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### Retaining Young Professionals in Massachusetts

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# University of Massachusetts Boston

Emerging Leaders Program  
Team Project Report

Center for Collaborative Leadership ~ College of Management

## "Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston"

*In the palm  
of your  
hand...*



The themes, LIRIC, as portrayed in this visual, suggest that the answers for retaining and attracting new professionals to the region are "in the palm of your hand...if you reach for it."

November 8, 2007



Center for Collaborative Leadership

**The Emerging Leaders Program at UMass Boston would like to give special thanks to the Boston Globe Foundation for grant support for the project and mini-conference on “Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston” and to the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for hosting our mini-conference.**

**Thank you also to the many private and public organizations who support our efforts to foster collaborative leadership in Greater Boston.**

**For more information about the Emerging Leaders Program, please visit our website at [www.leaders.umb.edu](http://www.leaders.umb.edu).**



2007 ELP cohort pictured with Mayor Thomas Menino and ELP founding director Sherry Penney

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### Overview

As part of the experience in the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), Fellows, in teams of six to eight, work on team projects dealing with a civic issue that affects the greater Boston region. The 2007 cohort of the ELP has researched “Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston” and what works to attract and retain young professionals.

In November of 2006, stakeholders from the Boston region including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, The Boston Foundation, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston Municipal Research Bureau, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, LaWare Leadership Forum and Massachusetts Business Roundtable met to discuss issues regarding young professionals in the region. The following topics emerged from the discussion as action projects:

- Develop an alumni network of leadership programs in the Boston region,
- Create a ‘back end’ package of the things young professionals are interested in, resources available to them and how Boston could put it all together in an appealing way,
- Devise ways for corporate social responsibility to play a role in the recruitment and retention of young professionals,
- Conduct a comparative analysis of efforts in other cities that retain and/or attract young adults to drive an action plan for retention/attraction,
- Create a strategy to strengthen the professional/educational pipeline for home grown talent,
- Develop corporate strategies for retention/attraction of young professionals by looking at best practices of companies/organizations in the region,
- Create a ‘front end package’ of things Boston has to offer that would appeal to young professionals,
- Develop new strategies for programs designed to strengthen student connections to Boston by assessing and utilizing the existing internship projects/programs.

Consultants from *Synectics*, a company recognized as the founder of the field of innovation process and a leader in enabling people to harness individual creativity and maximize teamwork to develop new solutions, provided approaches and tools to lay the groundwork for the team projects. Following the workshop facilitated by *Synectics*, the Fellows formed a total of eight teams according to their interest in the action topics, and devised team names. The following are the teams with a list of the members:

- **Alumnet** – Carmelle Bonhometre, Perry Conrad, Michael Crowley, Renee LeFevre and Sidney Rodrigues,
- **The Backenders** – Sandra Bailly, David Connolly, Meaghan Hooper-Berdik, James Nee, Amanda Trojan and Raydiance Wise,
- **Giving Back** – JoséAlberto Betances, Gabrielle Dorsey, Wendy Le-ment, Leah McLean and Constant Yu,
- **Global Fusion** – Kristen Almechatt, Michael Henry, Nelly Houston, Darius McCroey, Jason Schupbach, Martina Toponarski and Feng Yu,
- **Homegrown** – Tom Henderson, Jonathan Horka, Tom Martin, Tamara Pitts and Teresa Rodriguez,
- **Mass Attraction Practices (MAPS)** – David Bryant, Trevor Dunwell, Anne Muita and Crispus Njogu,
- **Sell Boston** – Francois Fils-Aime, Marlo Fogelman, Sonal Gandhi, Maureen Shea Baker and Susan Soergel,
- **Webs (We Empower Boston Students)** – Andrea Hurwitz, Samanta Morales, Patti Quint, Michael Rawan and Craig Williams.

What follows is a summary of the quantitative research done by the teams.

### **Alumnet**

- Surveyed the 2002 through 2006 ELP classes – approximately 200 people received survey and there was a 40% rate of participation (79 responses),
- Gathered information on fourteen leadership programs/events: networking event “New Voices for Boston” at the Boston Foundation; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation: The MA Institute for Community Health Leadership; Boston Cares: Civic Leadership Institute; Boston Center for Community & Justice: LeadBoston; Environmental Leadership Program; Leadership for a Change: Boston College; Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce: Boston’s Future Leaders Program; The Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston: Business of Board; UMass Boston: Emerging Leaders Program; One in Three Boston; The Boston Foundation; The Commonwealth Seminar; The Partnership Inc.; The Social Innovation Forum,
- Met with Emerging Leaders Program Alumni Board,
- Met with Emerging Leaders Program staff,
- Met with Jim Tierney and Fran Collins of Lead Boston, Andrea Laing of The Partnership and Karen Boss of Boston Cares.

