

Bring 'em Home!

I was reading an article in the SDG News (an internet newsletter put out by the Strategic Development Group out of Bloomington, Indiana.) SDG is an Economic and Community Development consulting firm in the middle U.S. They recently conducted a survey, and in a random sampling of the respondents they concluded that **“38% of college graduates would like to start a business in their home town”!** What a heart-warming thought that is! Anybody out there see some potential?

We are constantly talking about how we educate our most valuable resource, our youth, and then send them elsewhere to exercise their chosen profession because we don't have the jobs here in Wyoming. Here's a survey, that if it is even close to correct, tells us that three or four out of every ten of our local youth that graduate from college might consider coming back to their home town to start their own business! I would call that a “lead” worth pursuing.

In previous columns I have written that in this technological age everybody has competition, thanks to internet and telecommunication capabilities. That kind of leads us to deduce that if other folks can do business “here” from “there”, we ought to be able to do business “there” from “here”! That being said, I wonder why most of our educated youth could not practice their chosen occupation from “here” if they are willing, and desire to do their own thing? So ... here is my plan:

Let's set a network in motion to see if we can locate and communicate with some of these “three or four out of every ten”! We all know a few college grads who, for one reason or another, are elsewhere working in their chosen field. *Since Economic Development is a Team Sport, and since you are all on the team, your assignment is to ask them what they would think of coming home and going out on their own* and let me know

their responses via e-mail(selledge@wysbc.com) or US Mail (c/o WBC, 300 So. Wolcott, Suite 300, Casper, 82601). I want to know not only if they are interested or would consider such a venture, I also want to know what the perceived roadblocks might be. I'm guessing that financing will be an issue, and probably some concern about customers and market what else?

Let's get serious about this and see how far out of the proverbial box we need to climb to get some of this moving! Let's not draw any lines either, all interested should be checked out! Individual consultants, those who can work for a company in another state from here, firms with no local customer base, manufacturing, white-collar, professional, high tech we are interested in them all! We might end up finding some simple solutions to some unnoticed problems or we might find some problems that are tough to deal with and might take us some serious time, money, and innovation to overcome. Whatever the challenge, I would think it will be worth it if we find one or two we can help to "get home" and "make a living". It creates those jobs we are looking for also, so it has to be worth a shot!

I'll keep you posted of the feedback I receive in future columns. I'm looking forward to hearing your results ... (and finding out if anyone out there is reading this column!)
Thanks for participating.

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