



Next Move Group

We Are Jobs Podcast

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As far as I'm concerned, they are absolutely the best lead generation firm in the business for economic development organizations. Call them now. They can help you create real prospects.

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Chad Chancellor: Welcome to this week's episode of the Next Move Group We Are Jobs podcast. This is Chad Chancellor, co-founder of Next Move Group and today, I've got Amber Hunter with us with Research FDI out of Montreal. I think Research FDI is the best lead generation firm as far as I'm concerned in the business and Amber, thank you for being with us. You all have sponsored our podcast in the past and doing it again this year and we're so proud of that. So, why don't you just tell us a little bit about what Research FDI does and really talk about your growth right now that's coming.

Amber Hunter: Thank you for having me. It's an honor.

Chad Chancellor: Yes. You all are sponsors of our podcast, so we're going to do several features on RCI this year because I think you are the best lead generation firm in the economic development space. I know it's your 10 year anniversary, so why don't you talk to our audience about what Research Consultants does and your 10 year anniversary.

Amber Hunter: Absolutely. Well, thank you again for your continued support. Next year is actually going to be a very special year for us. It's 10 years in the making. Maybe you don't know, but in 2016, we had about 7 people in-house and now we have 35. So, that's been--

Chad Chancellor: Wow! I didn't know that.

Amber Hunter: Yes, that's been tremendous growth. We moved offices about two years ago and we are completely at capacity at the moment so on the scout for a new office. 10 years; we're very excited about it. We are planning something. It's still a bit of a mystery, but we're thinking we're going to have a party, we don't know if we're going to invite all of our clients and friends down to Montreal in the summer, of course. So, stay tuned for that, but we do have something in the works that's going to really represent how proud we are to have made it to year 10.

Chad Chancellor: Awesome. I love Montreal. I have to go. I haven't been there probably in two or three years. I went out for the Montreal Jazz Fest. Of course, you know New Orleans we know how to do a jazz fest and so, I had heard about this one in Montreal and I figured it was exaggeration. I got up there. It was fantastic other than half the singers were singing in French and I didn't know, but one of my favorite ones was a French singer. His name was Natty Jean. That's what I call him. They call him Natty Jean.

Amber Hunter: Oh, Jean. Okay.

Chad Chancellor: He was one of my favorite ones, but every word he said was in French, but I still really enjoyed it.

Amber Hunter: That's it. As long as the melody is good, I don't know if it matters about the language.

Chad Chancellor: That's right. Well, talk about FDI365. I think that's something that you all came out within the last year or two. So, talk about it and also, I believe you got now version 3.0. So, tell the folks what that is.

Amber Hunter: Yes, so that's another exciting thing on our calendar. We're launching 3.0 of FDI365, which is our leading business intelligence platform. So, essentially the updates are mostly aesthetic, but it's looking very good, if I say so myself. The purpose of this platform is really tailored to communities that are trying to refocus and be a little more proactive rather than reactive and we know that can be hard sometimes based on the resource and time that they have wearing a lot of hats.

So, what this does essentially is it kind of replaces a database. So, you don't need to go in there and scale through hundreds of companies and find the best ones. What we do is we deliver a lead a day of a high-growth company and we show you the indicators of why it's growing and we also have a human-curated selection rationale which pinpoints the assets that your community has and the talent that you have that makes the synergy with why we think this company would fit for you. So, it really alleviates a lot of the research and gets you right to the client and calling that prospect.

Chad Chancellor: And so I know-- so, this is actually our 10th year and we should say we're recording this in December of 2019 at the MidAmerica EDC event in Chicago. So, sometimes it takes us a month or two to air this. So, since we're saying next year, people need to know 2020 is the year that we're talking about. So, when did you join RCI? And kind of walk these folks through what you do.

Amber Hunter: Yes, absolutely. So, I joined RCI almost three years ago to the day. Right now, I'm the vice president of business development and I focus on the North American market. So, essentially I'm in the U.S. 50% of my time. My role is introducing clients to our programs and different tiers of things we can do to help with investment and traction, but I also like to see myself as a kind of ambassador to the client.