### **Backenders**

- One focus group, held at Blue Cross Blue Shield on March 9, 2007 – eight participants and two moderators,
- Forty-one emailed interviews,
- Seventeen face to face interviews,
- Interviews were limited to both blue and white collar, young professionals between the ages of twenty-five to forty living within the 495 belt.

### **Giving Back**

- Nine Raytheon engineers surveyed, ages between mid-twenties – early thirties,
- Nine alumnae from Regis College, graduated between 1998-2005,
- Additional interviews with Jen Waldner and Rachel Criuscolo of State Street, an attorney from the MA Business Roundtable, and Amy Hanneman from Raytheon.

### **Global Fusion**

- Seventy individuals (local and national) surveyed and asked seven questions,
- Reviewed programs that promoted young professional retention in twenty-two cities: Philadelphia, Vancouver, Toronto, Las Vegas, Phoenix, San Diego, Atlanta, Washington DC, Charlotte, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, Montreal, San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, Fort Collins (CO), Chicago, Austin, Raleigh-Durham (NC), Kansas City, Boise, and Portland (OR),
- Eighteen types of initiatives found: conferences, marketing/promotion, direct recruitment/internship, networking events/seminars, internship fairs, awards programs, investment funds, websites, training classes, radio programs, consultant research, board matching, speaker series, mentoring, tax initiatives, online career portfolio management, including creative people in decision making and entertainment events,
- Categorized initiatives into four groups: talent and “creative class”, diversity and culture, entrepreneurship, and social and networking.

### **Homegrown**

- Fifteen interviews (included educators, corporate recruiters, human resources professionals, business line professionals and non-profit professionals.)

### **Mass Attraction Practices (MAPS)**

- The following companies were surveyed:  
Raytheon – thirty interns,



State Street Corp. – two human resources professionals and six interns,  
Blue Cross Blue Shield – two human resources professionals and six interns.

### **Sell Boston**

- Four people were interviewed from the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority – one male and three females, ages ranging from 35 to 38,
- Two additional interviews of out of state people – one male and female, ages 40 and 45,
- One teacher interviewed from Boston Public Schools – female, 46 years old,
- Additionally fifteen surveys were sent to eight women and seven men.

### **Webs**

- Surveyed 126 students, 94 of whom had taken part in an internship and planned to stay in Boston,
- Surveyed 57 professionals, 42 of whom had taken part in an internship,
- The following industries were covered by the surveys:
  - Financial Services – 36% students, 9% professionals, total of 30%
  - Professional service – 14% students, 23% professionals, total of 16%
  - Technology – 13% students, 17% professional, total of 14%
  - Healthcare – 7% students, 11% professionals, total of 8%
  - Education – 6% students, 3% professionals, total of 5%
  - Not for profit – 4% students, 6% professionals, total of 4%
  - Government – 1% students, 6% professionals, total of 2%
  - Biotech – 2% students, 0% professionals, total of 1%
  - Other – 18% students, 26% professionals, total of 20%

The next section of this report summarizes the findings of each of the teams.

## **Team Findings**

### **Alumnet**

Alumnet's task was to "develop an alumni network of leadership programs in the Boston Region." Their first step was to identify and research the organizations that focus on collaboration and leadership. These organizations were: The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, The MA Institute for Community Health Leadership, Boston Cares: Civic Leadership Justice, Boston Center for Community & Justice: Lead Boston, Environmental Leadership Program, Boston College's Leadership for a Change, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce: Boston's Future Leaders Program, the Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston: Business on Board, UMass Boston's Emerging Leaders Program, One in Three Boston, The Boston Foundation, The Commonwealth Seminar, The Partnership Inc., and the Social Innovation Forum.

After a careful study of these programs and events, Alumnet decided to concentrate on the Emerging Leaders Program. They attended ELP sponsored luncheons to speak to program alumni, took part in the monthly ELP Alumni Board meetings, gathered information on past ELP cohorts from the Emerging Leaders Program staff, and conducted two surveys - a new survey of the ELP alumni and one for the Leadership Exchange.

