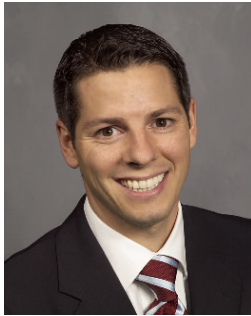


Wednesday, November 1st, 2006



**City needs young entrepreneurs**  
***Show them benefits of living here***

**Wed Nov 1 2006**

***On the Cutting Edge / Brian T. D. Bowman***

WHAT does Winnipeg need to do to better attract and retain young entrepreneurs to the city?

With the results of last week's municipal election being digested and a newly elected and youthful chairman of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, I thought the time was right to wade into the topic.

When I graduated from law school in Toronto in the late 1990s, I was faced with the decision of where to begin my career -- Toronto or Winnipeg. Ultimately, I returned home to Winnipeg.

Beyond tax rates and other considerations that are constantly being debated in Winnipeg, I want to highlight three basic personality traits that I think are typical of young entrepreneurs and which influenced my decision to move back to the city.

Idealism: Young entrepreneurs are idealistic and want to make a difference in the community.

In Winnipeg, young people can easily play leadership roles in volunteer groups. And this makes for plenty of opportunities for them to channel their energies to idealistic personal causes.

However, the business community sometimes fails to recognize this idealistic personality trait of young entrepreneurs. Young professionals are too often left with the wrongful impression in this city that they can only make a difference in their chosen field by moving elsewhere.

My experience is typical. While studying in Toronto, I was repeatedly told that my career would be limited if I moved back to Winnipeg. Nothing could be further from the truth. You can make a difference by working in Winnipeg.

But the city must better market to young entrepreneurs the opportunities for them to make a difference within the Winnipeg business community or we will continue to lose them, especially mobile young professionals, to other cities.

Real-time: Young entrepreneurs want everything in "real-time". We want e-mails delivered to our BlackBerries in real-time. We want news delivered to our cell phones in real-time. And, we want well-paying jobs, demanding fewer hours and a well-balanced home life at a young age.

Winnipeg generally recognizes this personality trait in young entrepreneurs. You can, as a young professional, obtain a well-balanced life in Winnipeg.

Where we often fall short is when it comes to well-paying jobs for young professionals early in their careers. Admittedly, the market dictates by supply and demand what salaries are necessary to attract and retain young entrepreneurs.

But the "market" to some business and political leaders is Winnipeg. To young entrepreneurs, the "market" is global.

Change: Young entrepreneurs truly embrace change. A community that does not embrace change simply drives young entrepreneurs away.

I love Winnipeg because it has a strong sense of community. But that sense of community can also be insular to a fault, resulting in collective resistance to change. This reality, more than any other, has driven many young friends of mine to other cities like Calgary and New York.

I think that it is up to all of us to try to push the envelope on issues where change could do the city good and, in doing so, demonstrate to young entrepreneurs that they can have a future in our city.

My modest suggestions for business leaders and our newly elected city council are to actively support the idealism of young entrepreneurs, better market to them the real-time benefits of living in Winnipeg and demonstrate that they can play a positive role in making progressive changes to our city.

I have returned to Winnipeg because I think it is the best place in the world to live. But in order to succeed as a community we must be able to attract and retain young entrepreneurs to the city in greater numbers than today.

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