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BACKGROUND

Accelerate Indy

In 2014, following years of under performance, the Central Indiana Region political, corporate and philanthropic leadership determined that a new approach to economic development was needed. The result was a consolidation of the regional business recruitment organization, the Indy Partnership, and the City of Indianapolis economic development corporation, Develop Indy, under the umbrella of the Indy Chamber. Subsequent to the merger, a regional CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) was launched and completed in late 2015. At this point, proper resourcing for the unprecedented regional strategy emerged as an acute challenge.

RDG'S ROLE AND RESULTS

RDG was retained initially to complete a comprehensive, regional funding feasibility study to establish the mechanics for broad based funding of the CEDS strategy, now known as Accelerate Indy. During the feasibility it became evident that some key building blocks were still required in order to fully optimize the strategy. First, was development of a regional governance structure, for which RDG facilitated creation via best practice research and volunteer task force management. Second, was identification of a CEDO (Chief Economic Development Officer). Working closely with staff and the professional search firm, RDG informed the process to ensure the right fit for this start-up. Finally, the Indy Chamber had enthusiastic but inexperienced internal staff capacity to manage solicitations for Accelerate Indy. RDG worked with the staff team to establish proper mechanics for managing and implementing the campaign, including recruiting, organizing and managing a volunteer infrastructure to assist. In addition, RDG trained staff, informed development and production of campaign collateral materials, developed the campaign narrative and oversaw completion of the successful funding initiative.

LEGACY

Accelerate Indy has served as the strategic driver of regional economic development in Central Indiana since its inception. Proper resourcing, a creative strategy and nimble leadership allowed the Chamber to pivot quickly and impressively at the onset of Covid-19. More importantly, as the Indy Chamber resets for the future, Accelerate Indy will provide the foundation for excelling in the new post Covid-19 economy.

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