The ELP survey, which asked a number of questions regarding networking, was sent to approximately 200 individuals who were part of the Emerging Leaders Program between 2002 and 2006. There was a 40% participation rate (79 responses). The result was that Alumnet identified a need for the young professionals to seek out like-minded individuals with whom to network. The young professionals felt they needed this connection because Boston is seen as a "city full of barriers...to the point of feeling like a segregated or even racist city." The young professionals desire to take part in the happenings of their communities and get involved in civic engagements. They believe such participation is thwarted by the lack of connections between themselves and other individuals with the same desires.

The team decided that the best solution to the problem the young professionals are facing was to create an ELP website where Boston leaders and program alumni would be featured, along with a calendar of events, a facebook, links to other sites of interest, a blog page and career information that may be helpful to young professionals.

Similar to Alumnet, the Backenders found that young professionals have a desire to partake in things happening in Boston, but that the amount of time their daily responsibilities takes up does not allow for many of those activities. The Backenders decided to define young professionals as individuals between the ages of twenty-five and forty, Boston as the area inside the 495 belt, and professionals as blue and white collar workers.

### **Backenders**

The Backenders research consisted of one focus group at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, forty-one emailed interviews and seventeen face-to-face interviews. Their insight is that “young professionals need to feel a sense of calm in the storm of over-commitment, they want assurance that they are on the right track as they make decisions, and they desire connections as they lay the foundation for their future.”

The Backenders proposed creating a service called *Boston’s Life Concierge* which will attract and retain young professionals to Boston. This affordable, online service would aid members in finding all types of services, such as dry cleaning, house cleaning, errand running, utilities connections, post office, day care, dog walking, carpooling, gift buying, apartment finding and travel planning. The end result would be beneficial to both the city and the young professionals. Boston would benefit from support to local businesses and greater retention of a needed population, and young professionals would benefit by having better time management that would lead to more free time to spend in professional development and community activities.

The *Boston Life Concierge* could have four possible owners. First it could be controlled by a Boston agency like the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s One-In-3 Boston, the Small Business Association or the New Bostonians. A second option would be to have Boston as the principal customer and owner but partnered with a private firm for administration. Third it could be housed in the University of Massachusetts Boston as a leadership think tank maintained by business students, and lastly it could be set-up as an entrepreneurial venture.

There is reason to believe that a service such as the *Boston Life Concierge* would work because through local and national research the Backenders found that similar services were already offered, but tailored as a luxury service and not as a more general, affordable service catering to the young professionals. Boston would be in an excellent position to create the latter kind of service because it has many independently run small businesses in a city small enough to be able to connect all the services.

### **Giving Back**

Another view on corporate practices was given by the team Giving Back. The team defines corporate social responsibility (CSR) as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

The team’s research and surveys discovered that young professionals want CSR to become more visible, and they want to have more time to volunteer and participate in CSR events. The

survey also showed that companies want to show their support for the community and to CSR, but are worried that there is not a formal manner of measuring or determining how CSR will attract new employees and whether CSR may affect negatively the company's bottom line. The team recommends creating the *Hubies*. The *Hubies* would take the element of glamour and elegance of award shows such as the Grammys, Emmys and Oscars. Instead of providing recognition to entertainers, the awards would be given to those companies and individuals that have improved the community. This would give young professionals more faith in the companies that they work for and the city in which they live. The surveys were given to students, health care employees, and workers in academia and the non-profit sector. Additionally the team Giving Back held interviews with State Street, Raytheon, Accenture, and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable.

The *Hubies* would satisfy the needs of both young professionals and businesses because the show would bring the greater attention to CSR that young professionals want, in addition to bringing greater publicity to businesses that receive awards. The award categories would be:

