

After HQ2: An Open Letter to the Rochester Community

As many of you have seen, our region was not selected to be in the next stage of the Amazon HQ2 selection process. While this is disappointing, we cannot and should not view this as a failure. Amazon decided to focus on the big cities with huge population centers, and that is not us. By aiming high, however, we learned a lot about what makes this community so compelling.

Personally, I couldn't be more excited about what happened in the process. Our region did some self-reflection and learned a bit about ourselves. Moody's independently rated us the #4 Best City for Amazon HQ2. Gambling websites had us in the Top 10 most likely to win. And, a grassroots group of business and community leaders came together, formed a new organization called Scale585, and mobilized to supplement the official RFP response. Amazon HQ2 was a long shot, but rather than walking away, how can we capitalize on our amazing progress?

My personal motto (tattooed on my forearm so I never forget it) is a quote from Sir Ernest Shackleton: "Fortitudine Vincimus," which means, "Through Endurance We Conquer." We don't lose because we have a failure or a miss; we lose if we give up, and victory can be ours when we persevere and push through even when we don't win immediately.

We know for a fact Amazon would still benefit from a smaller regional office in Rochester. scale(585) is now going to refocus on showing Amazon, and other software companies, why our city is the right location for such a regional office. Let's tell the software world how they benefit from our community and let's lead them here.

So, I ask all of us to not lose faith. We have taken a step forward, and now we need to keep moving. While we are building incredible home-grown technology companies here, we also need to continue pushing our community as an awesome place to co-locate businesses from around the world. Please join me in continuing to spread the word, talking about the reasons we love Rochester, and keeping the momentum up.

Sincerely,



Aaron Newman
Founder and CEO

cc Honorable Lovely A. Warren, Mayor of Rochester
Robert J. Duffy, President & CEO, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Matt Hurlbutt, President & CEO, Greater Rochester Enterprise
David Andreatta, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle