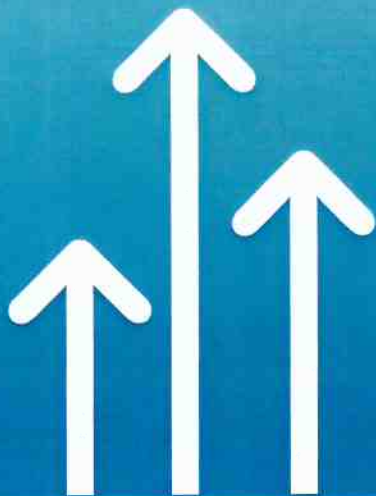


# **2016 Northeast Economic Development Survey**

Sponsored by:  
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The Rochester Group

# Thriving in the midst of the 'new normal' for economic development.

## The idea in brief

Global, national and local trends have created a 'new normal' in the way that economic developers in government and higher education grow jobs and positively impact economic prosperity. The Rochester Group (TRG) wanted to understand what those caught up in the midst of this change are experiencing.

TRG surveyed key Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs), Incubators and Professional Associations in government and higher education to find out:

- What is important to them
- Where change is impacting them
- How they assess their ability to execute
- Where they seek to improve operations

## What did we find?

With the increased demand on resources, tighter markets and increasing competitive pressures, many economic development organizations find themselves at a crossroads. They can only do so much. Resources are tight and staffs are stretched in multiple directions as they work to attract and grow businesses in their region while accommodating the demands of state and other oversight committees.

Running from this "new normal" is not how today's top economic development groups are attacking the challenge. Organizations that are not changing find themselves falling further and further behind. Both large and small EDOs are adopting a more deliberate, intensely strategic approach to economic development when confronted by fewer resources, steeper challenges and changing demographic landscapes.

Our research shows that to ensure their success, leaders in economic development are focusing on three pillars: Time, Teamwork and Insight.

## Why address the pillars?



### TIME

### Making the most of your existing resources

Time is one of the most valuable resources for any organization.

Many government and higher education EDOs lack the tools to manage core parts of their organization. Manual tasks are labor intensive and prevent team members from working on top priorities. They seek to improve the way they run their organization in order to optimize their use of that precious commodity, time.



### TEAMWORK

### Collaborating to drive better outcomes

Most organizations lack a platform to efficiently and effectively share critical information across internal and external groups. Operating in silos limits the effectiveness of the organization and external collaboration is increasingly important, but sharing information and coordinating activities can be cumbersome and time consuming. A method for communication and information sharing would allow teams to better coordinate their activities, cooperate on projects and consolidate learnings.



### INSIGHT

### Using data-driven strategies to address economic development needs

EDOs are experiencing an explosion in reporting requirements – both upstream and downstream – and wonder what they'll be asked to report tomorrow. Manual methods are burdensome and lack flexibility. Effective organizations need easy, accurate information flow among colleagues, constituents and oversight entities. They want to focus on the opportunities that will drive the best outcomes for their region and know that decisions are being made based on facts, not intuition. They seek real-time, dynamic metrics that track a broader set of data points that enable fact-based decision making.

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### Methodology

#### Overview:

In March 2016, TRG surveyed key Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs), Incubators and Professional Associations in government and higher education across the Northeast Region. Some were current customers of The Rochester Group and others were not.

#### Survey Factors:

**Size of the population:** The “population” of the group included more than 40 individuals that represented 28 separate organizations.

**Segmentation analysis desired:** This survey was focused on the Northeast United States, and included EDOs, IDAs, Incubators and Professional Associations.

**Survey Scoring:** The survey was conducted with both an objective scoring model, as well as the ability to provide comments (subjective qualification) for each question. Each interview question was scored on a scale of 1 to 10 – with 10 being extremely important and 1 being ‘not applicable’.

**Questionnaire sections:** Each question was anchored to a specific topic that included:

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Compliance & Regulatory Requirements
- Technology Requirements & Constraints
- Other (subjective) considerations

**Question split:** each question had an ‘A and B’ split:

- ‘A’ question: How important a topic was to the responding organization
- ‘B’ question: How good their organization was at this specific topic

**Degree of variance in responses:** For each question we threw out the high and low score to eliminate any statistical anomalies.