- Corporate Giving Award – “honors corporate financial contributions to charitable organization that make a substantial impact on targeted areas of interest.”
- Best Corporate Matching Award – to honor “outstanding programs in corporate matching of employee contributions to charitable organizations.”
- Most Innovative Employee Fund Drive Award – for “innovative and effective employee fund drives that involve a substantial percentage of management and staff. Fund drives should be targeted to relieve human suffering from disease, famine, natural disasters and/or displacement caused by war.”
- Best Incentives for Employee Community Volunteering Award – “honors corporations that encourage and support employee community volunteering by giving paid time of and/or other perks.”
- Best Environmental Sound Practices Award - to honor “corporations with an outstanding record of environmentally conscious practices, such as recycling, energy conservation, carpooling incentives, and providing T passes to employees.”
- The Fair Practices Award – to honor “corporations with an outstanding track record of respecting their customers, employees and vendors.”
- Best Stakeholder Engagement – “honors corporations that actively involve their stakeholders in CSR effort.”
- Work/Life Balance Award – “honors corporations that support employees by providing day care assistance solutions for the children and the elder family members of their employees.”
- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles Award – “honors corporations that promote healthy lifestyles for employees by providing outstanding health plan benefits, health club facilities, healthy food at work, sporting activities, tournaments and other benefits that continually benefit and improve the health of the employees.”
- Outstanding Ethical Practices Award – “honors corporations with recognized ethical practices at all levels and at all branches and subsidiaries inside or outside the country.”
- Outstanding Community Relations Award – “honors corporations with extensive CSR

programs that directly support and benefit their local community.”

- Thomas Menino Social Innovation Award – “honors corporations that create and provide innovative solutions to social issues that will affect the society in the future.”

To be able to launch the first award ceremony, one would need to create nomination guidelines and a selection process, hold fundraisers and create community interest, secure a space and potential sponsors and gain coverage by major media outlets in Boston. This would be a three year effort, but the end result would be an improved working environment in Boston that would be sure to attract and retain young professionals.

### **Global Fusion**

Further recommendations as to how the city of Boston could retain and attract young professionals were given by the team Global Fusion whose task was to conduct a comparative analysis of efforts in other cities that have had success in attracting and retaining young adults. Global Fusion surveyed 70 individuals both locally and nationally, and the result of the survey was that people felt that Boston has positive aspects such as social liberalism, excellent higher education, big city with small town feel, seasonal changes and culinary excellence. However, its drawbacks are that it has no traffic/bike lanes, lack of social opportunities for minorities, lack of entrepreneurial resources, a high cost of living, everything shuts down early, no one place to get information on events, perception of people as not friendly and negative perception of the public schools. Along with the surveys, Global Fusion reviewed reports that dealt with the retention of young professionals, and these were Portland’s the “Monograph” and “The Young and Restless,” Philadelphia’s “The Young and Restless,” Michigan’s “Attracting and Retaining the Best Talent to Michigan,” and Toronto’s “Magnetic North.”

In addition to the surveys and reports, Global Fusion picked twenty-two cities to research from the US World Report and those mentioned in the seventy interviews. The twenty-two cities were Philadelphia, Vancouver, Toronto, Las Vegas, Phoenix, San Diego, Atlanta, Washington DC, Charlotte, Minneapolis- St. Paul, Denver, Montreal, San Francisco, Seattle, New York City, Fort Collins (CO), Chicago, Austin, Raleigh-Durham (NC), Kansas City, Boise, and Portland (OR). The research was further narrowed to Philadelphia, Vancouver, San Diego, Washington DC, Charlotte, Fort Collins (CO), Chicago, Austin, Raleigh-Durham (NC) and Portland (OR) because these ten cities had the most specific programs.

Programs were categorized into four groups: “talent and “creative class,” diversity and culture, entrepreneurship, and social and networking.” In the category of talent retention and creative class the best programs were:

- Innovation Philly – geared towards workers between the ages of 25-34, and with the goal

of making Philadelphia's economy grow and become an international destination for technology and knowledge industry businesses. This organization is partnered with the areas technology councils, corporations, biotech industry, banks, real estate developers, universities, the Mayor and director of commerce, the State Department of Community, design/film org, foundations and the Great Philly Cultural Alliance.

- DIY Portland – “encourages start up businesses in the arts, publishing, crafts, clothing and food production, also promotes continuing education. Since 2001 DIY has been providing resources for those that are looking to start new businesses through websites, radio programs, seminars and networking.”
- The Mayor's Office Program in Chicago – funded by the Mayor's office is a yearly program that recruits graduate students to work with senior level staff on policy decision and creating new programs around: green building, traffic, housing, cultural, public schools, and crime.

