MAY / 2024

talent >wars

P04

TALENT LANDSCAPE Current trends and challenges P 06 MYTHS & FACTS What really drives

relocation

P 42

TOP MARKETING TACTICS How to influence talent P 52 ACTION ITEMS Turning the data into action

dCi

What Really Matters to Talent and What Places Can Do to Attract Them



Contents

MAY / 2024

- **03** Introduction
- **06 What Matters to Talent**
- **10** Which Came First, the Job or the Location?
- 14 Is Gen Z Different From Other Generations?
- 20 "White-Collar" vs. "Blue-Collar" Talent Priorities
- 26 Influencing Perceptions of Safety
- **30** The Future of Remote Work
- 34 Where Talent Wants to Live
- 38 Will People Re-enter the Workforce?
- 42 Most Effective Marketing Tactics
- 52 Conclusion
- **54 Citations**
- 55 About DCI





Introduction

Due to a perfect storm of demographic conditions, labor force participation and skillset misalignment, labor shortages are the new normal – and companies continue to put pressure on communities to supply the talent that they demand. "Talent attraction" has become a common term, no longer used only by human resources professionals, but also by city, region and state leaders to refer to their efforts to grow and retain their working-age population. The battlefield has shifted from the corporate to the economic development world, as places fight to increase their population to fill the needs of current and future employers.

Now firmly in a "post-pandemic" environment, the U.S. saw a number of trends that point to shifts in the talent and workplace landscape over the last year. Notably:

- > According to a new study, people now live roughly twice as far from their offices as they did pre-pandemic. This is most relevant to white-collar workers.¹
- > At the same time, office employers appear to be gaining more leverage as whitecollar job postings have decreased, with the greatest declines in software, IT, finance, marketing and media, all of which also experienced an uptick in layoffs.²
- The "Great Resignation" is officially over.
 After a surge during 2021 and 2022, the
 U.S. "quit rate" has plateaued, returning to
 pre-pandemic levels.³



- > Increasingly, industrial operations are forced to look further and further out from population centers to find the sites they need, which presents a unique challenge and opportunity when it comes to sourcing talent.⁴
- > More Gen Z are reportedly going into trades due to rising higher education costs and perceived instability of whitecollar jobs with the rise of generative AI.⁵
- > The U.S. and locations across the globe are in an election year and facing a slew of challenges that could impact the priorities of relocating talent. For one, home prices and mortgage rates are climbing again, making homeownership more and more challenging.⁶

Each year since 2017, DCI has set out to uncover the motivations and preferences of relocating talent with the goal to understand how best to influence their "path to purchase" for a new location to call home.

Now in its eighth edition, "Talent Wars" tackles a few hot topics this year that go beyond our usual line of questioning. Notably, we compare the priorities of selfidentified "blue-collar" vs. "white-collar" talent, examine generational differences, look at what it would take for those not currently working to re-enter the workforce, and delve into what influences perceptions of safety. Also new this year, we included a



subset of respondents referred to as "nonrelocators" who did not recently relocate. While the majority of our findings focus on "relocators," or those who have relocated at least 100 miles away from their previous residence within the last three years, we also wanted to hear from those who did not recently make a relocation to understand if their motivations and preferences differ. In total, we surveyed 1,500 working-age individuals (ages 21-65) across the U.S. With eight years of data in our arsenal, we can confidently say that we understand what really matters to talent and how places can influence them in the war for talent. Still, we encounter a lot of myths about the ways in which these decisions are made. With that in mind, we tackled eight myths about talent attraction, revealing the real, data-backed facts, and what they mean for locations.

Myth: Talent's Priorities Change Every Year Fact: Talent's Priorities Remain Consistent



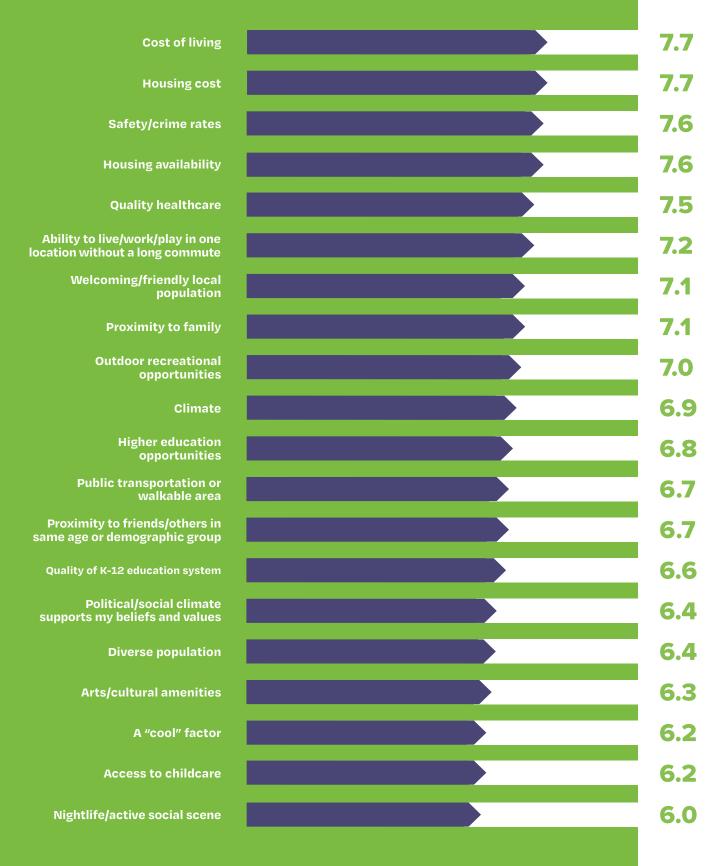
Despite recent trends and shifts in what feels like an ever-changing talent landscape, the things that matter most to talent do not change. In fact, across eight years of surveying working-age individuals for this report, we have found that the top lifestyle and job factors have remained steady.

While the order of the top lifestyle factors has shifted slightly over the last several years, the top factors themselves remain remarkably consistent, with cost of living topping the list of factors every year since 2017. This year, cost of living and housing cost tied for first, safety/crime rates and housing availability tied for second, and quality healthcare was third, underscoring that the practical factors are what matter most to talent in a relocation decision. Similarly, the top career factors that talent considers as part of a relocation decision are nearly identical every year. When evaluating the career/work-related factors of a relocation, talent consistently prioritizes finding that initial job, followed by the salary and benefits offered in the area, and work-life balance, which tied for second place again this year and has become increasingly important over the last several years.

Of note, the top lifestyle factor and top career factor received the same rating of importance this year, indicating that people are now placing equal weight on lifestyle and career factors as part of relocation decisions.

Most Important Lifestyle Factors

On a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to relocate?



Most Important Career Factors

On a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), how important were the following career/work-related factors the last time you relocated to a new area?