So, as you know, most of economic development is really focused on relationship building. So, a lot of what I do is understanding my client, understanding what their goals are, what their KPIs

are and then kind of working with the operations team to not only showing what the objective is but really explaining what would make my client happy. So, I'm kind of the middleman in that regard. My clients know that. I'm sure they can testify that they text or call at any point and I'll go to bat for them. So, I think that's really where I kind of come into play.

Chad Chancellor: And so most economic developers can find you at events like this I assume. I guess you're on the trade show circuit?

Amber Hunter: Yes, they find me at any city. They know to come to me always there for the receptions. I like to have a good time on-- I was actually just in New Orleans and that was quite the experience. It was my first time. I'll definitely be going back.

Chad Chancellor: When were you there? Was it SEDC?

Amber Hunter: SEDC. Yes.

Chad Chancellor: You know we have a Mardi Gras event every other year. I don't think you came to our Mardi Gras last year. Bruce did and so, we'll do it again in 2021 and we're going to have to bring clients on there because we've doubled in growth this year so by--

Amber Hunter: Congratulations.

Chad Chancellor: --the time Mardi Gras gets here, we'll be able to really get it out and I apologize for the background noise to our listeners. We're recording this at a conference. So, they're changing out the breakfast for the lunch which is highly important to me. So, I'm glad with that. One thing I want to ask you, we probably share our clients or at least a lot of our clients can be clients of yours especially in our executive search space. We have towns as small as 5,000 people to as large as-- well, we did the World Trade Center in New Orleans, Cheyenne, Wyoming. What trends are you guys seeing? Economic developers and boards are always asking me what am I seeing in the market place. What kind of trends are you all seeing as kind of the front line lead generation people that economic developers might be interested in?

Amber Hunter: Yes. Well, the two trends that I'm noticing now is that a lot of communities as of late have been winning food and beverage projects. That seems to be kind of on the uptake in

terms of warehousing, cooling facilities, but another thing that I'm noticing is that a lot of communities even smaller are trying to branch out and be more tech-oriented.

They're trying to find a way to diversify their community to get this sort of back-office operations because as you know, those jobs are typically higher-paying, can help with the medium wage and it also kind of plays into the workforce. A lot of people are starting new workforce programs to try to bring back their population that go after college and having these kinds of high tech programs is kind of plays in part with that.

So, we're seeing a lot of communities that come up to us and say I want to go recruit tech and we always say well, wait. Let's take a step back. Let's focus maybe on doing some research, some strategy, looking at your assets, seeing where it could fit. We'd love to sell recruitment trips to everyone, but we really want to have a full package in place before they go in sort of blind to markets, so to speak.

Chad Chancellor: Right. So, if an economic developer calls you and really knows nothing-- let's say it's their first day on the job and they want to do lead generation, but they know very little. You guys can help them with the strategy not just hey, let's put you on a trip to Chicago since that's where we're sitting today. Talk about-- I guess give your sales pitch of all your services and the different ways that you can help folks.

Amber Hunter: Well, absolutely and what's so great about us is that we have some very key partnerships with you and a lot of other firms and our partner firm WAVTEQ where we have this deep embedded skills across the board in terms of strategy, in terms of target analysis. So, we can really kind of help create a menu item for every community that's just starting. Say they don't even have a website, we can then find them the right partners to create a website.

We also offer training. So, we can kind of come for the new and higher-- we can come in-house and do a two-day workshop, focus purely on recruitment or how to set up their recruitment team.

So, really from the sort of beginning, they have a carte blanche. We can help them evolve and kind of figure out what they want to do.

So, it's great. Recruitment you know that's our bread and butter. That's where we-- I think have the best reputation as-- the quality of our leads are quite spectacular, but yes. When we have a client come to us, we want to listen to them. It's really key to listen, understand where they are in their sort of scope and then we can figure out or recommend at least programs that make sense for them at that moment.

