

THE BUXTON REPORT

Success Stories in Retail Recruitment

Case Study: Underserved/Heavy Leakage - Gary, IN

Gary's Challenge

Being underserved by retail is a challenge not limited to small towns. Across the country, many larger communities have been bypassed by retail and restaurant development. Until just a few years ago, Gary, Ind., (population 102,000) was a prime example of a city with plenty of people but few shopping and dining opportunities.

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan, Gary is an industrial city just 25 miles from downtown Chicago. Before Gary's recent renaissance, if residents wanted to shop or eat out, they quite often traveled outside the city limits. Gary civic leaders realized that this "leakage" was decreasing the quality of life for residents and causing the municipality to miss out on much-needed tax revenue. In the early 2000s, Gary leaders decided to aggressively and strategically work to correct this situation.

Buxton's Solution

During their quest for a retail development strategy, Gary city leaders discovered Buxton at an ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) conference. They eventually hired Buxton to perform its CommunityID analysis. Buxton assessed consumers in three sites, providing a detailed analysis of their buying habits and lifestyles.

"We have been very satisfied with Buxton," says Ben Clement, Economic Development and Marketing Administrator for the GECH Empowerment Zone. "Buxton gave us a fundamental understanding of our market. They helped us fine-tune our research and focus in on retailers that fit our market."

The Results

Using the package of information from Buxton, Gary leaders have recruited several restaurants, including a Bennigan's. A new development features a Walgreens and a Family Dollar. Another property is being proposed for big box development.

"The Buxton information helped us to understand ourselves and what we had to offer," Clement says.

Five years after hiring Buxton, Gary leaders continue to use the Buxton materials in their pursuit of retail development. 