In the category of diversity and culture, the best programs were:

- African America Quality of Life Initiative – based in Austin, and started after African American communities voiced their problems with the current policies in the areas of police and safety, neighborhood sustainability, business and economic development, arts, culture and entertainment, education and employment, and health. This initiative includes the Austin Area Urban League, The Capital City African American Chamber of Commerce, Austin Revitalization Authority, African American Health Alliance, Alliance for African-American Health in Central Texas, Austin NAACP and ProArts Collective.
- Charlotte City Committee – “established in 2002. Its mission is to promote the Charlotte region as the best place to live and work in America.” This committee is partnered with Advantage Carolina, Charlotte Chamber Commerce, City of Charlotte, Charlotte Center of City Partners, school systems, NC Dept. of Commerce, local magazine & newspapers, leadership programs and the United Way of Central Carolinas. Its initiatives are the Young Professional Organization, web portal, Board March, hot jobs awards, “Work/Life awards”, identity team, and the City Committee Speaker Series.

For entrepreneurship the best programs were:

- Council on Entrepreneurial Development, Raleigh-Durham (NC) – “a private non-profit organization formed in 1984 to identify, enable and promote high growth, high impact entrepreneurial companies and to accelerate the entrepreneurial culture of the Research Triangle and North Carolina.” The organization has 4,000 members representing over 1,100 companies and is the largest entrepreneurial support organization in the nation. Its mission is to provide assistance to entrepreneurs and companies in the areas of mentoring, education, capital and society. The Council's partners are biotech networks, entrepreneur networks, university business schools, leadership training programs, enterprise foundations, women business organizations, medical device organizations, statewide network of entrepreneurial councils, foundations, young entrepreneurs organizations, state's innovation program (NC Idea) and the North Carolina Dept. of Commerce.
- BEAR, San Diego's Economic Development Division – partnered with San Diego Gas and Electric, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and various non-profit organizations and institutions. BEAR works directly with key businesses to provide incentives that result in the retention and creation of

jobs in San Diego. Some of these incentives are a 7.75% tax rate, no city income taxes and no utility taxes on citizens. The result has been that San Diego received World Trade Status in 1994, its foreign trade has increased by more than 17% annually, and that 10% of all publicly-traded companies and 8% of all U.S. biotech firms are found in San Diego.

In the category of social and networking the top program nationally was the Young CEO’s Washington DC, an “organization founded in 2006 dedicated to assisting young professionals, executives and entrepreneurs through business networking opportunities, business development programs and community outreach/service facilitation.” Other programs were geared exclusively towards ethnicity, current issues or networking opportunities.

The key of all these programs is that they all involved creative partnerships that connect education, family and career. Global Fusion’s recommendations to Boston are to create opportunities for civic involvement, get young talent involved in policy decision making, acknowledge the blur between non-profits and commercial creative industries that create many opportunities, develop ties between local universities and businesses and then maintain connections with alumni, communicate development plans to young professionals and finally promote the city.


### **Homegrown**

Team Homegrown was charged with the action topic of “building a homegrown pipeline.” In order to better define the topic, they decided that Boston homegrown talent would include students inside the 495 belt and students from all Massachusetts public colleges. They interviewed fifteen professionals such as educators, corporate recruiters, human resources professionals, business line professionals and non-profit organizations to gather data from the many sectors that make up the city.

Their research led to the insight that Boston has raw talent but that employers desire highly skilled workers and see little necessity for in-house training. Employers did not have a preference for local talent, and they focus primarily on their current work needs. Employers also focused on current vs. long-term needs. This means that in order to strengthen homegrown talent, Boston needs to improve its public education so that it is competitive both locally and nationally, and that more connections should exist between the public and private sectors to better train students.

### **Mass Attraction Practices (MAPS)**

The team Mass Attraction Practices (MAPS) took a slightly different approach. Instead of focusing on creating connections to the city to foster in the young professionals a sense of ownership and belonging, they looked at how businesses could develop corporate strategies to attract and retain the young professionals.



After interviewing thirty interns from Raytheon, two human resources professionals and six young professionals from State Street Corporation, and two human resources professionals and six young professionals from Blue Cross Blue Shield, the team formulated the Mass Attraction Practices (MAPs) – Leadership Development Program and Global Inclusion. The key to MAPs are four main insights: career development, location, work environment, and community and communications. Each of these four points affects young professionals and is a factor in whether they choose to stay in Boston or find another city.

