A man with dark hair, wearing a grey suit jacket and dark trousers, is sitting on a light-colored wooden chair. He has his arms crossed over the back of the chair and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a solid green wall. The floor has a geometric pattern of light and dark tiles. There are yellow L-shaped corner brackets in the top-left and top-right corners of the image.

"VARIETY
is the name
of the game."

- Josh Taylor, PR Manager
Downtown Cleveland Alliance

work well, play well,

LIVE WELL

CITIES AND LOCAL BUSINESSES AIM TO ATTRACT GEN XERS. BY BARBARA SANFORD



There's more to life than work,

and no one knows it better than today's Gen Xers. Born between 1961 and 1981, these bright, creative, tech-savvy professionals look for a great place to live, work and play when searching for a job.

"'Live first, work second' is their credo," says Rebecca Ryan, founder and CEO of Next Generation Consulting, a Madison-based research and consulting firm that helps businesses and cities across the country engage the next generation. "Three out of four Gen Xers under the age of 28 say a cool community is more important than a good job," she says.

Within the next 10 years, for every two baby boomers retiring, there will be only one Gen Xer replacing them. Nationwide, cities and businesses are challenged with attracting and retaining young professionals.

Businesses are giving Gen Xers what they want: Something to believe in. They are offering opportunities for growth, rewards and recognition, and a sustained work/life balance. Here are a few examples of businesses across the country that have come up with creative ways to attract Gen-X workers.

Columbus

A new "Attract and Retain Talent" initiative in Columbus brings leaders from the arts, government, business and education together to boost the city's young workforce through internships, recruitment, marketing and leveraging assets.

Participating global financial services giant **JP Morgan Chase & Company** maintains a high profile in the Columbus community, one that is positive and full of goodwill. "The company is family friendly and diverse, supports volunteerism and philanthropy, and has a sense of social and environmental responsibility," says Jeff Lyttle, vice president of community relations.

At JP Morgan, more than 100 employee networking chapters bring together people with similar backgrounds and shared interests, while Intranet sites facilitate meetings and personal development opportunities. Employees participate in community activities and support causes such as the Latino Festival and Gay Pride Parade. In addition, employees have the opportunity to move around the world under the firm's umbrella.

Indianapolis

Indy Hub, an Indianapolis-based group of 1,300 young professionals, connects its members to nonprofit organizations. It showcases

what the city has to offer and provides employees a chance to network with each other and get involved in the community. "It's all about

getting connected, getting involved and energizing the city," says Molly Chavers, the executive director. "We've worked with dozens of social, professional and philanthropic organizations to promote more than 75 events in our first year."

**"LIVE FIRST,
work second
is their credo."**

- Rebecca Ryan,
founder and CEO, Next Generation Consulting

AD

A cool vibe is in the air at the multimedia company **MediaSauce**, located about 30 minutes north of Indianapolis. The young firm tells stories that engage Gen Xers with broadband-based technologies that can be downloaded to cell phones, iPods and computers. It's a fresh, innovative place to work for its 56 mostly twentysomething employees. "They can put their energy and passion into a company that respects them and have fun doing what they love," says CEO Bryan Gray. Authenticity and self-expression are emphasized, and every month the staff does some off-site goal setting. Quarterly meetings are dedicated to contributing manpower to nonprofit organizations. Inside the Sauce, an internal social community, engages everyone from graffiti artists to musicians. "We're big on who we are, where we live and what we can do," Gray says.



HYLAND SOFTWARE'S TWISTY SLIDE, CLEVELAND

"It's all about getting
CONNECTED,
 getting **INVOLVED**
 & **ENERGIZING** the city."