A job opportunity for myself

Salary and benefits offered in the area relative to the cost of living

Culture of good work/life balance

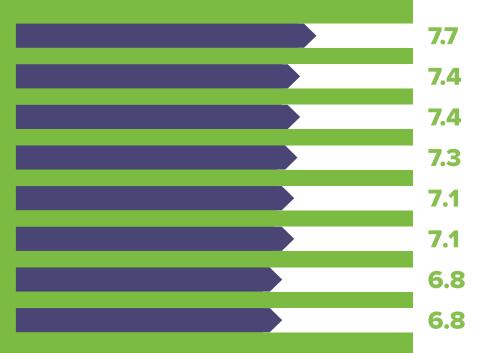
Ability to live/work/play in one location without a long commute

Alternative job/ advancement opportunities

Job opportunities for my spouse/partner

Diverse industry base

Strong entrepreneurial culture



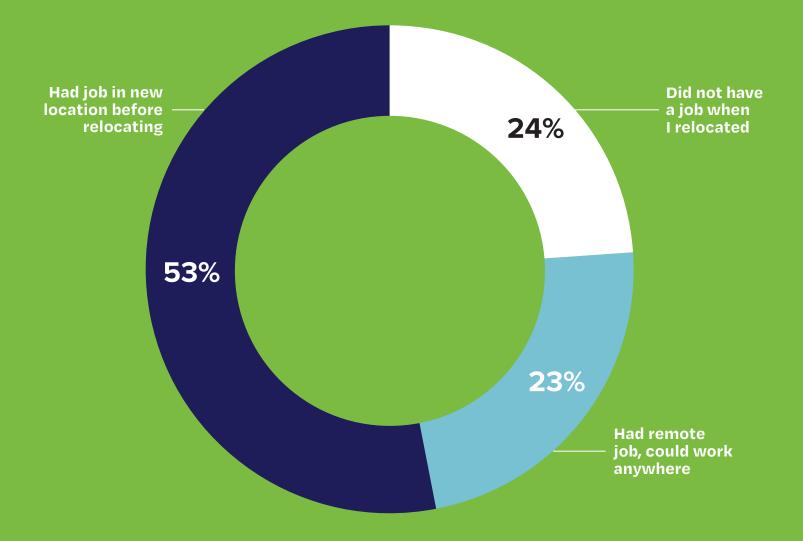




Myth: People Move to a Place First and Find a Job Later Fact: The Majority of People Will Not Relocate Without a Job



We consistently find that jobs are a key driver of relocation. Still, the notion that people will up and move to a new city or region without a job persists, particularly as quality of life has been the top "trigger" inspiring relocation for the past three years. To put this debate to rest, we asked those who relocated about their employment status at the time of their move. What we found underscores that the majority of people will not relocate without a job in place. Indeed, more than three-quarters of those who relocated had a job either in the location they moved to or remotely prior to their relocation. When you moved, did you have a job in the new location you moved to?



76%

of those who relocated had a job either in the location or remotely prior to the relocation. Our research also illustrates that most people will either relocate or stay for the right job opportunity. Jobs are once again driving relocation post-pandemic. As was the case in the 2023 study, accepting a job that required relocation was the third most common trigger that inspired people to relocate behind seeking out a better quality of life and wanting to be closer to family. During the pandemic, moving for a specific job fell below the top three triggers.

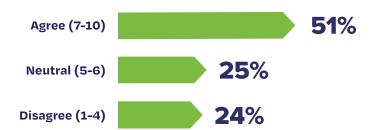
Top Triggers for Relocation

What was the primary trigger that caused you to relocate during your most recent move?



When it comes to evaluating the job itself, the top factors once again remain consistent with previous years. Salary is the top factor, as it has been every year since 2017, followed closely by work-life balance.

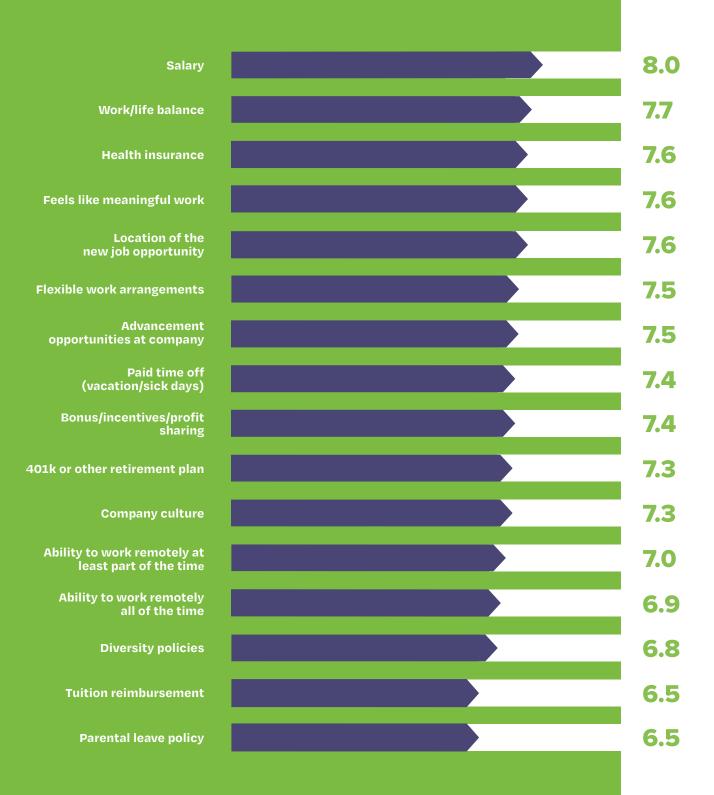
This year, "health insurance," "feels like meaningful work," and "location of new job opportunity" tied for third place, followed by "flexible work arrangements" and "advancement opportunities at company." This indicates that if the company offering the job can satisfy salary requirements and fulfill a higher standard of work-life balance, a company will have a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent. <image>



A job that matches my skill and salary requirements is more important to me than an area's quality of life.

Top Job Factors

On a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), please rate each of the following factors when considering a new job opportunity



Myth: Gen Z Has Different Priorities Than Other Generations Fact: Talent Across Generations Have Largely the Same Priorities



Just as talent priorities don't change yearover-year, they don't change much across generations. While it's a common practice to sensationalize or characterize the newest generation in the workforce (in this case, Gen Z) as if they are a unique phenomenon, our research finds that Gen Z are just people – and people prioritize the same things at the end of the day.

To examine possible differences, we broke out responses by generation, focusing on the three generations that currently represent the largest share of the workforce: Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X. While the top factors remain consistent overall, we do observe slight differences across generations. While Gen Z and Millennials are most motivated to relocate to have a better quality of life, Gen X are most motivated to relocate to be closer to family. For Millennials and Gen X, the desire to lower their overall cost of living appears in the top three triggers, while it does not for Gen Z. For Gen X, accepting a job that requires relocation does not appear in the top three triggers as it does for Gen Z and Millennials. All of these slight differences can be attributed to different life and career stages that each generation finds themselves in.

Top Triggers Inspiring Relocation

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	
Trigger 1	To have a better quality of life	To have a better quality of life	Wanted to be closer to family	
Triggor 2	Wanted to be	Wanted to be closer to family	To have a better quality of life	
Trigger 2	closer to family	Accepted a new job that required relocation		
Trigger 3	Accepted a new job that required relocation	To lower my overall cost of living	To lower my overall cost of living	

We observe similar nuances across generations when it comes to the top lifestyle and career factors influencing relocation. Ultimately, everyone prioritizes the same factors in these decisions, but some become slightly more important than others depending upon the career and life stage one is in. Our data suggests that the talent attraction strategy does not need to change when appealing to different generations. For talent attraction campaigns, this means that the messaging itself actually does not need to greatly differ, but the priority focus could be tailored slightly to appeal to one generation over another.



