan community, but it is a great place to raise a family. There are opportunities to market Battle Creek better by providing more information to families looking to relocate here. If there are children in the family, the biggest issue is educational opportunities.

Celeste emphasized that Battle Creek has always figured out how to make things happen, and the community must rally around specific issues and collaborate for resources in order to create positive change.

Following Celeste's comments, she took questions from members. She was asked about the perception of Battle Creek by candidates, and she indicated that sometimes people automatically assume a small town equals small minds. Battle Creek needs to look at ways to promote itself. She indicated that it would be helpful to have electronic media

available that they could distribute within the Company. There is much to brag about, such as the extensive walking and biking trails. Celeste suggested that a “sales” sheet be created comparing Battle Creek to Kalamazoo and other neighbors so that people see how we stack up against other communities, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, and public safety.

Celeste was asked what Kellogg would like to see downtown that would draw employees out more. She suggested that more eatery options must be provided. Employees like to get out when they can and they often hold dinner meetings that could easily be held downtown if there are desirable options available. There is opportunity around the Y-Center moving downtown as well as potential KCC sites, fitting nicely with the move of the Math and Science Center. We need to invest in downtown to give it a vibrant, attractive appearance that people want to be a part of.

### **Group Discussion and Input**

Following Celeste’s comments, the members were asked to break into small workgroups and answer the following question: **Based on what we just heard, what opportunities exist for us to make B.C. a place where people will choose to work, live and invest?**

### **Opportunities Identified**

#### **Communication and Marketing**

- Improve publicity before and after events
- Develop and market the beauty of downtown & the river
- Include testimonials from B.C. graduates
- Promote activity in Arts
- Promote Volunteerism
- Promote B.C. as a destination place for outlying areas
- Identify and promote where B.C. excels compared to other communities
- Develop sales material about B.C. strengths to be used by local Realty

#### **Community**

- Understand demographics of current and potential residents and then develop activities and business that fit them.
- Cater to the National Guard and others that come to our community
- Strengthen neighborhood organizations

#### **Education**

- Expand the Math and Science Center programs
- Create places where students can meet and study, library or WMU
- Develop mentoring programs
- Offer coaching and career development
- Promote professional networking
- Leverage economies of scale among local school districts
- Offer more internship options

Consider later start times at high school

Other Ideas

Create trendy places, marketable to wide population

Connect and utilize existing non-profits

Promote physical fitness opportunities

Create opportunities for youth to have a voice

Promote “family” programs (art center, athletics, specifically for kids)

**Closing Comments**

Members were challenged to take their ideas out into the community and make a personal commitment to creating change.

All members are encouraged to attend the next Project 2020 community event scheduled for October 20, 4:30-6:00 pm at Burnham Brook. The topic will be “Education Creating Opportunities to Develop and Retain Talent.” Speaking at this event will be Dave Harris, Miller College; Ed Haring, KCC; and Steve Benoit, International Food Protection Training Institute. This event is a great follow-up to what we worked on at this meeting.

Members were asked to complete a survey, make an on-line donation, and invite others to join us.