Career development mends the unmet need of young professionals lack of “enjoyability of work,” and this affects three important areas of the young professionals’ lives – family, finances and career advancement. The benefits of career development in the area of Leadership Development are increased finances and benefits, more job opportunities, senior leadership exposure and networking, while the possible drawbacks are a disruption of work/life balance, frequent travel and relocation. In the area of Global Inclusion, the benefits of career development are more family time, increased pay and work enjoyability, while possible cons are lower pay, disruption of work/life balance and lack of supportive leadership. To guard against the possible drawback to career development, corporations could increase the shelf life of career development, offer ongoing career counseling and maintain individuals connected to the leadership development program. Additionally in the area of Global Inclusion, corporations would have to improve their communication with employees and motivate them by finding better ways of celebrating their successes.

The second point, location, deals with the young professionals’ need to have “access to the wide network” that already exists in Boston. Just like Alumnet and the Backenders, the Mass Attraction Practices (MAPS) team found that young professionals want to be connected with what is going on around them because in the area of leadership development it might lead to expanded resources, new opportunities, versatility, efficiency and professional growth. The possible drawbacks of location are that the location may not be affordable and offer only limited options. In the Global Inclusion practices one may have the problem that the networks are closed to the young professionals so it would be necessary to “provide [an] inter-modal access to a network atmosphere” where the points of access are safe and reliable and there can be increased connection between community activities and social responsibility.

The corporations’ responsibility to increase communication and availability of networks leads to the third insight which is that young professionals need a supportive work environment. Corporations can better the work environment by coordinating emphasis on mentoring programs to enhance career development and by being supportive of initiatives that sustain employees and their families.



## **“Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston”**

The fourth MAPS team insight was that “young professionals need inclusion with flexibility.” The result of increasing inclusion would be a more welcoming working environment where volunteerism is supported and where there is greater corporate social responsibility. Corporations can make this happen by increasing the incentives to volunteer, and the state can offer tax breaks to the companies as an incentive to become more involved with the community.

The last insight is related to the corporations’ need to become more involved with the community because young professionals need confidence in values. This means that corporations can retain more of their workers and attract new ones by having open and honest communication, consistent feedback to foster growth and a good history of helping the community.

The MAPS team concluded that creating leadership programs while individuals are still in school would help in the retention of young professionals since today’s students are tomorrow’s professionals. Secondly, companies can create a roundtable for corporations to share their best practices and learn from each other. The roundtable could be facilitated by the University of Massachusetts Boston and host local organizations. Additionally, UMass could also match companies that need to implement best practices with companies that have already achieved their goals.

### **Sell Boston**

The last recommendation by Global Fusion was Sell Boston’s mission since they were given the task of creating a front-end package for Boston. After asking ten questions to seven individuals and sending fifteen surveys to people, Sell Boston concluded that what attracts local people to Boston is its history, the changing seasons, its proximity to oceans, lakes and mountains, sports and culture, family and friends and the manageable size of the city. On the other hand, what locals did not like was the high cost of living. Internationally people found Boston attractive because it has a major airport, many job opportunities, and a good lifestyle and culture. The aspects of Boston that were troublesome internationally were the difficulty of making friends in Boston, closed networks, an aging subway system, lack of economic diversity, challenging immigration laws and too much focus on sports. To young families Boston is convenient because it has many recreational opportunities, good school systems, and there exist family support networks. The only inconveniences were the cost of living and lack of safety. To recent graduates and young professionals, Boston is a good fit because it has many job opportunities; it has a nightlife; it’s an energetic city and has many continuing educational opportunities. Much like the locals and young families, young professionals find that Boston is too expensive and that it lacks entrepreneur opportunities.

The common theme of all these groups is that they all want strong connections, whether

they are family support networks or professional networks. In order to Sell Boston connections have to be made between the personal, professional and civic parts of people's lives. This could be achieved by a Sell Boston website. It would be a combination of a search engine, social media, board links and evolving FAQ. The website would centralize all Boston-related information under one location so that all can connect to Boston in the way that they need. The unique website benefits are that it would be focused, relevant and up-to-date and that it would provide a one-stop shop on information regarding neighborhoods, lifestyle, religion, volunteer opportunities, and networking.

