

Luring Business: Large and Small

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After reading my articles each month, you probably already have a good idea of what TEAM does for Santa Rosa County. You know our goal is to create jobs and sustain existing business. When it comes to creating jobs, TEAM works with companies around the nation to bring well paying sustainable jobs to our area. Specifically, industries, which by definition are those companies that sell 50% or more of their product outside of our three-county region (Santa Rosa, Escambia and Okaloosa Counties).

When we find a company that fits this definition, and is looking to expand or relocate operations, there are many factors we have to consider when packaging together our proposal to sell Santa Rosa County. To help them make their decision to locate here, we compile data on business incentives, local demographics and potential sites for housing their operations. We show them data and examples of our quality workforce from which they will draw employees, the infrastructure necessary to efficiently operate their business and a business-friendly government that welcomes economic growth. These factors all help entice industry to the Gulf Coast.

But before we start our research, we have to consider the size of their company. While any industry that brings good jobs to the area is one on which we'll focus, our recruitment strategies are not one-size-fits-all.

Let's take, for example, a company, which sells 50% or more of its product outside of the region and employs 20 people. Let's also suppose that same company is going to pay considerably above average wage and plans to double its workforce within three years of opening its doors. More than likely, this company is owned and operated by an entrepreneur who will probably move with their company if it relocates. This business owner is going to be interested in arts and culture, local schools, the beaches- quality of life, along with all the hard data that indicates Santa Rosa will be a good choice for increasing their bottom line.

On the flip side, let's suppose there is a large corporation that wants to set up a location or subsidiary in Northwest Florida and is considering Santa Rosa County. We could create a stunning packet on all the wonderful attributes about Santa Rosa County, and it wouldn't matter to the decision maker. Large industry is going to be concerned primarily with the bottom line. Their questions will be, "will the company make strong profits in northwest Florida, is there a strong existing workforce and can they accommodate our site requirements?" The decision makers will make their choice based on the hard data, rather than the quality of life factors that a smaller company may find essential.

We recently discovered that to some, the concept of economic development is simply a matter of luring a company to come here. However, presentation strategy is vital in our approach and specific to each and every industry with which we work. No two industries have the same business needs and for our recruitment efforts to be successful, we must tailor our approach.