Top Lifestyle Factors Influencing Decision To Relocate

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	
Factor Housing		Cost of living (7.9)	Housing cost	
1	availability (7.4)	Housing availability (7.9)	(7.9)	
Factor 2	Cost of living (7.3)	Safety/crime rates (7.8)	Cost of living (7.8)	
2	Quality healthcare (7.3)		(1.0)	
Factor	Housing cost (7.2)	Housing cost (7.7)	Housing availability (7.7)	
3	Safety/crime rates (7.2)	Quality healthcare (7.7)	Safety/crime rates (7.7)	
Factor 4	Higher education opportunities (7.0)	Live/work/play without long commute (7.5)	Welcoming/friendly local population (7.4)	
Factor	Outdoor recreational opportunities (6.9)	Proximity to family	Quality	
5	Live/work/play without long commute (6.9)	(7.4)	healthcare (7.2)	

Top Career Factors Influencing Decision To Relocate

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	
	Job opportunity for self (7.3)	Job opportunity	Job opportunity	
Factor 1	Salary and benefits offered (7.3)	for self (7.9)	for self (7.8)	
	Live/work/play without long commute (7.0)			
Factor 2	Alternative job/ advancement opportunities (7.0)	Salary and benefits offered (7.6)	Work/life balance (7.5)	
	Work/life balance (7.0)			
		Job opportunities for partner (7.5)		
Factor 3	Job opportunities for partner (6.9)	Alternative job/ advancement opportunities (7.5)	Live/work/play without long commute (7.3)	
		Work/life balance (7.5)		

The Role of Politics in Relocation

Even when we look at a hot topic like politics, we observe only slight differences across generations in terms of how it impacts relocation decisions. When asked the degree to which they agree with the statement "I will only live in a state that matches my political and social values," all generations gave moderate ratings on a scale from one to 10, with Millennials agreeing most with the statement, followed by Gen Z, and finally Gen X.



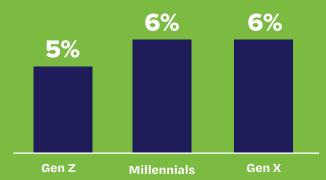
Agreement with statement "I will only live in a state that matches my political and social values."



A small percentage of Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X reported that the primary trigger inspiring relocation was to move to an area that better aligned with their social and political values or beliefs (6% of Millennials and Gen X, respectively, and 5% of Gen Z).

Percent choosing "To move to an area better aligned with my social and political values or beliefs" as the primary trigger prompting most recent relocation

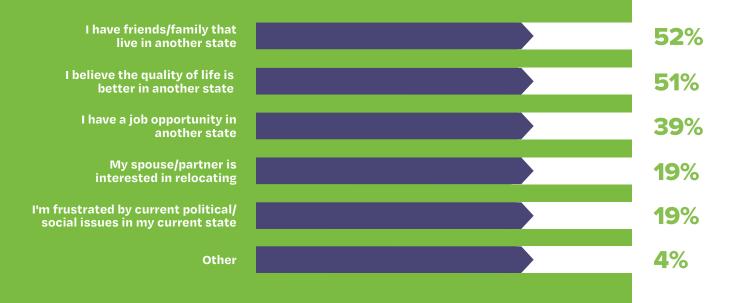
What was the primary trigger that caused you to relocate during your most recent move?



Across all generations, 19% report they would consider relocating to a new state within the next five years primarily because they are frustrated by the political/social issues in their current state, so while politics are not a top factor influencing future relocation, they are a key part of the consideration set for roughly one in five.

Top Reasons Talent Would Consider Relocating to Another State

What is the primary reason(s) you would consider moving to another state?



"White-Collar" and "Blue-Collar" Talent Have Different Priorities Fact: Occupation Does Not Influence Priorities



Just as talent's priorities don't change across generations, they remain fairly consistent across occupational groups. While we have done many occupationspecific studies for our talent attraction clients over the years that seemed to illustrate this point, this year in our national study, we decided to ask specifically for respondents to identify themselves as either "white-collar" or "blue-collar." While these terms are becoming outdated, allowing respondents to self-identify as one or the other allowed us to answer a complex question with a simple comparison: should talent attraction campaigns take a different approach depending on the type of skillset they are looking to attract? What we found is that, for the most part, behaviors and motivations remain consistent, with a few slight differences.

When it comes to what triggers relocation, both groups are most motivated by a better quality of life, followed by being closer to family and accepting a job that required relocation (tied for second among blue-collar workers and second and third, respectively, for white-collar workers). The difference is that some additional triggers emerged in the third spot when we look at

Top Relocation Triggers During Most Recent Move				
Blue Collar		White Collar		
Trigger 1	Better quality of life	Better quality of life		
Trigger 2	Closer to Family	Closer to family		
irigger 2	New job required relocation			
	Partner was being relocated	New job required relocation		
Trigger 3	Access to larger living space			
	Crime rate/felt unsafe			

blue-collar workers specifically: a partner being relocated, wanting access to a larger living space, and in response to the local crime rate or feeling unsafe.

When it comes to the top lifestyle and job factors, once again, we see consistent responses across groups with slight variatons. White-collar workers consider safety to be more important than housing cost and quality healthcare, whereas bluecollar workers rank housing cost above quality healthcare and safety in terms of importance. Among job factors, blue-collar workers rate meaningful work on par with health insurance, whereas meaningful work does not appear in the top three job factors for white-collar workers.

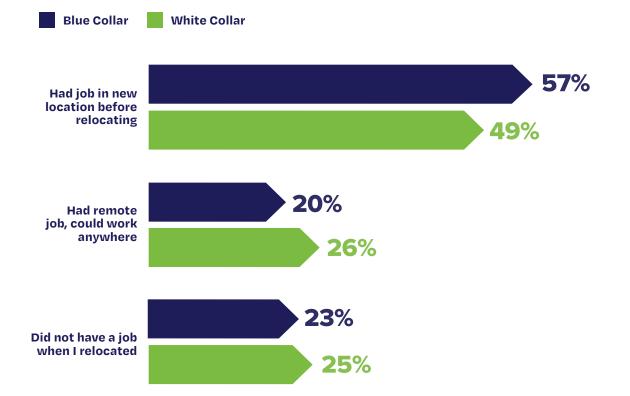
Interestingly, white-collar workers assign a higher rating of importance to factors across the board compared to blue-collar workers. Among the top career-related factors considered when evaluating a new location, the top three were consistent across groups: job opportunity, salary and benefits and culture of good work-life balance. However, white-collar workers assigned a rating of 8.0 to the top factor, while blue-collar workers assigned a rating of 7.4 on a scale from 1 to 10.

Top Lifestyle Factors In Decision To Relocate				
	Blue Collar	White Collar		
	Cost of living (7.5)	Cost of living (7.9)		
Factor 1	Housing availability (7.5)	Housing availability (7.9)		
	Housing cost (7.5)	Safety/crime rates (7.9)		
Factor 2	Quality healthcare (7.3)	Housing cost (7.7)		
	Safety/crime rates (7.3)	Quality healthcare (7.7)		

Top Factors When Considering New Job Opportunity				
	Blue Collar	White Collar		
Factor 1	Salary (7.8)	Salary (8.3)		
Factor 2	Work/life balance Work/life balance (7.4) (8.1)			
	Location (7.3)	Location (8.0)		
Factor 3	Meaningful work (7.3)	Health insurance		
	Health insurance (7.3)	(8.0)		

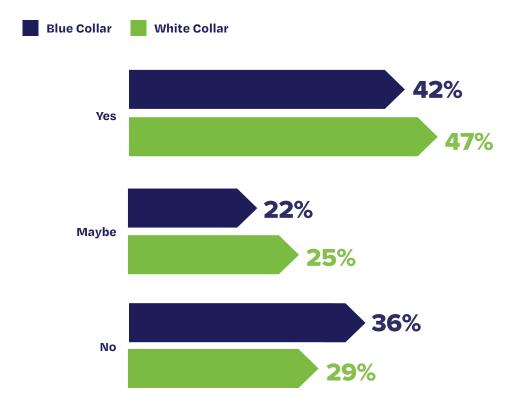
Not surprisingly, blue-collar workers were more likely to have a job in the new location prior to their move, likely because more blue-collar jobs require in-person work. Still, the gap is smaller than one might think, with 57% of blue-collar workers and 49% of white-collar workers reporting they had a job in the new location in advance of their move. Of those remaining, 20% of bluecollar workers reported having a remote job (compared to 26% for white-collar workers) and 23% reported not having a job at the time of the relocation (compared to 25% of white-collar workers).

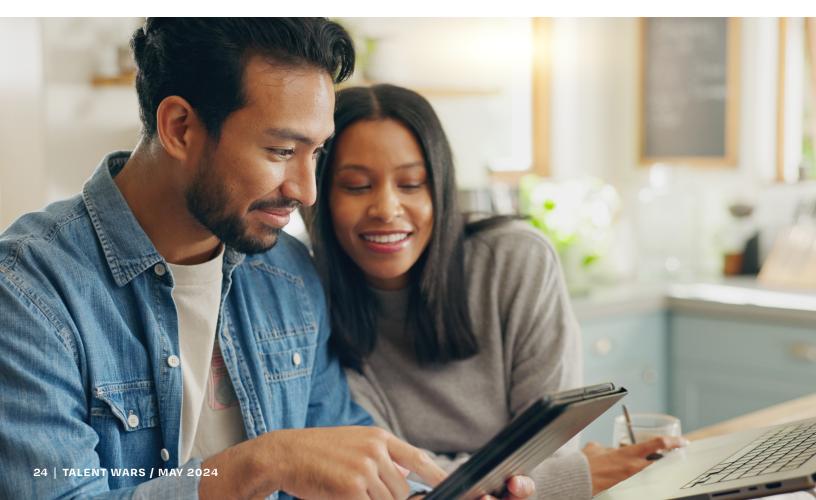
When you moved, did you have a job in the new location you moved to?





Are you actively considering a move to another location (more than 100 miles from your current residence) in the next five years?





Top Incentives

Would any of the following incentives entice you to consider relocating to a new area? (Please select the top two that would interest you the most)



(no restrictions)

Moving expenses covered

Homebuying assistance (e.g. no or low closing costs)

On average, white-collar workers are slightly more likely to consider a relocation than blue-collar workers, but there is still a clear opportunity to attract both groups. Specifically, 47% of white-collar workers are actively considering a move to another location more than 100 miles away within the next five years, while 42% of blue-collar workers are.

Both groups would be most motivated to relocate by the same incentives, with blue-collar workers saying they would be enticed by these top three incentives to a slightly greater degree than white-collar workers.

When it comes to marketing to white-collar and blue-collar workers, our data suggests once again that the strategy does not need to differ. Both groups report learning about locations primarily through the internet, first-hand experience and word of mouth and searching for jobs primarily through online job boards. More detail is included on page 42 about how to reach talent.





Myth: Crime Rates Are Preventing Places From Attracting Talent Fact: Perceptions of Safety Are Important, But They Can Be Influenced

Safety continues to be a major consideration for talent as part of a relocation decision. Specifically, safety is the second leading lifestyle factor influencing relocation, tied with housing cost, and is increasingly considered a major contributor to quality of life. Since the pandemic, in particular, talent has been seeking psychological as well as physical safety; in other words, the peace of mind that comes with stability, and security in their personal lives and careers.

Defining Quality of Life

Thinking beyond basic needs such as housing, a job, childcare, etc., how do you define "quality of life"?



An area's crime rate and other safety indicators strongly influence where I choose to live.



While community safety is certainly something that should be addressed at the policy level, we recognize that communities are often plagued by "if it bleeds, it leads" news coverage and internal negativity that contribute to worse perceptions of safety than are a reality. With that in mind, we sought to understand where people are getting the information that influences their perceptions of a region's safety.

Specifically, we asked those who indicated that an area's safety/crime rate is among the most important factors influencing their decision to relocate what sources of information they use to evaluate the safety or crime rates in a community. Among the various open-ended responses, a few common themes were:

- » News articles in local, regional or state media - 20%
- » Word of mouth from friends, family or personal connections - 12%

> Social media - 8%

"General internet search" was also a common response, which could aggregate these sources, all of which have some level of subjectivity or ability to be influenced. While it is important to be transparent and authentic – talent will seek out crime statistics and data no matter what – this indicates that it is indeed very possible to influence perceptions of safety and the responses should serve as a guide for how best to do so. First, a proactive media relations strategy is imperative for influencing perceptions. While you can't stop coverage of crime, you can look for opportunities to elevate the positive strides and strategic initiatives happening in your community to improve safety and belonging.

Second, the power of word of mouth in influencing perceptions of safety underscores that your own residents and stakeholders can either negatively contribute to perceptions or they can serve as cheerleaders. Work to cultivate ambassadors within your community who can speak authentically to the top livability attributes and prep them with key messaging that illustrates how a safe, secure and stable life is possible there.

Finally, harness these ambassadors and your brand platform to paint a favorable picture of safety on social media. Again, you can't control everything that is posted, but you can help to drown out the bad news with proactive stories of community safety and resilience.

STOP

"

While you can't stop coverage of crime, you can look for opportunities to elevate the positive strides and strategic initiatives happening in your community to improve safety and belonging."

Myth: Talent Wants the Flexibility of Remote Work Fact: There Is an Increasing Appetite to Go Back to the Office (At Least Some of the Time)



In a post-pandemic world, remote work remains a hot topic of debate. But while it may be considered common knowledge that employees are demanding remote and hybrid work arrangements, our data suggests a shift in attitudes. Indeed, most who have experienced working remotely are increasingly interested in going back to the office, suggesting those who have worked remotely may be becoming disillusioned with the experience. Specifically:

> Those who currently work remotely 100% of the time are most likely to prefer a hybrid situation in the future (39%).

