

PHOENIX BUSINESS BLOG

How ASU and Maricopa Corporate College have helped lure thousands of jobs to Phoenix

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Arizona State University and Maricopa Corporate College have had roles in bringing more than 8,000 jobs to Phoenix in the past 12 months.

Site selectors told the Phoenix Business Journal that in nearly all cases, workforce quality and clusters of like-skilled

employees are the crucial components of a site selection.

Zenefits, ZocDoc and Santander Consumer USA and Northern Trust all cited ASU and Maricopa Corporate College as reasons for selecting Phoenix over other metropolitan areas. Those three companies alone, account for more than 3,000 jobs.

“We get more than just graduates from ASU,” said Mark Woolway, senior vice president with Zenefits. “There are tech transfer opportunities.”

A graduation pipeline is not the only product ASU brings to the table.

Technology transfer, consultive advice, and research and development are some of the others. Companies looking at facility relocations are eager to locate proximate to a research university.

“ASU is a knowledge enterprise,” said university CFO Morgan Olsen. “It is by far the largest asset we offer businesses and is our mission as a research university.”

The expertise and attraction power of America's largest public university isn't lost on site selection recruiters looking at the Phoenix market compared to others.

"We establish meaningful relationships with companies looking at the market," said Todd Hardy, senior economic development advisor to ASU and vice president for Assets at the ASU Foundation. "Our job is to listen to a company's needs and define the ways we can be helpful."

Finding a pipeline of students with degrees is a big deal to companies looking to feed a growing workforce.

"Not all companies are just looking at college graduates," said Gene Giovannini, president of the Maricopa Corporate College. "Today's companies want to find workers that have particular skills, and then apply training to ready the workforce."

That's the case with Santander Consumer USA, Inc. The company picked a location on Southern Avenue across from

Mesa Community
College.

“(Santander) has
specific
psychographics they
want to hire,” said
Jon Altschuler,
founder of ALT+CO, a
site selection
consultant firm. “We
ran the data to find
where the work
clusters lived, but
wanted to be close to
a campus in the
area.”

Giovannini said that
MCor helps
businesses define
workforce needs
going out 10 to 15
years.

“We learn who they
need, when they need
the workforce, and
how they want
people trained,” he
said. “Today it could
be continuing
education units or
certificates. Whatever
training is needed,
(MCor) is able to
provide a solution.”

Entrepreneurial
enterprises from
community colleges
are not common, and
site selectors are
impressed with what
the Corporate College
does.

“(The Corporate
College) set up
training for several
companies in
temporary sites so

that their workforce was ready to go when their new facility was open,” Giovannini said. He was involved in meetings with a company bringing jobs to Phoenix during its tour. “The fact that we could do that was one of the reasons the company picked Phoenix.

Olsen, Hardy and Giovannini are often called in as part of Team Arizona, the loosely organized group of education, business and public leaders who meet with executives of companies considering a move to Phoenix.

“We are major assets in this market,” said Hardy.

Eric covers economic development, banking and finance, infrastructure, transportation and utilities.

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