



# Next Move Group

## We Are Jobs Podcast

with Special Guest: Sharon Younger

**Chad Chancellor:** I want to thank Research Consultants International for sponsoring today's podcast. They are a globally renowned lead generation firm that helps economic development organizations create real prospects. They've helped over five hundred economic development organizations. Let me tell you exactly what they do.

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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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Welcome to this episode of Next Move Group's We Are Jobs podcast. I'm Chad Chancellor, co-founder of Next Move Group and we're pleased to have Sharon Younger here with us today. We're Younger Associates, so Sharon, thank you for being with us.

Behind the scenes, Sharon's team are producing these podcast. So, not only are we interviewing her, she's helping us actually do this. Thanks for all the help with that, Sharon. Why don't you tell us a little bit about Younger Associates?

**Sharon Younger:** Well, thanks, Chad. It's good to be here and it is fun to have Matt behind the sound panel with me producing the podcast. That's kind of fun to have a team member here. Happy to be affiliated with Next Move Group.

There's so much that's happening in economic development that's changed so much. Artificial intelligence even facial recognition; you were talking to one of your clients about that just a minute ago. We blend a lot of seasoned economic development professionals with some cutting edge technology folks because things are evolving. It's not even evolving. Evolving sounds like a slow thing. There's nothing slow about what's happening in economic development right now.

**Chad Chancellor:** I know you are really strong with what you are doing on the workforce side. So, why don't you talk about some of that work that you're doing?

**Sharon Younger:** Workforce is fast moving. The world looks like a different place when unemployment rate gets below 3%. People are looking for labor resources, workforce resources everywhere. They have to get inventive. I do a lot of work with people who have to understand what the workforce components are, where they can find people, inventive ways to attract talent.

So, what we see is not just coming in and doing a cookie-cutter analysis or looking at published data. We look at helping people really dig into their market, understanding that market, talking to the people who are influencing the availability and the skill sets of the workforce and telling the workforce story. That's what it's about; telling the workforce story.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, I know you teach at OU EDI. You teach a lot on targeted industry and not only how to figure out what to target but then go out and actually target those. Why don't you talk a little bit about that?

**Sharon Younger:** I would love to. I teach target industry analysis and targeting strategies at EDI and have for a few years. I always love hearing the wisdom in the room of the economic developers that come in. Targeting is important. We always talk about it in class; nobody has unlimited resources. Nobody has an unlimited amount of time and nobody has all the staff they need.

So, you can't just shoot at everything that's out there. You've got to have some idea what's going to have the biggest potential positive impact for your market place and your existing industry base.

How do you find a target that's complementary to the people you already have employing people in your market? How do you make that work together?

We really-- the thing that's surprising to most people who come in and do targeting with me is the strategies are so research-based. They are so data-based because that's what makes them work.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, that's one thing I wanted to compliment you all on. When people think of, not you but just economic development marketing agencies typically, you think of marketing pretty brochures, pretty websites and all, but you guys really are research-based. You do the research first then figure out the other side of it which I think is very refreshing. So, you might talk about that philosophy I guess that you've used to build this company.

**Sharon Younger:** Yeah, you hit it with that. We are data-driven. We always come at it from a research point of view because that's our first level of expertise. Pretty pictures don't get it. Every place can put up a pretty picture and use the old worn out phrase "it's a great place to live, work, and play," but it's all about prove it.

There are a lot of things in economic development that don't call for a pretty picture. We've all got a lot of dirt to sell and that's not very pretty, but if you can really solve the equation how can I make your business thrive in this location and you can go to a business with a marketing strategy that says here's how I'm going to give you a competitive advantage in the market place then you can really do some effective marketing.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, I know I've been in economic development related fields since... let's see 2004, so 15 years now and I've heard your name from day one as being someone obviously well respected in the business. So, take us back to starting Younger Associates. How long have you been in business and what was kind of the passion behind starting it way back then?

**Sharon Younger:** We've been in business over 25 years, so we started just a little bit before you did. I've heard your name all 15 years you've been out there. I was actually a college professor and teaching market research; a lot of consumer behavior, but a lot of analytical items and started doing volunteer work in economic development because it was an interest.

I think a lot of people get into economic development because they see the need for it or they see an opportunity to get involved, kind of move the needle and economic development creating

opportunities for people. So, I got the bug that way doing some work for local chambers and then statewide economic development in Tennessee and then moved beyond that. It's just passion.

**Chad Chancellor:** Well, great. Well, Sharon, thank you for being with us today and for all your team's doing, not only to be interviewed as a guest but behind the scenes to publish and produce these podcasts. We really appreciate it.

**Sharon Younger:** Thanks, Chad. Good to be with you.

**Chad Chancellor:** Thank you. I want to thank the University of Southern Mississippi's Masters of Economic Development program for sponsoring today's podcast. We work with Southern Miss a lot and they do tremendous research for us whether we're working with a site selection project and we need Southern Miss's help to understand labor and the market around that area, transportation they do a lot of research in or whether we need talent from the University of Southern Mississippi.

We have hired-- their students actually work for us as both interns and full-time employees. So, you can get a Master's degree in Economic Development from the university. They have two options to do that. One is mostly an online option where you go in a few weekends and one is the more traditional classroom option.

So, whether you run an organization and need talent or whether you run an organization and need research, you should really consider the University of Southern Mississippi's Masters of Economic Development program.

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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](http://younger-associates.com)