



# CEDS update Meeting 3

*Regional Brand & Image; Talent Attraction & Retention; Startups & Innovation*

*July 17, 2025*

GREATER  
 **MSP**<sup>®</sup>  
Partnership



# Regional Brand & Image

# Q: Why is a region's brand and image important?

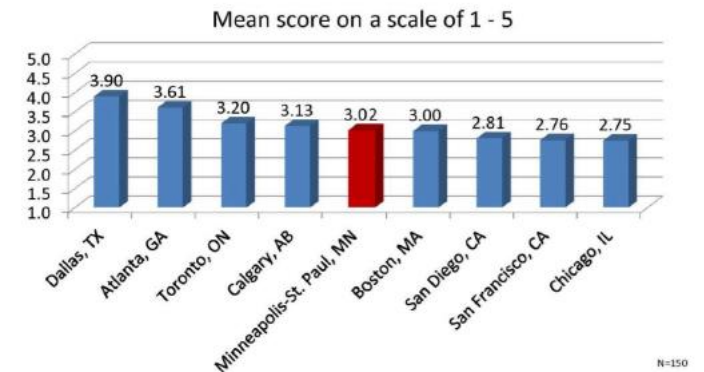
Capital and talent is mobile in a global economy. People and companies have choices about where they spend or invest dollars and time. Places that attract more of it can expand the pie of their economies.

People do not invest dollars or time in places they do not know or do not have a positive perception of.

Key audiences include:

- **Visitors/tourists** and event/convention planners whether, for leisure or business, spend money in a place during a visit
- **Business decision-makers** decide where to expand and invest in the global economy, creating new jobs and expanding the tax base
- **People in the workforce** make decisions about where to live and contribute to a local workforce, where to spend and invest, and where to engage in community

On a scale of one to five, where one is "poor" and five is "excellent," what is your overall perception of the business climates of the following metro areas?



*Survey of business site selectors across the U.S. from 2013. Over the subsequent decade, the Dallas region was one of the nation's top markets for both job growth and global business expansions.*

# Q: What should I know about all regions' brands and image?

States and metro regions typically **have different brands**, if interrelated and interdependent ones.

*This is the case for the MSP region's peers. Peer region brands are typically associated with the metro region's largest city, such as Atlanta, Chicago, Austin, or Seattle.*

Different audiences value different **attributes** in a region's brand and image.

*Consider the tourist visiting for 48-72 hours and the resident making a long-term move. One values short-term lodging, the other housing.*

Intentional marketing and public **relations campaigns** are one way that places enhance their brands.

*We are most accustomed to seeing tourism marketing campaigns, but more cities, regions, and states now market to workers and businesses.*

# Q: What should I know about our region's brand and image?

1. The Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul region remains less known than many peers and more interdependent with awareness and perceptions of the state of Minnesota.

Our metro brand is more attached to our state's brand than are our peers. This is partially due to intentional decisions to describe ourselves as a state (e.g. Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Zoo, Minnesota Star Tribune).

*The Explore Minnesota "Star of the North" campaign markets the state to prospective tourists, residents, and businesses. A recent Explore Minnesota survey found:*

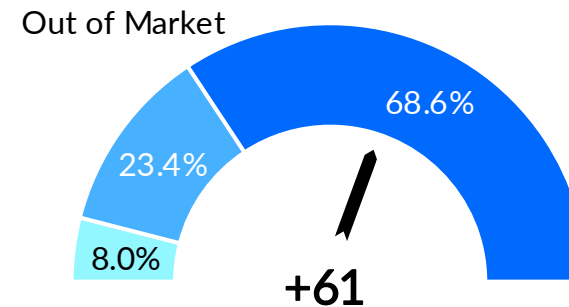
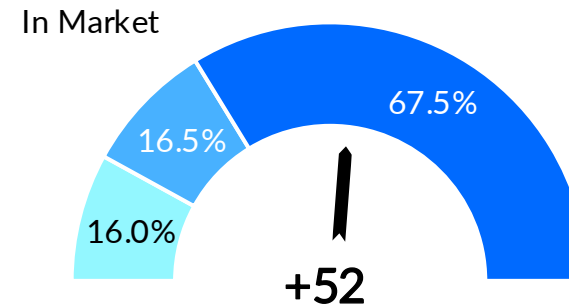
**50%+** of working-age US adults interested in moving to another state viewed *Washington, Colorado, and Texas* as very good places to live and work

