



the Miami Brain Trust

February 3, 2011

Introduction

On February 3, 2011, CEOs for Cities and Florida International University convened the Miami Brain Trust, a cross-sector group of 50-60 urban leaders who engaged in a robust discussion of the trends shaping the future of cities, how Miami is likely to fare in light of these trends and if the local civic agenda needs to shift in response to these trends.

Miami has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to reinvent itself as it embraced successive waves of newcomers and immigrants. How can Miami use this civic capability to adapt itself yet again in a changing world? What are the lessons other cities can learn from Miami's adaptive ability? And given this strength, how can Miami capitalize on its growing global reputation among opinion makers as a sophisticated place to live, work, and visit?

After opening remarks by Carol Coletta, President & CEO of CEOs for Cities, a panel of local leaders responded to questions about Miami's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. A facilitated group dialogue followed in which all Brain Trust participants were able to suggest the three most important actions Miami leaders ought to take to shape the city for the future. Results are presented in this report.

The Miami Brain Trust is a program of the US Initiative, a civic movement to imagine a new kind of future for urban life in America. The US Initiative was launched in 2010 by CEOs for Cities with support from The Rockefeller Foundation and advances the work of the CEOs for Cities network of corporations, universities, foundations and cultural institutions with a comprehensive public engagement campaign.

Outcomes of the Miami Brain Trust will be compiled and put to use in national publications related to the project, including a book to be published by The Rockefeller Foundation.



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There are three factors that make cities work:

Quality of Talent

Quality of Place

Quality of Opportunity

And without leadership, none of these can be realized.



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The Miami brand is strong, but we can do better.

Miami has long been a place where citizens of many cultures have come together to create a better future for themselves and each other. The ongoing inflow of international students and immigrants has made Miami second in the nation for international talent and 17th for international students. This unique asset also contributes to Miami being ranked fifth on CEOs for Cities Weirdness Index – a measure of how much Miamians’ consumption patterns diverge from the average American’s.

And yes, weirdness is a good thing. But is it celebrated to the fullest extent? While many participants highlighted Miami’s “diversity and harmony,” Daniella Levine of Human Services Coalition pointed out that Miami needs “to get close and personal with diversity.” Not only is this important for Miami citizens, but it’s a critical strategic position as well, as Miami Dade County Public School Superintendent Alberto Carvalho pointed out Miami is the largest bi-literate, bi-cultural area of its size in the world, making it an important hub in the Americas and between Europe and South America..

Of course, even if the diversity point is celebrated, Miami needs to develop more of the talent of its diverse population and develop them better. When it comes to success factors for cities, talent is the first among equals. Conservative estimates attribute 58% of a city’s success, if defined by per capita income, to the percentage of its population with a four-year degree. But the latest figures available show that only 25.7 percent of Miami-Dade’s population has a 4-year college degree or better, putting it in the bottom half of the top 50 metros. If Miami could increase that just one percentage point – just one – it would produce an additional \$1.7 billion in personal income. That’s more than the annual payroll of Carnival Cruise Lines. That’s the Talent Dividend.



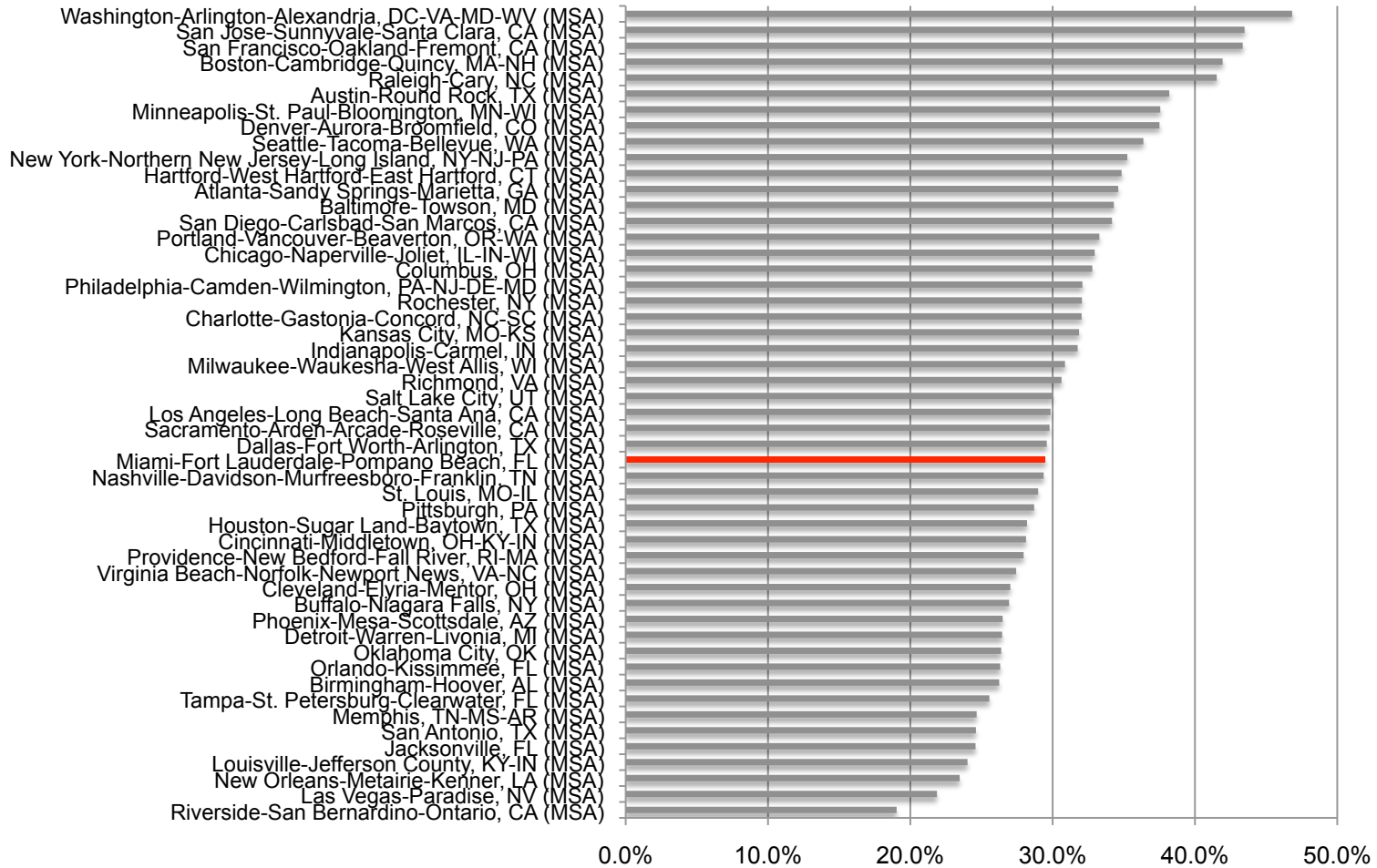
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Metro Variation in College Attainment

Source: 2008 ACS



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Where do the biggest opportunities lie for gaining competitive advantage?

It seems almost paradoxical, but Miami has learned to be at once distinctive in its local and global natures. Miami enjoys a special dynamism thanks to bi-cultural, bi-lingual and bi-literate human capital pool and its geographic position as an international through-way. As a result, tourism and, as Jack Lowell pointed out, immigration are two mainstays in Miami's economic profile. But how can the city take better advantage of both?

During the Brain Trust, some city leaders have been discussing the possibility of revisiting the One Community One Goal Initiative – a program from the mid-90s that identified seven economic growth sectors with the job creation potential to keep pace with Miami Dade County's projected population growth. Carvahlo referenced it and indicated a new iteration would better anticipate knowledge trends and foster human capital development through knowledge acquisition. Others suggested the program would need to be re-branded to be successful a second time around. At least three of the One Community One Goal industries were identified as opportunity areas—biomedical, international commerce and tourism—and each must be linked to education and human capital development strategies.

Singapore was offered as a model for Miami. Singapore has very little industry but boasts one of the world's highest per capita GDPs. That's because the country relies heavily on international trade – its port is the world's busiest. Singapore is among the most literate and diverse countries in the world, which has cultivated a global citizenship culture.



There are some strengths to build on.

The National Assessment of Education Progress ranks the Miami Dade County Public School System #1 in math and strong in science. Institutions like Florida International University, Miami Dade College and University of Miami are central to the city's future (and its fortunes). If the city can crack the code on increasing education levels and college completion for its predominantly Hispanic population, Miami will not only make the most important move it can make to influence its own future, but it will also make the most important move to influence the future of America. Education is that important.

But it doesn't do any good to do the expensive job of developing talent if you can't keep it. A city with a strong ethos of opportunity communicates to its residents that they can put their talents to work there. Miami is number one in the nation in small business and in self-employment. It shows that the people there are industrious, resilient, and capable of inventing their own careers – qualities that are increasingly important in a volatile economy.

What can Miami do to better support the long-term sustainability of small businesses and entrepreneurs? How can it mature its workforce? There is concern about the lack of upward mobility among Miami's middle class and perceptions among young people that they have to leave the city – and often the state – for college and careers.



Build for the future.

In a recent comparison of major metros by CEOs for Cities, Miami ranks 21st in net increase in college-educated 25-34 year-olds, a key demographic to watch since they are the most mobile. With the median tenure of employment for U.S. workers at only 4.4 years, cities are competing more than ever to attract and retain talent. That's why civic actions like Miami 21 are so valuable. It's not just about planning, it's about adding value that ensures talented people will stay in Miami.

The Knight Foundation's Soul of the Community research has found that the top three factors that keep people attached to their communities are social offerings, openness and aesthetics. Miami excels on all three. It ranks fourth in the nation on CEOs for Cities' Culture: HDTV Ratio, which simply means that people in Miami get out and enjoy live performances more often than they sit at home and watch TV. The city also ranks 13th on restaurant variety, so there is no shortage of social offerings.

Miami has demonstrated its openness by consistently absorbing new people, new cultures and new ideas – in fact it's a national model for cities who have struggled to do this successfully. And of course it's hard to beat the natural beauty of Miami's tropical aesthetic, which has in recent years been augmented by outstanding architecture and leadership in the arts. These are the kinds of things that make Miami a place where talented people want to live and work.

In order to capitalize on these assets, Miami leaders need to find a way to meaningfully respond to national trends that point to the Next American Dream. A whopping 85% of Millennials say they prefer urban living. Miami must act now to engage next generation leaders in shaping the city's future or risk losing those leaders to cities that better reflect their priorities and provide the opportunities they need.



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What are the three most important actions we need to take as a community?



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1. Develop Miami's talent and put it to work.

In order to compete in the 21st century, Miami leaders must continue to create economic mobility for all its residents. This means matching education with opportunities, deliberately supporting an entrepreneurial eco-system (while continuing to attract multinationals) and promoting educational opportunities at all levels. Because Miami students who leave the city for college are far less likely to come back. In business, Miami needs to build up its backbone of small businesses and start ups. For successful entrepreneurs there needs to be new access to larger markets and to capital to retain their talents.

2. View Miami through the lens of young people. What is the Miami where they want to live?

There was overwhelming consensus that the next generation needs to be an integral participant in defining “the new Miami Dream.” What are the characteristics they prioritize in their relocation decisions? Research increasingly points to Quality of Place. A clear priority is transit and connectivity. Reducing the need for Miamians’ to use a car to meet their daily needs speaks directly to the compact urban lifestyle preferred by Millennials. Miami needs cross-sector leadership to make transit work in the city, and there was more than one call for specific leadership from the business community. A connected city facilitates health and vibrancy in the urban core. Build for the future. Perhaps equally important here is Quality of Opportunity, in this case opportunity to lead. The next generation of leaders need to be welcomed into leadership positions across the city.

3. Create a mechanism to facilitate cross-sector collaboration among Miami's leaders.

The responses on the following page show just how much Brain Trust participants prioritized leadership collaboration as a critical strategy for shaping Miami's future. Quality of Talent, Place and Opportunity only thrive when activated by quality leadership. Miami is not wanting for quality of leadership – there are many talented and dedicated leaders working for the city's future – but working together meaningfully across sectors is not something Miami leaders do well. A civic leadership cabinet representing business, education, cultural, philanthropic and public interests would facilitate collaboration by setting shared goals for Miami and the region.



Responses from Facilitated Group Dialogue

Talent

Regional support for bi-literacy

Promote education at all levels

Restructure county government

Cross-pollinate entrepreneurship

Brand and then support: multinationals (ensure remain & increase), vocational training, entrepreneurship

Match opportunity with education

Invest in technical training and capitalize on entrepreneurship

Train – vocational, entrepreneurial

Remove barriers for small businesses

Place

Business community needs to get behind a smart transit plan

Connectivity/Transit

Become a connected city and a healthy city

Build on the great things happening in the arts

Better urban core

Place – build for the future, epicenter of Latin American culture, real estate

Need to transition now to 25-40 generation to retain them in Miami

Leadership

Engage 25-40 generation of leaders

Converge the roles of government/private/public sectors to shape how we each work toward the Miami Dream

Business community needs to lead, create opportunities so talent stays here

Leadership has to be identified in the next generation; need visionary leaders

ICE – Intellectual, Cultural and Educational Leadership

Public life: civic leadership and support systems to foster new leadership

Partnerships in education – corps with public service

Coalesce around shared goals

Civic leadership/engagement

Leaders – strong leaders with the ability to engage others in business and public sectors

Small business & education need to collaborate and engage

Community discussion for shared vision



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Miami Brain Trust Participants:

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Nick Gunia, Alterna Corp
Matt Hagmann, The Miami Herald
Lee Hefty, Miami Dade County Department of Environmental
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Michael Heithaus, FIU SEAS
Howard Herring, New World Symphony
Neisen Kasdin, Akerman
Brian Keeley, Baptist Health South Florida
David Lawrence, The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation
Jesse Leon, Hands on Miami and Discovery Networks International
Daniella Levine, Human Services Coalition
Jack Lowell, Flagler Real Estate Services
Aminda Marques-Gonzalez, The Miami Herald
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Harve Mogul, United Way of Miami-Dade
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