**Tolerance and accuracy:** The average scoring is carried to 1 decimal point, and includes key comments and observations from the interviews.

#### Survey Conclusion:

The consistent theme from the questionnaire responses is that organizations and personnel are stretched thin, that there is ever-increasing competition and that they face limitations because of the current lackluster economy. These and other concerns are putting economic development organizations at a crossroads of change.

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## Results

These are the questions where the responses focused on **TIME**.

	<i>Time Related Questions</i>	<i>Average Score</i>	<i>Key Observations</i>
1. A	How important is time management to your role and to your staff?	9.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to become more proactive – reacting to 64 campuses – not enough hours in the day</li> <li>• 24/7 access to information is becoming a requirement – priorities are constantly shifting</li> <li>• Compliance needs are growing – at the same time that resources (personnel) are shrinking</li> </ul>
1. B	How good are you at managing your time?	7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are pulled constantly – limited staffing makes every minute count</li> <li>• Need to apply technology and new tools to manage projects</li> <li>• We have always been good at large projects – small projects drop off the radar</li> </ul>
2. A	How important is effectively managing your economic development data?	8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to track &amp; trace programs throughout their lifecycle is key</li> <li>• Providing key metrics along with the nuances aligned to activities and results</li> <li>• Requirement to efficiently trickle down data and information back to the community</li> </ul>
2. B	How good are you at managing your economic development data?	7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently lack the systems, metrics and rigor to provide timely information</li> <li>• By establishing consistent program data we can more efficiently pursue grants</li> <li>• The key is to track programs from incubation through their entire lifecycle</li> </ul>
3. A	How important is managing promotional campaigns for organization attraction?	7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to be more active and dynamic to improve campaign effectiveness – currently too passive</li> <li>• Consolidated data would provide ROI to promote best case' campaigns</li> <li>• Campaign promotion and advertising results can be better leveraged to attract new programs</li> </ul>
3. B	How good are you at managing campaigns?	6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to continually provide results and message our success</li> <li>• Currently lack the tools to communicate program activity and results</li> <li>• Too manual – need to streamline the process for tracking</li> </ul>
4. A	How important is having a consistent, repeatable, scalable technology platform for collection and reporting on your organization?	8.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our technology platform allows us to deliver tactically and remain strategically relevant</li> <li>• We need flexibility to compete with larger, better funded institutions</li> <li>• Technology is the magnet to attract a younger, more progressive workforce</li> </ul>
4. B	How good is your technology platform at helping you manage and report on your organization?	6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With TRG EcoDev we are getting to excellent by providing information seamlessly across smart devices</li> <li>• Our investment in EcoDev is delivering a consistent, flexible platform to drive efficiencies</li> <li>• We struggle – we are merely doing enough to fulfill our obligations – we lack automation tools</li> </ul>

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## Results

These are the questions where the responses focused on **TEAMWORK**.

Teamwork Related Questions		Average Score	Key Observations
1. A	How important is the ability to provide reports and dashboards to board members?	7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We still rely to much on the 'sneaker net' to deliver meaningful results &amp; dashboards</li> <li>• Challenges exist both within the campuses and across our sister schools</li> <li>• Reports are ever changing and dynamic – to our board, constituents and community</li> </ul>
1. B	How good are you and your team at providing reports and dashboards to board members?	6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRG EcoDev provides performance indicators so we can show our members and constituents where we can 'move the needle'</li> <li>• We can now – with EcoDev – provide accurate data, flexible reporting and be more proactive</li> <li>• We are good at high level board reports – but all are generated manually – resulting in loss of key details and visibility</li> </ul>
2. A	How important is project collaboration between team members?	8.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs require faculty, administration, and board be aligned – no one can be on an island</li> <li>• Everyone needs to collaborate on the right data</li> <li>• Collaborating across the state and regions is consistently a challenge</li> </ul>
2. B	How good are you at project collaboration?	7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRG EcoDev provides dashboards that allow us to collaborate, a platform to effectively and efficiently share data.</li> <li>• We are great with large programs – the challenge is being fluid with dynamic, smaller programs</li> <li>• Constant leadership changes combined with a growing portfolio create collaboration challenges</li> </ul>
3. A	How important is managing your organization expansion, attracting new projects, and retention activities and progress?	9.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key is focus on programs, initiatives and shovel-ready opportunities</li> <li>• Alignment with the community and showing program progress that can be leveraged to attract new programs</li> <li>• Cement the relationship between the community and the companies we attract</li> </ul>
3. B	How good are you at managing your organization expansion, attracting new projects and retention activities and progress?	6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today it is a manual process – and extremely time consuming</li> <li>• We deliver on existing programs manually – the challenge is upstream alignment before shovel-ready sites come online</li> <li>• With TRG EcoDev we manage the previously unorganized data, and can prioritize key potential projects</li> </ul>