**38%** viewed *Minnesota* as a very good place to live and work (on par with Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio)

# Q: What should I know about our region's brand and image?

2. When audiences get direct exposure to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region OR state of Minnesota, perceptions are largely positive, and our brand image improves.

This is documented among leisure and business travelers, newcomers, and audiences directly exposed to place-based advertising.



■ Detractors   ■ Passive   ■ Promoters

**Question:** Based on what you now know about Minneapolis, how likely are you to recommend Minneapolis as a place to visit to friends and family members?

Base: all survey respondents. 550 completed surveys.

Source: Meet Minneapolis, June 2024

# Q: What should I know about our region's brand and image?

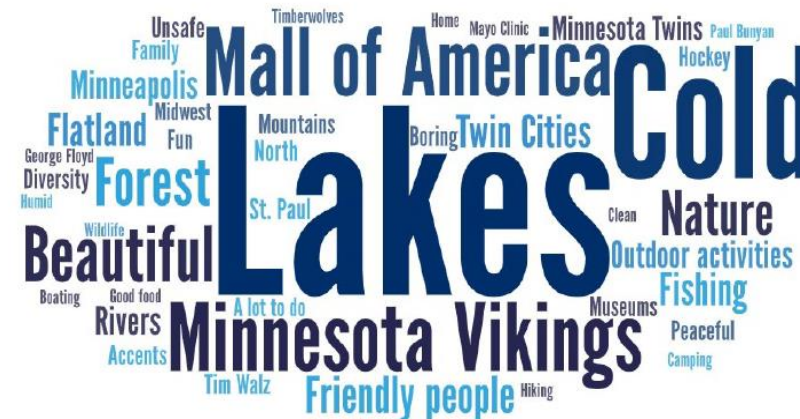
3. Current events, even historic ones, quickly fade in the minds of external audiences and become secondary to the brand attributes that persist over longer periods.

For example, external audiences quickly revert to considering our region's weather & climate or long-established institutions, not major political headlines.

“Despite being hot topics in 2021, travelers no longer associate Minnesota with George Floyd or politics”

- Explore Minnesota-commissioned survey of 1,583 people in 8 US markets in April 2025

## Unaided attribute associations with Minnesota



# Q: Who works on our region's brand and image?

Some groups work intentionally on the brand and image of a place:

- **Destination marketing organizations** such as city or state convention and visitors bureaus run targeted national and global paid marketing and earned media campaigns to specific tourism and meeting/event planning audiences
- **Economic development organizations** run targeted national and global paid marketing and earned media campaigns to specific business and resident audiences

Many more individuals and groups directly impact a region's brand and image through their own national and global channels, including:

- Professional sports teams
- Arts institutions
- Media
- City and state governments or elected officials
- Celebrities and influencers
- Event organizers





