

Our first two questions dealt with the issues affecting the city in the eyes of Birmingham area young professionals and what exciting things were giving them hope. The third question asked what would help empower area young professionals. Like we said yesterday, there were not many answers but those that we did get were quite interesting and they should encourage some dialogue, even if not on the pages of this site.

Some felt empowered already, despite the perceptions to the contrary:

I feel empowered in my job due to my education. I'd like to be paid more and work less hard to move up—but hey, that is life. I am happy in this city as a young professional but wish we had more people NOT from Alabama in Birmingham.

As a young professional, I could CARE LESS about football and don't want to talk about it at work. I'd like to see a city/state with other amazing things going on so I don't have to feign interest in Auburn or Alabama as an attempt to connect with locals. There are other things in life on which people can find common ground: art, music, festivals, concerts, etc. Sports are great, but this isn't the only thing going on in the fall.

There are plenty of opportunities in Bham to serve on boards

By feeling as though I am making a difference in the community whether it be through volunteering, or just contributing to the improvement of the city center, bringing more arts and culture to the area (as opposed to sports bars downtown).

There were one that commented that maybe young professionals may be seeking too much right out of the gate:

Quite honestly, as a 30-year-old young professional who has been involved in civic life since my teens, I'm somewhat frustrated by the perception by some young professionals that they need respect from Baby Boomers and opportunities to serve on boards. Respect is earned, and opportunities are sought, not given.

More young professionals need to volunteer, get involved, pay their dues, and make things happen. Do not expect to be given power, and do not "make nice" with the current powers-that-be in order to get "your turn" at leadership positions. Otherwise, the opportunity for greatness in this community will be delayed and compromised by the small-minded ineptness of past and current leadership.

Or that they are not necessarily willing to take the time to learn from a mentor:

I like working with experienced people who have good ideas and a lot of enthusiasm. I think that if there is a downside to motivated young professionals, it's that they are used to being leaders and not accustomed to following. I think young people have the best chance to make a difference if they are given the opportunity to work with great mentors that encourage them, allow them to improve Birmingham, and teach/prepare them to lead.

One also wondered about the methods used to express our opinions and if it would change depending on the medium:

It would be great to have a vehicle that allows us to express our views publicly such as our own YP television show. Blogs are great. I love 'em, but I think a TV show that is designed to cater to the YP would be really cool too. Many people get really bold (and often obnoxious) with their blog comments and I wonder if the more "negative" bloggers would have the guts to say in person/on television what they so quickly blurt out on a blog! ☐

Let us know your thoughts about these responses and the other responses made through our survey. We'd like to thank all that participated.

We'd also like to take this chance to thank Alison Howell, who has helped lead the YP charge from the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce for the last year. Today is Alison's last day at the Chamber, but she's still going to be involved in the YP movement (hopefully for a long time) with United Cerebral Palsy. I think all of us here at The Terminal can safely say that she will be missed by those that have been involved in this discussion over the past year.