- Roughly one-third of current hybrid workers are interested in in-person work (33%), and another third are interested in being remote-only (30%) and remaining hybrid (31%), respectively.
- > Current in-person workers who have worked remotely in the past are most likely to be flexible about future work situations (32%), followed by preferring a hybrid situation (29%) in the future.
- > Workers who have never worked remotely are most likely to prefer a remote-only situation in the future (41%).

	Current Work Situation				
		Remote	Hybrid	In-person (remote in past)	In-person (never remote)
	Remote	28%	30%	23%	41%
Preferred Future Work Situation	Hybrid	39%	31%	29%	19%
	In-person (remote in past)	25%	33%	16%	21%
	In-person (never remote)	8%	6%	32%	20%

"

Our data suggests a shift in attitudes. Indeed, most who have experienced working remotely are increasingly interested in going back to the office, suggesting those who have worked remotely may be becoming disillusioned with the experience."

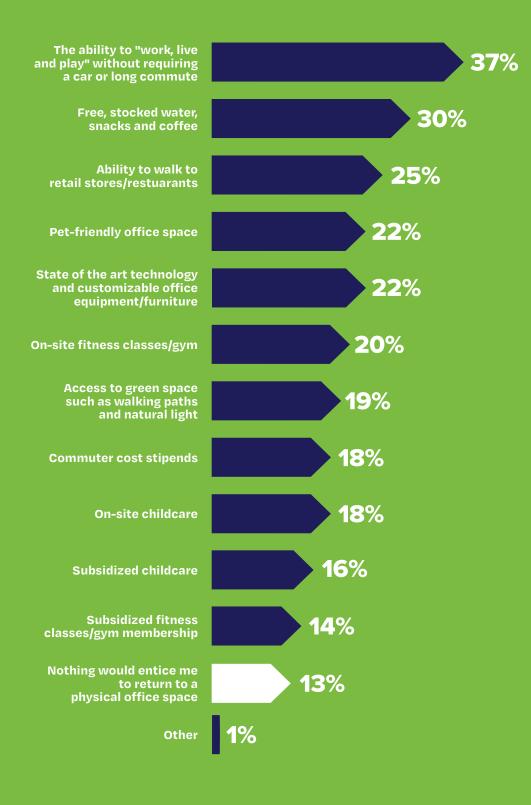


Additionally, when we asked those who would prefer to work remotely 100% of the time what would entice them to return to a physical office either part or all of the time, the most popular answer was simply the ability to live, work and play without requiring a long commute (37%), followed by free stocked water, snacks and coffee (30%). Ultimately, those who are used to the conveniences of working from home would be willing to return to the office if the experience feels similarly convenient. This is far from a tall order for many companies and communities, especially as corporate real estate gets creative to provide amenities to improve occupancy rates. Additionally, only 13% of those remote workers who said they would prefer to continue working remotely said that nothing would entice them to return to a physical office space.



Top Back-to-Office Amenities

Would any of the following amenities entice you to return to a physical office either part or all of the time?



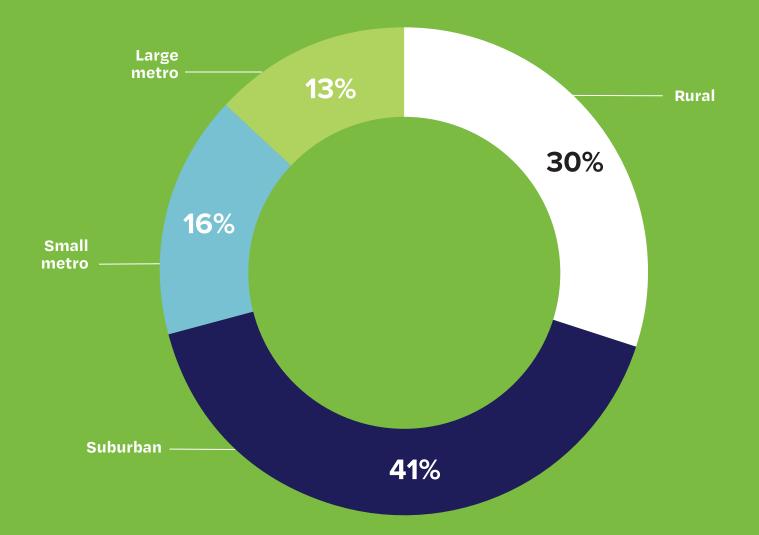
Myth: Talent Wants to Move to Major Cities Fact: Talent Is Interested in All Types of Communities



The draw of major cities like New York, LA, Chicago or Atlanta is undeniable. Big cities typically have plentiful jobs, rich cultural amenities and large, diverse communities of people, all of which are attractive, to younger generations in particular.

Our data, however, consistently finds that there is a lid for every pot when it comes to people and the places they choose to call home. Not everyone dreams of moving to a big city. In fact, when we asked about the type of community that respondents would be most interested in moving to, the largest percentage indicated suburban (41%), followed by rural (30%), small metro (16%) and finally, large metro (13%).

The responses are spread enough to suggest that different people really are looking for different types of communities. This highlights the importance of regional marketing when it comes to appealing to potential residents. The more different types of assets you have to offer, the more different types of people you will have a chance of appealing to. If you were/are considering relocation, what type of community would you be most interested in moving to?



"

The data underscores the importance of regional marketing when it comes to appealing to potential residents."



Most Relocations Happen Within the Same Region

Consistent with previous surveys, our data finds that, in general, people tend to relocate within the same region of the country to where they previously lived. The large majority of those in the Midwest relocated elsewhere within the region (83%). Those from the Northeast largely relocated within the Northeast (68%), with the second-largest group relocating to the South (21%). In the South, talent largely relocated to another area within the South (78%), followed by the Midwest (11%). Sixty-eight percent of those in the West relocated within the region, followed by 17% relocating to the South.

	Region Located From				
Region Located To	Midwest	Northeast	South	West	
Midwest	83%	5%	11%	8%	
Northeast	3%	68%	7%	8%	
South	8%	21%	78%	17%	
West	5%	5%	4%	68%	



Myth: Those Not Currently in the Workforce Are Uninterested in Working Fact: People Will Re-enter the Workforce with the Right Motivation



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, labor force participation rates in the U.S. are expected to fall to 60.4% by 2032, part of a gradual decline from a height of 67.4% in 2000 and 63.3% pre-pandemic. A big part of this decline is related to the size of the population – and the fact that baby boomers are retiring and the number of Gen Z workers entering the labor force is smaller than previous generations - but it's also related to the number of working-age individuals who are not currently seeking out employment. This category includes those who are retired, students, those taking care of children or other family members and others who are neither working nor seeking out work.