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### Results

These are the questions where the responses focused on **INSIGHT**.

	<i>Insight Related Questions</i>	<i>Average Score</i>	<i>Key Observations</i>
1. A	How important is funnel management? (tracking of pipeline leads or projects)?	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As demands continue to grow, resources are limited, it is important to focus on the right opportunities</li> <li>It goes beyond managing current projects to focusing on developing a robust pipeline of future projects</li> <li>The more value we deliver to our stakeholders, the more projects will flow our way</li> </ul>
1. B	How good are you at funnel management?	6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With EcoDev we are building robust dashboards to better align leads with real projects</li> <li>We need to better understand the pinch points in the progress of landing key programs</li> <li>We are good with existing projects, but lack the systems to drive effectiveness with new initiatives</li> </ul>
2. A	How important is compliance and regulatory/auditing to you?	9.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every new project requires compliance and regulatory vetting</li> <li>State Controller's offices requires answers and documentation on how efficient we are using funding</li> <li>State funding programs are requiring more detailed and consistent reporting</li> </ul>
2. B	How good are you at managing the compliance process and reporting obligations?	7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without a system like EcoDev it is an extremely manual process</li> <li>It remains an extremely manual process, and although we deliver what is required, it is a major resource drain</li> <li>We need to go beyond manual methods to keep pace with increasing demands</li> </ul>
3. A	How important is contract risk management?	8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our primary job is to protect and not expose our students and faculty</li> <li>We have difficulty keeping up with the onslaught of data, but we manage – definitely an area to improve</li> <li>The state gives us little flexibility in how we manage contracts – and become more effective</li> </ul>
3. B	How good are you at limiting contract risk?	5.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With EcoDev we now have a consistent platform to track programs and projects</li> <li>Since we manually document contracts we are marginal at best</li> <li>Without a system we have limited to no visibility</li> </ul>
4. A	How important is it to generate organization reports and summaries?	8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a snapshot at any point in time would be nirvana</li> <li>We would like to collaborate extensively, but today we have very limited reports, summaries and visibility</li> <li>Our Stakeholders demand it – our ability to deliver is suspect</li> </ul>
4. B	How good are you at generating accurate and quality reports and summaries?	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With EcoDev we have a tool to deliver consistent reports and cleansed data.</li> <li>Not institutionalized and too siloed in reporting.</li> <li>Since reporting takes so much time and effort, we only create those reports that are required</li> </ul>

## 2016 Northeast Economic Development Survey



**TRG**  
**EcoDev**

The Rochester Group is pleased to share the results of our 2016 survey with you. If you heard familiar themes, it's clear that you are not alone. Most EDOs are challenged by big expectations, but limited resources. The good news is that effective use of technology can help to recapture time in your day, make collaboration easier and derive meaningful insights from your organization's data.

TRG EcoDev arms your team with the tools to tackle the challenges of the 'new normal' in your world. It's a software solution that empowers your economic development team to work more effectively together to manage your ongoing operations, design and execute new programs and accurately measure the success of your growth initiatives. We would welcome the opportunity to tell you more!