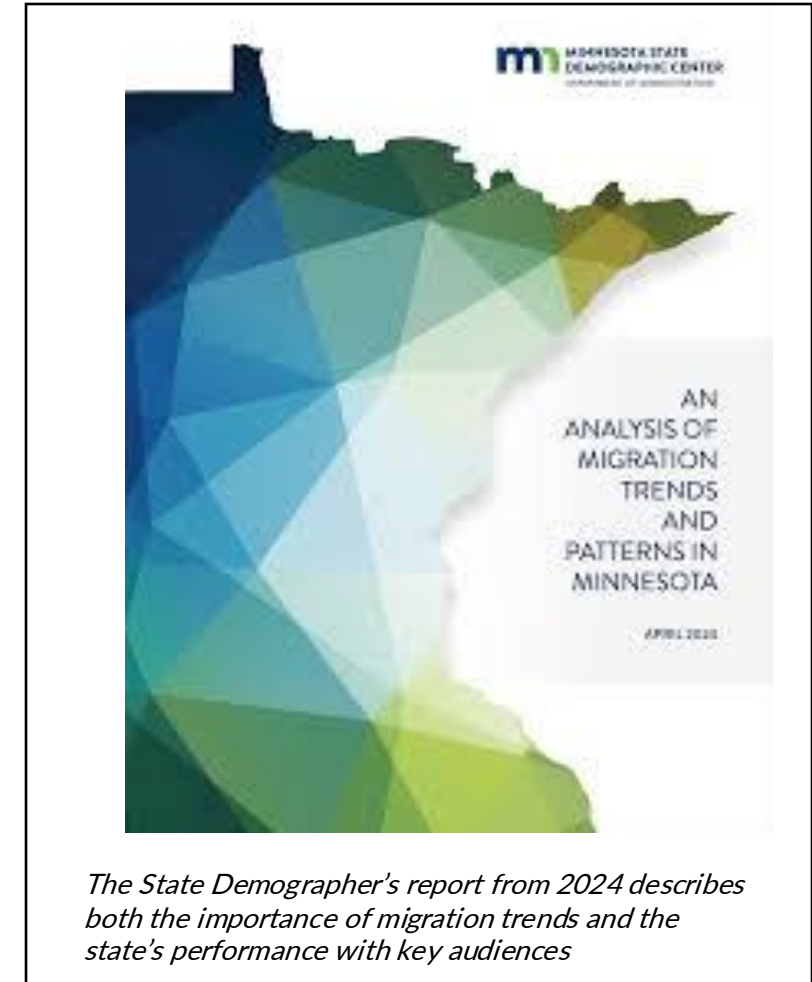
# Talent Migration

# Q: Why is a region's talent migration important?

Movement of working-age adults in and out of a metro region becomes more important as other growth metrics slow.

For instance:

- Regions with declining labor force growth are more reliant on migration and labor force productivity to keep growing their economies
- Net migration does not just account for new residents but retaining the fastest-growing population segments the region already will rely on to contribute to the economy and the community, including the local tax base
- Ability to attract and retain workers impacts a region's ability to build confidence among businesses and investors to continue to grow and make investments in a region



# Q: What should I know about all regions' talent migration?

People are more likely to relocate at **specific times** in their lives that are associated with major changes in their careers or families.

*Young adults and retirees relocate at far higher rates than working-age adults with children. Immigrants are often more likely to arrive in the U.S. due to specific events in their countries of origin.*

Different segments of the **population** prioritize different **factors** when relocating to a region, but economic conditions matter.

*The abundance of job opportunities and housing affordability are top concerns for workers, who prioritize belonging with friends and family. Retirees are less concerned with jobs.*

Migration patterns for specific regions can fluctuate significantly over the medium-to-long term.

*Regions' performance change year to year but can swing significantly from decade to decade, especially places with extremely high in- or out-migration bursts that then trigger broader economic change in those places.*

# Q: What should I know about our region's talent migration?

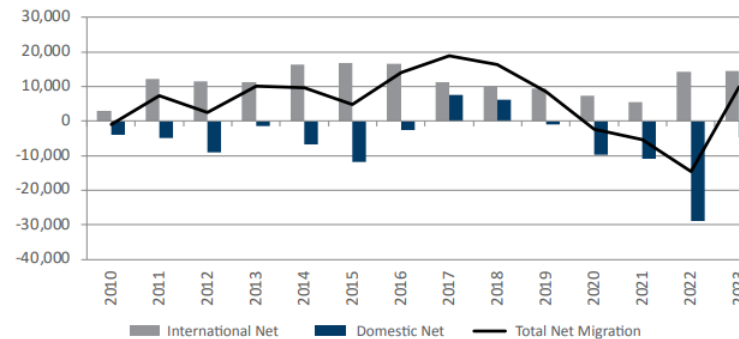
1. The Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul region continues to rely on international migration to experience net positive migration.

Other than a brief exception in 2017-2018, the MSP region has been experiencing modest net-negative domestic migration for many years, with a bigger dip during the pandemic. The region's reliance on international migration makes it vulnerable to larger federal immigration changes.

Over the past 14 years:

- International net migration to Minnesota has been *positive every year*
- Domestic net migration to Minnesota has been *negative in 12 of 14 years*

Annual Net Migration (International, Domestic, and Total), Minnesota, 2010-2023



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Source: Minnesota Demographic Center

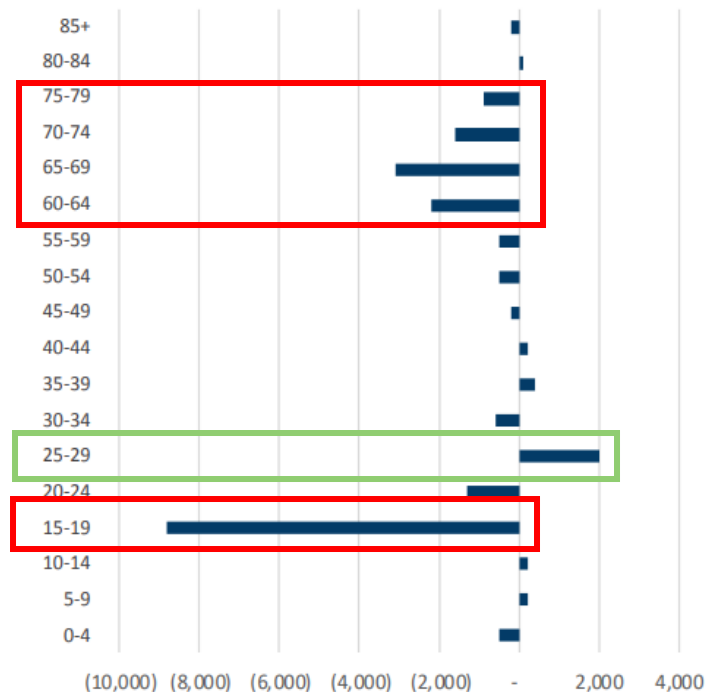
# Q: What should I know about our region's talent migration?

2. Domestically, the region and state's biggest net losses are occurring around the points of high school graduation and retirement ages.

The region and state does attract more highly mobile 25-34 year-olds than it loses to other parts of the U.S., which is an important population segment for economic growth. However, this net gain is not enough to counteract the net losses in other age ranges in the workforce.

Minnesota loses college-bound students and retirees and gains young adults

Average Annual Net Domestic Migration by Age, Minnesota, 2018-2022



Source: Minnesota Demographic Center

# Q: What should I know about our region's talent migration?

3. The Minneapolis-Saint Paul region's migration performance closely mirrors other Midwest metros with flat to slightly negative domestic trends.

Specific metro regions fluctuate in performance, but metro regions across much of the Sun Belt and West have been the country's overall net gainers via domestic migration over a sustained period.

*Net migration of adults  
age 25-34, 2024:*

MSP: +7,800

Atlanta: +19,100

Seattle: +26,200

Dallas: +44,800


# Q: Who works on our region's talent migration?

Groups working to attract or retain new residents:

- **Employers recruiting specific workers to join their firms**, whether to our region or away from our region
- **Colleges and universities seeking prospective students to enroll**, whether to this region or away from it
- **Economic development organizations** including the Explore Minnesota for Business initiative

Many other individuals and organizations can impact our region's performance attracting and retaining working-age adults through their decisions, such as:

- **State and local policymakers** often consider the implications of highly mobile populations such as immigrants, postsecondary students, or workers in specific industries, when making policy decisions. While not every policy decision has the impact proponents and opponents may claim, certain policy decisions matter a great deal.
- Many others including but not limited to **media institutions, tourism groups, real estate organizations, religious, civic, and membership organizations** make direct impact.
- **Friends and family** have tremendous influence.



# Startups & Innovation



# Q: Why is startup growth and innovation important?

All types of entrepreneurship are important to a region. Measures of startup growth and innovation signal how a region is expanding its overall economic base. Our “headquarters economy” is fueled by innovation.

- Our region’s high concentration of Fortune 500 and other large headquarters derived largely from a history of starting and scaling innovative firms in tradeable industries that can employ large numbers of people. More than half of the current jobs in our region are at large companies such as the region's Fortune 1000 companies
- Startups in growth sectors account for most productivity gains. Startups and small businesses more broadly account for most net new job growth in America.
- Regions that lead on R&D and startup growth in advanced industries are best positioned to capture manufacturing and broader supply chain multipliers
- Startup growth and innovation draws external investment into the region and is shown to boost confidence among key business and talent audiences



*Reports and studies that examine a region or state's innovation ecosystem are likely to differ, if complement, reports and studies that examine the overall environment for small businesses .*

## Q: What should I know about all regions on innovation?

Access to talent, capital, and basic R&D are key factors that impact a region's potential as a hotspot for startup growth and innovation

*Regions without high concentrations of STEM workers and research-driven organizations like major universities, labs, and large companies are at a significant disadvantage*

Improved performance on startup growth and innovation is a likely predictor of economic growth that expands the pie across a region

*Significant firm and job growth may lag by several years. A region's ability to capture the follow-on growth multipliers from innovation, like manufacturing jobs, depend on additional factors*

Several superstar metro regions across the U.S. capture the majority of early-stage innovation investments

*Just three metros – San Francisco, New York, and Boston – capture the majority of U.S. venture capital, while university and corporate R&D investments are somewhat more broadly distributed*

# Q: What should I know about our region on innovation?

1. Our concentration of Fortune 500 HQs and research institutions like University of Minnesota continue to provide a strong foundation of impact but a slower growing one.

MSP-based companies in advanced manufacturing invest billions in R&D each year, including in standout areas like medical technology where a high volume of patents are approved

**4.96 patents** per 1,000 workers in the MSP region, 7<sup>th</sup> among peers

*(San Francisco is 1<sup>st</sup> among peers with 23.7 patents / 1,000 workers)*

MSP in 2017: 5.49 patents/1,000, 6<sup>th</sup> among peers

**\$1.47 billion** in venture capital investment in the MSP region, 8<sup>th</sup> among peers

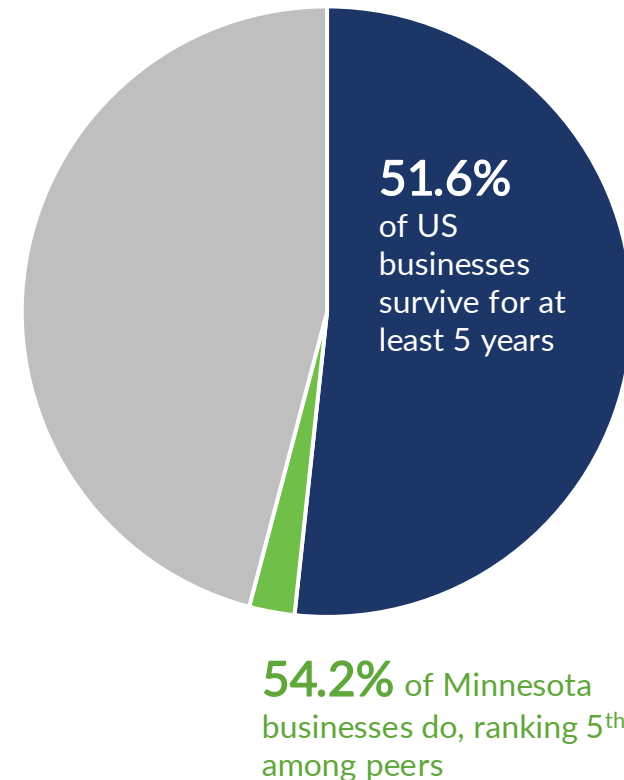
*(San Francisco is 1<sup>st</sup> among peers with \$23.9 billion)*

MSP in 2017: \$0.54 billion, 8<sup>th</sup> among peers

# Q: What should I know about our region on innovation?

2. Despite the region's lower rates of entrepreneurship across all business types, MSP startups are more likely to attract capital and survive than in most other U.S. regions

Regions with high employment see fewer business starts driven by necessity. Several indicators signal MSP-based startups are more likely to survive, but capital markets have tightened in recent years



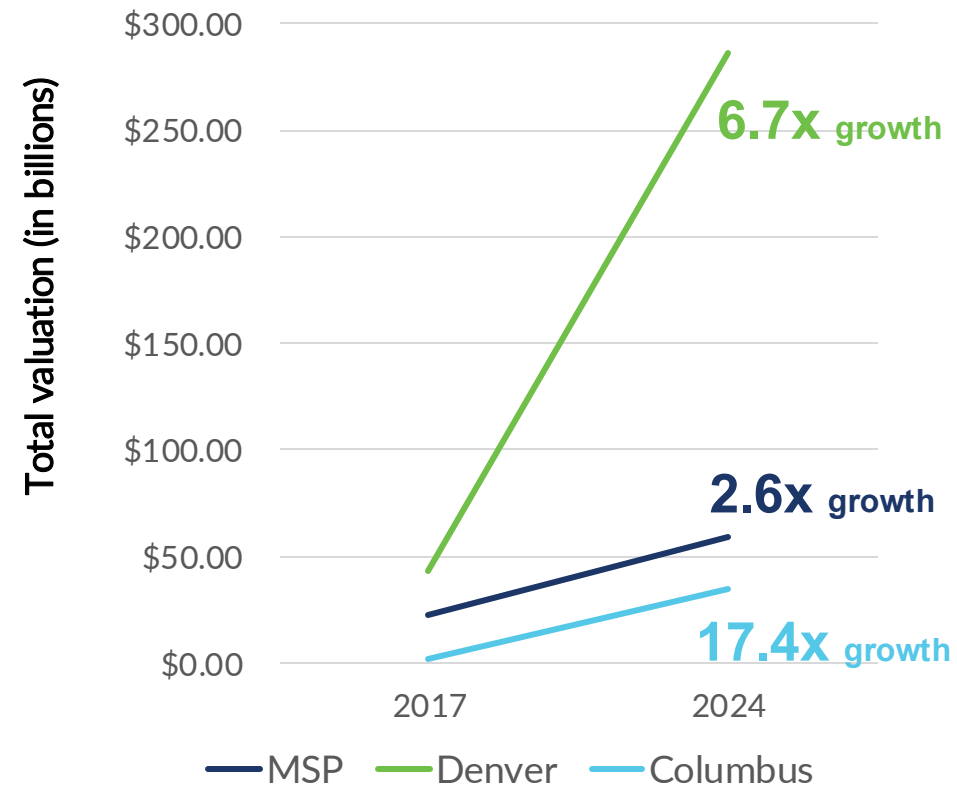
MN in 2017: 52.4% survival rate,  
3<sup>rd</sup> among peers

# Q: What should I know about our region on innovation?

3. MSP's innovation economy is growing and is still a Midwest leader, but peer U.S. metros and even some Midwest neighbors are far outpacing MSP in growth rates

More exponential post-pandemic growth is occurring in markets like Austin, Denver, Miami, Seattle, and even smaller markets like Salt Lake City and Columbus

**Valuation of regional venture ecosystems** (more than 1,000 combined startup ventures in each region)



# Q: Who works on our region's startup growth & innovation?

Innovative firms drive results that show up in regional performance via contributions of entrepreneurs, researchers, scientists, investors, and other collaborators. Some organizations focus on regional growth, like:

- Investment firms
- Accelerators and incubators
- University technology transfer offices and venture centers
- Corporations
- Industry and trade associations
- Economic development organizations at city, regional, and state level
- Foundations and family offices

Several technology clusters feature coalitions of these organizations working together with intentionality in areas like medical technology, agriculture, clean tech and energy, and other areas.