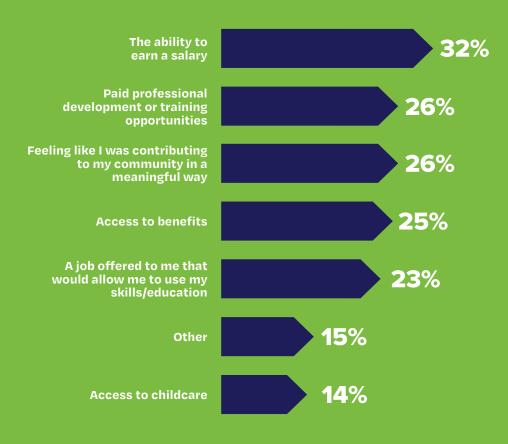
Many talent attraction and retention programs overlook this group, but our data suggests there is an opportunity to appeal to them. We asked those who selfidentified as "unemployed and not able/ interested in working currently but would like to work in the future" what would entice them to re-enter the workforce. What we found is that the ability to earn a salary is the top potential motivator (32%), followed by access to paid professional development or training opportunities (26%) and the feeling of contributing to one's community in a meaningful way (26%). These responses are not dissimilar to the top factors talent evaluates when considering a new job opportunity, which

include salary, the chance to do meaningful work and advancement opportunities. At the end of the day, all people are motivated by the ability to earn a salary, learn new skills and put them to use, and to feel as if their work has meaning for their community, their industry or the world as a whole.

Interestingly, while access to childcare was the least-mentioned factor for re-entering the workforce overall, it was the second most-mentioned factor among those who live with children (36%), behind the ability to earn a salary (39%). This underscores that childcare solutions are key to enticing parents who are not currently working back to the workforce.



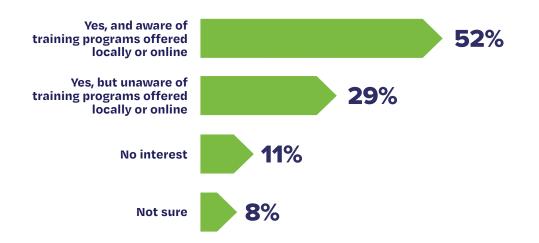
Top Motivators to Re-enter the Workforce <u>What factors would most likely entice you to re-enter the workforce?</u>



A Desire to Upskill

Paid professional development or training opportunities are the second most enticing factors to those considering re-entering the workforce. Our broader data suggests that the majority of working talent are also interested in additional training if it would allow them to upgrade their career or job prospects, which is good news for efforts to curb skillset misalignment. This is particularly relevant as new and emerging industries like AI and unmanned and autonomous vehicles grow, adding jobs for which no specific training even existed while the majority of the current workforce was in school. In total, 81% would be willing to undergo additional training or education to shift their career path, but 29% report that they are unaware of training programs offered locally or online.

Would you be willing to undergo additional training or education if it allowed you to shift your career path?





81%

would be willing to undergo additional training or education to shift their career path



Among those who would be willing to undergo additional training, 57% would be willing to relocate to a new region/state to access free training and 57% would be willing to invest in training at their own expense to upgrade their job or career prospects. While more than half (54%) report that they are aware of such programs

570/

either locally or online, just under half are either unsure or unaware of these programs.

This presents a strong case for why talent attraction and development programs should invest in marketing to raise awareness of training programs that align with in-demand jobs among both internal and external target talent.

Л0/

I would be willing to invest (a	t my own expense)	in additional training if	it allowed me to upgrac	le my career or job prospects

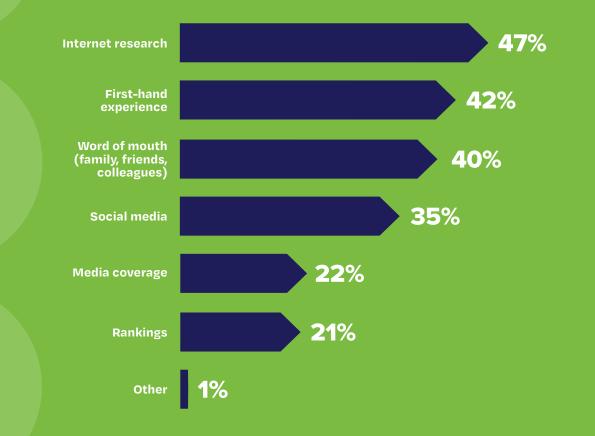
57%	24%	19%		
I would be willing to relocate to a new region/state to access free training that allowed me to upgrade my career or job prospects				
57%	24%	21%		
I would be willing to relocate to a new region/state to access free training that allowed me to upgrade my career or job prospects				
54%	22%	23%		
Agree Neutral Disagree				

Talent Attraction Marketing: How to Reach Talent

To understand how best to market to talent, we need to understand where they are getting their information. When it comes to what influences perceptions of places during a relocation decision, the internet remains king. For the third year in a row, internet research overtook firsthand experience on the list of top sources. This underscores the importance of a strong digital presence for communities looking to attract talent. As with the last several years, first-hand experience is close behind as a top influencer of perceptions, followed by word of mouth and social media, emphasizing the visitorto-resident connection and the importance of empowering ambassadors within your community to tell its stories.

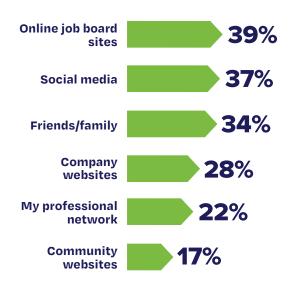
Top Sources Influencing Perceptions of Places to Relocate

When you were considering places to relocate to, what influenced your perceptions of communities being considered?



Top Sources for Job Opportunities

What sources do you utilize most often when looking for new job opportunities?





Top Social Media Platforms to Reach Talent

Respondents' top source for learning about new job opportunities remains online job boards, followed by social media. For the sixth year in a row, Facebook topped the list of social media platforms used to learn about both quality of life and job opportunities in an area.

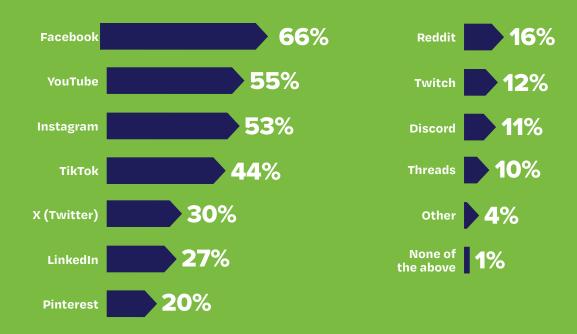
This year, we took a deeper dive into how exactly people are leveraging Facebook to learn about jobs and places to live. When searching for employment opportunities, Facebook users refer to company/ organization pages and posts from friends and family. When learning about places to live, they refer to posts from friends and family and discussions in private interest groups (such as alumni groups and public interest groups) over following brand



pages. The power of posts from friends and family to influence both job and relocation decisions once again underscores the value of recruiting current residents to serve as ambassadors, as well as partnering with content creators with an engaged audience to tell authentic stories of your community.

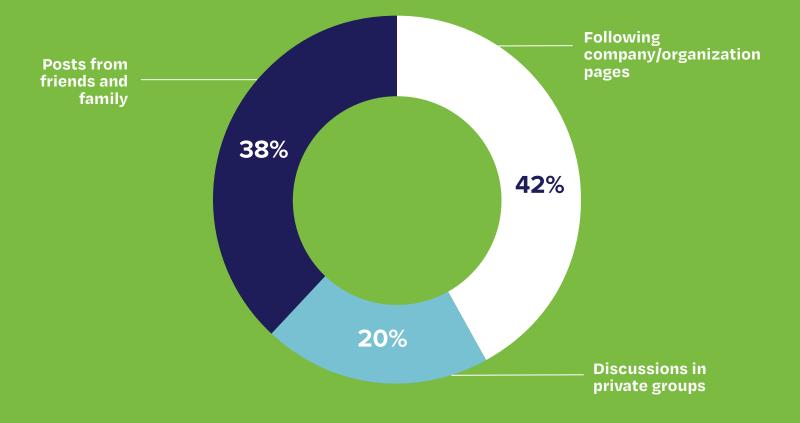
Top Social Platforms for Learning About Jobs

What social media sources do you most frequently refer to for information on employment opportunities and places to work.



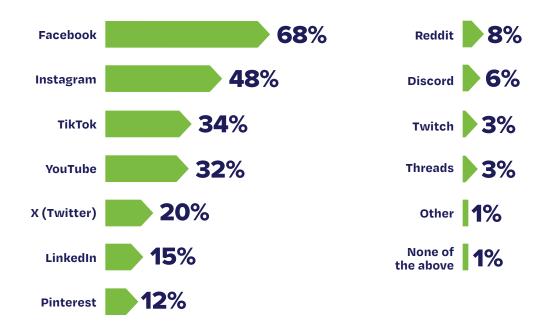
Facebook as a Resource for Jobs

How is Facebook most helpful to you when learning about employment opportunities?



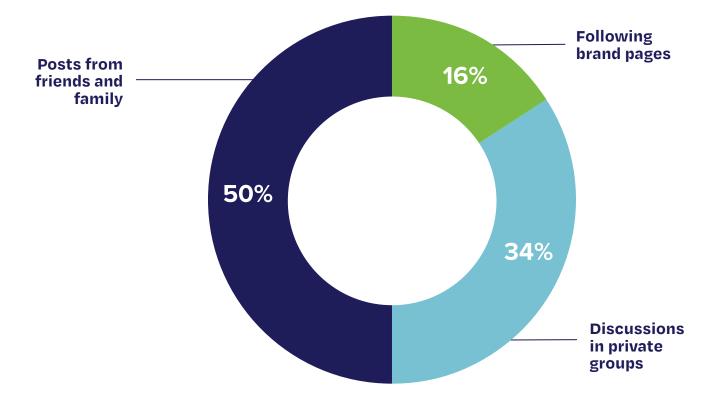
Top Social Platforms for Learning About Places to Live

Which of the following social media channels most influences your perception of communities as a place to live and the quality of life in an area?



Facebook as a Resource for Places to Live

How is Facebook most helpful to you when learning about places to live?

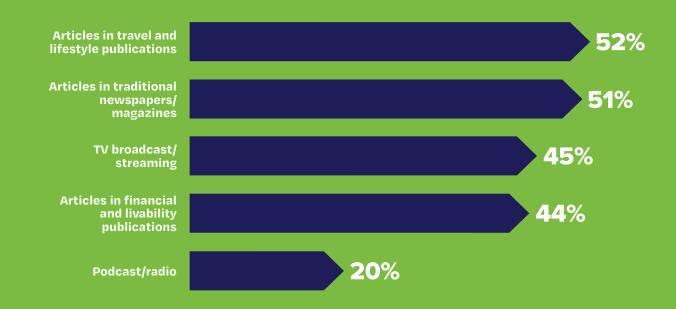


Top Media Influencing Perceptions of Places to Live

It's well-known among marketers that your brand is not made up of what you say about yourself, but rather what others say about you. With that in mind, the power of the press and the third-party credibility that media coverage provides is a major contributor to your community's brand. The same is true for the power it has to influence relocation, with 22% of respondents noting that media coverage influenced their perceptions of the places being considered during their last relocation.

Digging deeper into the types of publications referenced throughout their search, "articles in travel and lifestyle publications" (52%) were considered the most influential type of media. This indicates that tourism marketing efforts influence livability perceptions and underscores the importance of collaborating with your local tourism counterparts to earn media for your community. "Articles in traditional newspapers or magazines" (51%) closely follow travel and lifestyle publications, followed by "TV/broadcast/streaming" (45%), "articles in financial and livability publications" (44%) and "podcast/radio" (20%). This makes a case for a nuanced approach to public relations for talent attraction, where locations promote travel and lifestyle amenities (arts and culture, attractions, outdoors, food and beverage) alongside quality of life assets (safety, housing, schools, community development) and career content (employers, job market, success stories, entrepreneurship).

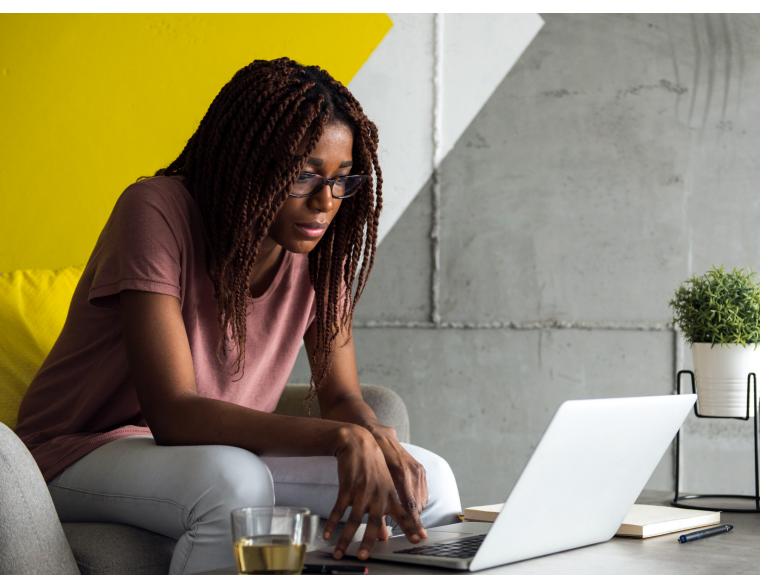
Top Media Influencing Perceptions of Communities as Places to Live Which of the following types of media influence your perceptions of communities as a place to live and the quality of life in the area?





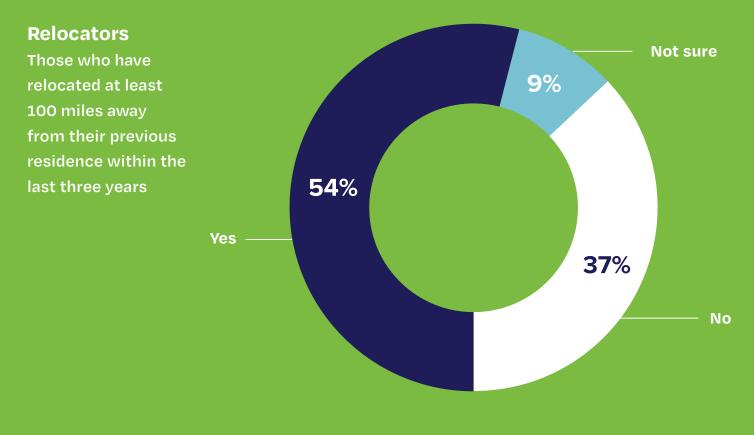
Do Talent Attraction Ads Work?