The website would be managed by the city of Boston and run as part of the World Boston Partnerships, and supported by public/private funding as a 501-(c) 3 entity. In addition to the website, Boston could be promoted locally by launching parties attended by the Mayor throughout the city and "provide citizens with a casual forum to connect and learn about opportunities." International promotion could be achieved by setting up Boston Pop-Up Shops on college campuses and other major areas of business. The Pop-Up Shops would focus on Boston's unique identity: cups of Legal Seafoods chowder, bags of baked beans or a DVD showcasing Boston. The DVDs could also be given to new residents of Boston along with information and coupons for local restaurants and the like.

### **Webs**

Following in the theme of making connections are Webternships, created by the team Webs (We Empower Boston Students). Web's topic was, "How can the current internship programs be strengthened?". To answer this question they created two surveys: one for graduating senior college students and one for young professionals who had completed an internship. Their total number of respondents was 126 students, 94 of whom had stayed or planned on staying in Boston once their internship was over, and 57 professionals, 42 of whom had stayed in Boston after the completion of their internship. These students and young professionals came from a diverse industry base, as can be seen in figure 1:

## “Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston”


**Figure 1**

Industries	Students	Professionals	Total
Financial Services	36%	9%	30%
Professional Ser-	14%	23%	16%
Technology	13%	17%	14%
Healthcare	7%	11%	8%
Education	6%	3%	5%
Not for Profit	4%	6%	4%
Government	1%	6%	2%
BioTech	2%	0%	1%
Other	18%	26%	20%

The team found that the major reasons interns stayed in Boston were proximity to friends and family, fondness of the area and job opportunities. Additionally they believed that internships are a good way to discover Boston’s history. The answers to the survey can be seen in figure 2:

**Figure 2**

Survey Questions	% Agree and/or Strongly Agree	
	Students	Professionals
My internship helped me to decide whether or not to stay in Boston post graduation.	50%	49%
I was happy with my internship experience.	76%	84%
<b>I would recommend an internship as a vehicle to experience Boston as a professional.</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>My employer promoted Boston during my internship.</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>My employer hosted networking events during my internship.</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>34%</b>
The opportunity to work in Boston was a factor in my decision to do an internship.	55%	65%



As can be seen by the data, many found the internships to be useful and would recommend them to other students, but surprisingly not many companies promoted the city or networking to a great extent as part of the internship.

Webs proposed that the companies take greater responsibility in showcasing Boston and its opportunities by creating Webternships “a cross-company and cross-city network of interns to [that would] meet on a regular basis to broaden the interns’ professional and social networks, and to increase their exposure and connection to the city of Boston.” The program would have three major components:

- Professional Development: two full-day seminars focused on networking and skill-building activities,
- Boston Immersion: to show Boston’s history and culture,
- Social Events and Networking: a series of fun events like Duck tours, community service projects and alumni reunions to keep the interns connected.

The full day seminars and other activities would be held at different companies where the interns work.

The benefits of Webternships are that they would create an ever growing network of young professionals who will have shared both a social and professional experience, and that it would strengthen and improve professional networks for the interns. Additionally, different companies and communities that take part in the program will have a great connection as well.

In order to implement the program Webs recommends creating the program under a public or government entity that will administer the program and maintain records. To administer the program a Webternship Council made up of senior leaders from Boston’s public, private and academic sectors will provide guidance and leadership. The Webternship Council would appoint delegates to a Webternships Organization Committee who would design the seminars, provide professional development workshops and recruit. A Webternship Administration Group sponsored by a smaller organization would maintain the day-to-day aspects of the program.

### Conclusions

Collectively the eight team projects gathered a wide array of information including surveys, focus groups, on-line research and in person interviews. The different approaches to the research on “Why Young Professionals Stay in Boston?” resulted in five common themes:

- **Lifestyles/Time/Priorities**—young professionals need to live in a place that supports their lifestyles (cultural, social, educational, and recreational) and helps them balance their work life,
- **Inclusion/Community**— young professionals want to feel valued and become a part of the community in which they live and also involved in decision making and community outreach efforts,
- **Recognition/Marketing** —young professionals want opportunities to be recognized as future leaders in the businesses and community, and to have access to internships and mentoring programs. Young professionals need to be heard,
- **Incentives**—young professionals are looking to feel rewarded for their efforts in business, entrepreneurship or community outreach efforts,
- **Connections/Networking** — networking young professionals want to stay in a place where they have strong connections, such as family ties and strong professional or strong social networks.

