



Next Move Group

We Are Jobs Podcast

with Special Guest: John Engelmann

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As far as I'm concerned, they are absolutely the best lead generation firm in the business for economic development organizations. Call them now. They can help you create real prospects.

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Chad Chancellor: Welcome to this episode of Next Move Group's We Are Jobs podcast. This is Chad Chancellor, co-founder of Next Move Group and I'm pleased to have John Engelmann here with us today with Kansas City Power and Light. Just changed their name to Evergy. I know you're going through a merger, so I'm not sure what to call you right now.

John Engelmann: We are officially Evergy, but we're sticking with KCPL until about October.

Chad Chancellor: Right. Well, why don't you tell the folks kind of what territory that will now cover by combining the two?

John Engelmann: Sure. So, original KCPL, Kansas City Power and Light was the-- primarily the western side of Missouri from Iowa down to Arkansas. We recently merged with Western Energy which covers from the eastern Kansas to about the Wichita area. So, we've basically doubled the number of customers we had from 800,000 to now 1.6 million.

Chad Chancellor: Wow!

John Engelmann: Yes.

Chad Chancellor: Talk about some of your types of industries. I was in Kansas City recently and Wichita. Wichita has got all that air space. I don't know if the average Joe knows that Wichita has all that air space and Kansas City seems just to be growing left and right. So, talk a little bit about that.

John Engelmann: Sure. So, Wichita definitely is air space capital. There's a lot of spin-off that happens, not only in Wichita but even back into the Kansas City area. Kansas City is known for logistics, the logistics hub. We have a lot of large logistics operations that have landed a couple of-- actually three Amazons that have just landed within the last two years.

We've also got a big healthcare industry, animal healthcare. About 80% of all healthcare worldwide happens within-- some of them call it the animal health quarter which is kind of centered in Kansas City. Manufacturing is big. Two auto plants, Ford and Chrysler and then we're big into IT with companies like Sana that are just in the midst of building a new campus that will employ another 15,000 people.

Chad Chancellor: Wow! And talk about LOIS. I know you all have one of the best builder-- probably the best builders in sites database on the market. So, I guess that was the brainchild originally of KCP&L and now a lot of people use it. So, talk about that.

John Engelmann: Yes, LOIS stands for Location One Information System. It was designed by our company last century because we are interested in knowing what sites and buildings we have within our service territory.

At that time, we would actually hand our partners a floppy disk and they would fill out something and then the internet was invented and we went full board on the internet and through word of mouth, originally we started selling subscriptions to location one. It was never meant as something like that for the business model, but now we're in about 40 states.

Chad Chancellor: Wow! And you all just recently reinvested in it I think because I was on it not long ago and it works beautifully on iPad, on the phone and that's so important now.

John Engelmann: Very adaptable. We've put a lot of money into it. Our local partners get it for free and we can't say enough about the importance of sites and buildings on a website.

Chad Chancellor: So, if there's an economic development organization in the territory not in Kansas City Power and Light or Evergy they can still be on LOIS for a subscription fee I assume.

John Engelmann: Yes, absolutely.

Chad Chancellor: And it really is very easy to use and I think that you guys have one of the best programs for really helping your small to mid-sized communities of any of the utilities that I've dealt with. Talk a little bit about your partnership program that you have.

John Engelmann: Thanks. So, we have a local partner program that really we feel is our way of strategically investing in our communities. So, what we look for are either existing programs like things through Next Group-- Next Move Group or another consultant that might be able to help our communities help themselves get ready for economic development and by that-- that's anything from training our economic developers to be smarter or a site selection group or something like that.

Chad Chancellor: Yes and you know when I think about from Kansas City to Wichita and the whole area there's a lot of small towns within the metro area. I mean the metro area is really a lot of small towns combined together.

John Engelmann: It is and what we see then is a wide variety of expertise and sophistication. So, for some groups we're working with them on the building blocks and for other groups we're taking that next big leap either through technology or the web or something to get them to stick out in the crowd.

Chad Chancellor: And so I'm asking almost all of our guests, tell us a little bit about how you got into economic development. I find that none of us are-- very few of us decided as a kid, "I want to be an economic developer." So, what's your story?

John Engelmann: So, I had been a science teacher in my former life. Got tired of teaching science, went and got a Masters and as an unemployed guy with a newborn, I was looking through a newspaper looking for ads. That's how old I am and there was an ad in the newspaper, a blind add that said something about economic and my wife nudged me and said you took econ, why don't you send in a resume?

And as it turned out the group was the Kansas City Area Development Council which is a very well respected group. The gentleman who used to run it was from Iowa or actually his wife is from Iowa. I'm from Iowa and that Iowa connection was the thing that allowed me 30 years ago to hop into this industry and I've loved it ever since.

Chad Chancellor: It's just amazing how people get into it. I think that's what makes it so interesting to get to know people. Well, John, thank you for all that you've done to help Next Move Group and thank you for being here today. We really appreciate you.

John Engelmann: It's been my pleasure. Thank you.

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Chad Chancellor: A special thank you to Younger Associates for recording, editing, and publishing this podcast for us. I encourage you to visit their website at younger-associates.com.