For the first time, this year, we wanted to understand people's awareness of "talent attraction" marketing campaigns. An effective talent attraction marketing strategy includes a mix of earned, owned, paid and direct engagement tactics to raise brand awareness and drive engagement and, ultimately, conversions. Since advertising is the most obvious form of a brand appealing directly to a target audience, we asked specifically about whether respondents have ever seen ads that tried to convince them to live and work in another city or state. Interestingly, 54% of relocators report they've seen ads trying to convince them to relocate, and only 26% of non-relocators report they've seen such ads. While the true marker of success is direct engagement with your campaign, this awareness data shows that targeted ads work. It indicates that those who are in the market for a relocation are more likely to see your ads. Campaigns should continue to target intentdriven users, or those actively searching for information about a new location to live and work, with compelling information that speaks to how the location can solve for their pain points.



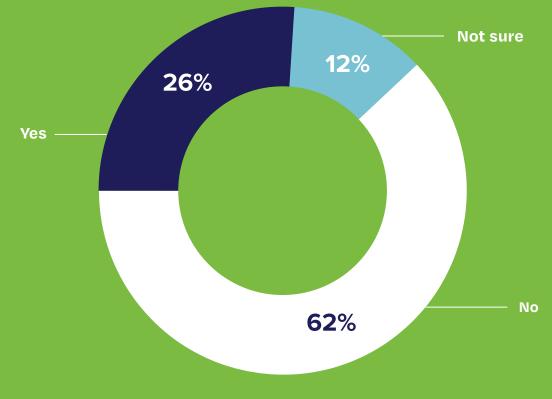
Awareness of Talent Attraction Ads

Have you ever seen advertising (e.g., billboards, commercials, social media posts, etc.) that tried to convince you to move to or work in a different city or state?



Non-Relocators

Those who have not relocated within the last three years



Conclusion

In this report, we put eight myths to rest and provided information on the top sources of information influencing relocation decisions. But what does it all mean for organizations involved in attracting and retaining talent? Here are five key takeaways to inform your talent strategy in the year ahead.

1. Focus on What Matters Most. Our data illustrates that talent priorities remain consistent across years, occupations and even entire generations. All talent, regardless of their age or professional or personal background, care most about being able to find and afford a better or comparable standard of living. That means talent attraction campaigns must include content and tools that provide information on cost of living, housing cost and availability and safety. The messaging should focus on how your community can solve for their pain points and what sets you apart compared to other options.

2. Highlight Jobs – and Arm Your

Employers. Despite what we may hear about people moving to a new city on a whim, the large majority of people will not relocate without a job. Locations can promote livability to get people into the top of the funnel on the "path to purchase" for a relocation, but employers are the deal closers. That's why it's important that talent attraction programs not only highlight the depth and breadth of jobs available in the area, but also arm their

employers with the information they need to sell the location so that they can close the deal with potential employees. This is also a crucial aspect of business retention and expansion efforts.

3. Own Your Narrative. Not every location can compete favorably on key measures like safety and cost of living. But that doesn't mean any one factor needs to be a deal-breaker. Our research illustrates that perceptions of safety can be influenced through strategic public relations, engaging with community members to serve as ambassadors and social media. Our research also finds that securing earned media - specifically coverage in travel and lifestyle publications, major news outlets and broadcast - is a powerful way to shift perceptions of your community as a whole. Whatever your community's challenges may be, it's important to own the narrative. Be authentic and transparent and provide useful proof points and tools. Talent is going to seek out this information either way - and with a smart PR and digital strategy, you can be the architect of your own story.

4. Promote Resources to Inspire Career Change. Talent attraction can get qualified people into jobs today, but it won't solve skillset misalignment. The good news is, the majority of talent are interested in upskilling to shift or upgrade their career path – and some would even be willing to relocate to access that training. However, our research consistently finds that many are not aware of the resources out there. Additionally, those who are not currently working or actively seeking employment may be enticed to re-enter the workforce for the right factors, including simply the chance to earn a salary, followed by access to paid training. There is a role for talent initiatives to promote existing resources and design new ones to help those interested in career change to see a clear pathway to a better future.

5. Go Digital and Stay Targeted. When it comes to getting in front of relocation-ready talent, it's important to meet them where they

are – and that's online. It is crucial that talent attraction campaigns have a strong digital presence and that they employ strategic digital tactics to reach targeted users. A strong SEO strategy is key to ensuring that talent finds your web content organically, and focused organic social media and paid media strategies will help you reach the right users with the right content. As awareness of talent attraction ad campaigns grows, so too does the competition. Make sure you're using your resources wisely and making a clear case for why your community should be at the top of talent's short list.





Citations

- Goldberg, E. (2024, March 4). The ZIP Code Shift: Why Many Americans No Longer Live Where They Work. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/04/ business/zip-code-shift-home-work.html
- 2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS).U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/jlt/
- 3. Maurer, R. (2024, January 10). The Great Resignation Is Over. Society for Human Resource Management. https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/talent-acquisition/thegreat-resignation-is-over-quits-rate-falls
- 4. Development Counsellors International & Site Selectors Guild (2024, April 4). The State of Site Selection, 2024. https://siteselectorsguild.com/research/the-state-of-site-selection-2024/
- 5. Chen, T. P. (2024, April 1). How Gen Z Is Becoming the Toolbelt Generation. The Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/lifestyle/careers/gen-z-trades-jobs-plumbingwelding-a76b5e43
- Sorokin, A. R., Mattu, R., Kessler, S., De la Merced, M. J., Hirsch , L., & Livni, E. (2024, April 12). Inflation Comes for the Housing Market. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes. com/2024/04/12/business/dealbook/inflation-housing-market-mortgages.html

About DCI

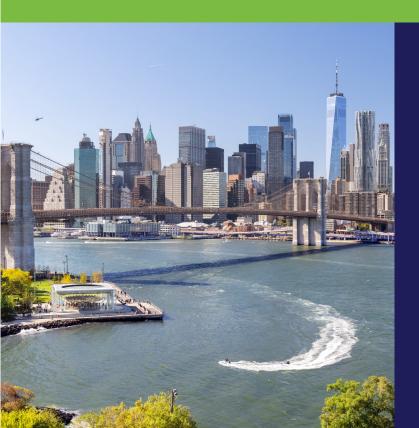
Development Counsellors International (DCI) is the leader in marketing places.

Since 1960, DCI has worked with more than 500 cities, states, regions and countries to attract visitors, businesses and talent. DCI combines tailored target audience research with place-marketing expertise to craft results-driven talent attraction strategies, campaigns and marketing programs.

DCI's combined expertise in economic development and tourism uniquely positions our agency to promote clients as both hubs for job opportunities and amazing places to live. Our integrated talent marketing team specializes in crafting recruitment marketing strategies and messages that spotlight what matters most to job seekers and potential candidates across industries.

Our areas of expertise include:

- > Customized Research & Perception Studies
- Marketing Strategy & Talent Program
 Consulting
- » Brand Development
- > Website Design & Development
- > Search Engine Marketing & Paid Media
- > Social & Content Marketing
- > Influencer Partnerships
- **> Public Relations**
- > Speaking Engagements



Interested in learning how we can help turn these insights into action for your community? Contact DCI's Vice President of Talent Attraction Patience Fairbrother at: patience.fairbrother@aboutdci.com.

Listen to the Companion Podcast





Learn More About DCI | www.aboutdci.com