Chad Chancellor: Right and so we've had Bruce on our show. So, tell us your background; kind of what you did before you joined Research Consultants.

Amber Hunter: Absolutely. So, funny enough, me and Bruce are friends and we went to neighboring high schools which we didn't know until we started working together. So, we were kind of rival high schools if you will. So, when we got to work together, that rivalry is still there. No, I'm kidding. I actually five years ago started in a space for a consulting firm and I was working as data entry. Full disclosure, my friend worked there and got me a job and I had no idea what economic development was.

Chad Chancellor: Nobody ever does. Don't feel bad.

Amber Hunter: Yes. Two months in, I still didn't know and then I was tasked with calling in to the companies and being that first kind of layer; speaking to a client and vetting them for the potential community. I'd like to say it was my talent, but a bit of fluke and a bit of luck which I think a lot of projects sometimes come down to.

I spoke with a growing FinTech company and lo and behold within six months, they went to that community representing 40 new jobs for software engineers. And that was three months into my five-year career and that's when I really had that light bulb go off and say oh, this works. This is real. You can have concrete jobs. You can see people, the ribbon-cutting. It was like a great feeling. So, that led me to move to the business development side as well as doing consulting work and I haven't looked back since.

Chad Chancellor: I'm curious the economy is good right now and you guys are growing. I figured you would grow when the economy was bad because I figured people would really need more companies and jobs there. I guess talk about the dynamic that you're growing really in these good times and also talk about-- in our business, we're seeing more boards when we're doing these executive searches say we want to have 40 or 50 jobs instead of 500. We're seeing a lot of more boards saying they want to diversify and recruit smaller; even manufacturing, not just-- is that something that you all are seeing? Is that something that you can get folks in the door with?

Amber Hunter: Absolutely. I think that really calls to what I was mentioning before in terms of the availability of workforce. We do have state clients, but we also have rural communities. We also have villages, towns, and they have a major problem with having labor, but perhaps not the most skilled or not the skills for the companies they are trying to recruit.

So, when we sit down with them, if we even propose a company that's interested and wants to create 200, 500 jobs, they are frank in the fact that they can't fill that building. They can get the facility or they may have the land, but they can't find the jobs unless they start poaching outside and then we know the type of political crisis that is. So, for them, they just focus on working on what is their sweet spot. So, that's communities of 50.

Chad Chancellor: I know you guys are based in Canada. I assume most of your business is in the U.S., but we actually have some Canadian listeners because I got the analytics that tells me. So, we have some Canadian listeners. So, do you help Canadian communities also call on you? I guess is there a territory that you're stronger in or can you help anybody?

Amber Hunter: Absolutely. Well, I'm biased because I represent North America. So, I'm going to say that all of our best clients are in the U.S. because that's all of mine, but we do work a lot with Canada specifically in Ontario actually and Quebec. So, we represent the province and the city of Quebec and we do a lot of FDI missions for them coming into the U.S.

So, it's really helpful for me because I know both U.S. EDOs and Canadian EDOs. So, I'm very transparent about the clients that I work with and any time one of my clients is going into a

community of another client, I call them and I let them know because sometimes, just having that kind of camaraderie can really help benefit a sort of tit for tat way showing them-- making some meetings with some key people and exporting or suppliers etc. So, we just like to keep the lines of communication open and we think can really benefit both sides.

Chad Chancellor: Well, Amber, give these people your contact information and then again, she's at almost all the big IEDCs and the MidAmerica Conference and SEDC and so forth. So, give these folks your contact information so they know how to get a hold of you.

Amber Hunter: Absolutely. Well, thank you so much, Chad, for having me. I really appreciate it. You guys can reach me at amber.researchfdi.com. I'd love to hear from you and tell you a little bit more about what we do.

Chad Chancellor: All right. Thank you so much.

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