The themes, **LIRIC**, as portrayed in this visual, suggest that the answers for retaining and attracting new professionals to the region are **“in the palm of your hand...if you reach for it.”**



All of the team findings reflected varying degrees of the themes mentioned above. The research found that conditions exist in Boston that are considered desirable, secure, comfortable, academic, and unique. The teams found that Boston is a great place, but it is not enough to call ourselves the hub of the universe. Boston’s inherent appeal must be reinforced by strategic action if it is to remain competitive.

The team project findings reveal the primary reasons why young professionals currently stay in Boston. Contrary to public perception, many young professionals do want to live in Boston. But they are looking for five LIRIC themes, as previously detailed: lifestyle support, incentives to engage in a range of activities, recognition of who they are and what they have to contribute; inclusion in the circles of decision-making; and connections with networks of likeminded individuals. Responding to the LIRIC message cannot be left to chance.

## **Recommendations**

The Emerging Leaders Fellows strongly urge Boston's business and civic leaders to create an **Alumnet**, an ELP website where Boston leaders and program alumni would be featured, along with a calendar of events, a facebook, links to other sites of interest, a blog page and career information that maybe helpful to young professionals.

**Boston's Life Concierge** could attract and retain young professionals to Boston. This affordable, online service would aid members in finding all types of services such as: dry cleaning, house cleaning, errand running, utilities waiting, post office, day care, dog walking, carpooling, gift buying, apartment finding and travel planning. The end result would be beneficial to both the city and the young professionals. Boston would benefit from support to local businesses and greater retention of a needed population, and young professionals would benefit from the service by having better time management which would lead to more free time to spend in professional and community development.

In addition, corporate entities should be energized to involve themselves more in leadership development initiatives, connect young professionals to the community through vigorous corporate social responsibility programs and to establish a **corporate roundtable** for exchanging best practices for helping the community. Efforts should be made to establish a "**Hubies award**" annual program to recognize outstanding corporate social responsibility, bring the greater attention to CSR that young professionals want, and bring greater publicity to businesses that receive awards.

Create a **Sell Boston web site**, which would be a combination of a search engine, social media, board links and evolving FAQ. The website would centralize all Boston-related information under one location so that all can connect to Boston in the way that they need. The unique website benefits are that it would be focused, relevant and up-to-date and that it would provide a one-stop shop on information regarding neighborhoods, lifestyle, religion, volunteer opportunities, and networking.

Fashion a **Webternship** program to connect Boston area businesses with students in area colleges. Webternship would be "a cross-company and cross-city network of interns to meet on a regular basis to broaden the interns' professional and social networks, and to increase their exposure and connection to the city of Boston." The program would have three major components:

- Professional Development: two full-day seminars focused on networking and skill-building activities,

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- Boston Immersion: to show Boston's history and culture,
- Social Events and Networking: a series of fun events like Duck tours, community service projects and alumni reunions to keep the interns connected.

The full day seminars and other activities would be held at different companies where the interns work.

These ideas are concrete and hold potential for attracting and retaining young professionals in Boston. These solutions are **"in the palm of your hand...if you reach for it."**

## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP**

The Center for Collaborative Leadership is charged with nourishing “emerging” leadership in Greater Boston and with exploring and refining the collaborative leadership model. To support the center’s efforts to create a more diverse pool of emerging leaders, State Street Corporation provided an initial grant for \$250,000 in 2000, support that has been crucial to launching the program. Additional support has been provided by The Boston Foundation, the Boston Globe Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Verizon New England, Sovereign Bank, Fleet Financial Foundation, John Hancock Financial Services and Mellon New England through the Eugene Fay Trust. The center also performs research on leadership-related topics. Its work will help to create a new generation of leaders for the Greater Boston region and will have broad implications for the theory and practice of leadership.

The Founding Director is Sherry H. Penney, the first holder of the Sherry H. Penney Endowed Professorship in Leadership at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She brings the experience of over 13 years as a CEO to her position as professor of leadership. Dr. Penney served as chancellor of UMass Boston from 1988 to 2000. She has also served as interim president of the University of Massachusetts system (1995) and interim president of SUNY Plattsburgh (1986-87).

The Director, Patricia Neilson, holds a doctorate in leadership and has experience in the business world as well as in higher education, where she has held major administrative positions. She works with organizations in the Greater Boston region to create projects dealing with important civic issues, and she is responsible for the development of the curriculum for the program.

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