— Molly Chavers, executive director of Indy Hub

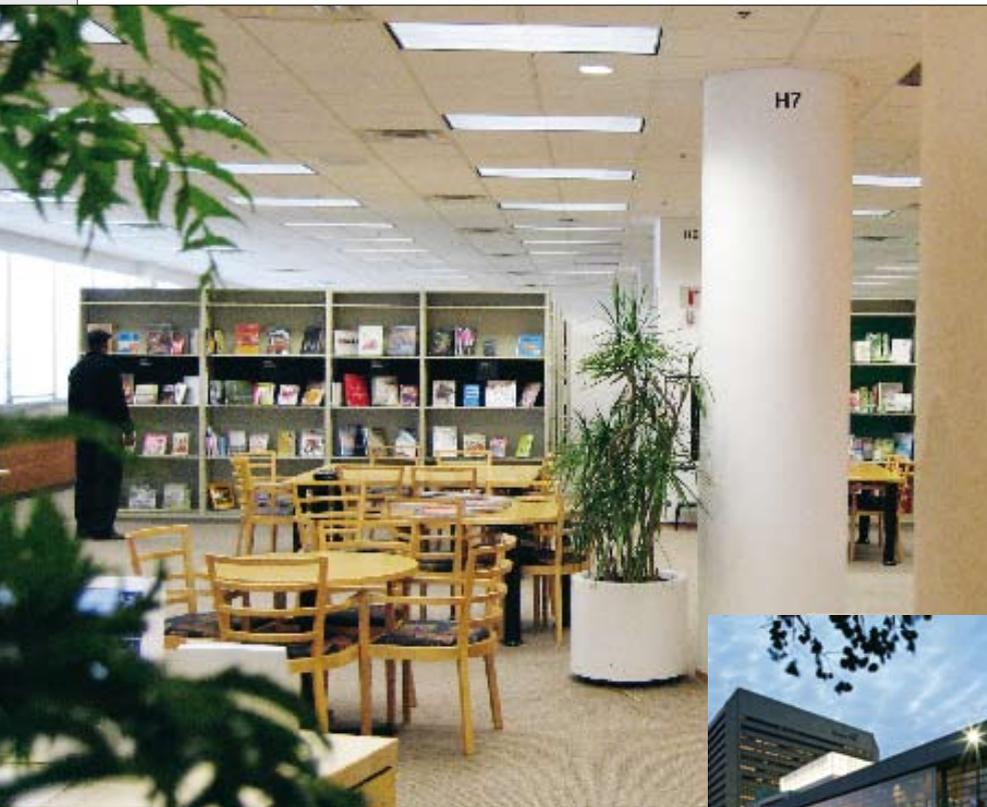
Cleveland

The **Downtown Cleveland Alliance** is dedicated to building a dynamic downtown. Its young professional advisory committees have hands-on involvement with creating events and increasing green space. "A dynamic atmosphere attracts young professionals," says Josh Taylor, the public relations manager. "Variety is the name of the game."

At **Hyland Software** in suburban Cleveland, the red twisty slide is a sure sign of a fun workplace. "We have a work-hard, play-hard atmosphere," says Sarah Coakley, the company's minister of culture. The tech company has an active culture that includes special events like a Clam & Jam Clambake (where musically inclined employees

perform), regular happy hours, a family holiday party and Kid's Day. Company-subsidized day care and a kindergarten are on-site. The company's management style promotes ingenuity with its open-door policy, which lets employees talk to their superiors in a relaxed structure. It also sponsors training and a continuing education program.

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ABOVE: HALLMARK CREATIVE RESOURCES LIBRARY, KANSAS CITY
 RIGHT: HOLLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, OMAHA



Kansas City

Downtown Kansas City is undergoing a renaissance. The new Power & Light District will transform downtown into an entertainment, retail and dining hotspot. The \$2 billion project includes a new performing arts venue, the Sprint Center Arena (which will host sports events, concerts and special events) and 10,000 new loft units. The hope is to draw new talent to the city.

Just as **Hallmark** greeting cards help people celebrate special moments, so too does Hallmark's headquarters help its employees celebrate at work. The company's biggest selling point is its creative culture and job stability. The largest employer of top creative professionals in the state, it recruits artists, writers and designers, and gives them the freedom to express themselves with true flex time and a

casual dress code. Each employee has two managers—a creative director and a career coach—that shepherd them through their time at Hallmark. Classes on topics from Photoshop to creative renewal are offered, and there is even a family farm where employees can go to write, paint, attend workshops or just renew themselves creatively.

"With 4,400 employees, Hallmark is so large that you can reinvent yourself, join another team or division, and have multiple careers here," says Donna Turk, manager of the recruiting studio for creative talent. "It's the ideal place to practice your craft and get experience—and it's a lot of fun."

Omaha

The **Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals Council** facilitates collaborations with local groups. It sponsors events

each month, as well as an annual charity ball and a Young Professionals Summit. "There's a buzz in the air to keep young talent in Omaha," says Kirsten Case, manager of leadership and workforce development. "We're working to educate Gen Xers and keep them engaged and connected. Omaha's independent rock scene [it's home to Saddle Creek Records] and arts scene are big draws. The new Holland Performing Arts Center and Gallup University downtown campus add to the city's dynamic growth."

Summit sponsor **First National Bank of Omaha** searches for the best and brightest talent at business and graduate schools throughout the country. Its yearlong Executive Development Program teaches young

professionals the banking business by having them spend time in all the bank's business units. Assigned an executive mentor, they participate in executive-sponsored projects and professional development opportunities.

Once hired, they are promoted every 18 months, becoming vice presidents in four to seven years. "These are our future leaders and division heads," says Tonya Kaminski, executive development program director. "They are required to get involved in community projects and organizations, serving on boards or coordinating fund-raising events." First National serves as an excellent role model. In fact, its First National Center building spearheaded the city's downtown economic redevelopment.

If Gen Xers have the hottest jobs in the coolest cities, it's hardly by chance. Due to the great demand for their talent and energy, communities and businesses nationwide have stepped up and transformed themselves into attractive destinations where Gen Xers want to live, work and play. Thanks to them, baby boomers can happily retire knowing that the future is in good hands. ■