



## Phoenix is a hot business climate for comms pros

Added 20 hours ago by [Alison Kanski](#) , [Be the first to comment](#)

The PR world in Phoenix comprises mostly small agencies and local client work. Some larger national agencies have offices there as well, including Allison+Partners and Havas PR.

Feature



Phoenix scorches in the summer, with temperatures reaching 100 degrees or higher nearly every day. But that shouldn't, and doesn't, stop people from living and working there.

It's the sixth-largest city in the country, with more than 1.5 million residents. But it doesn't feel like a typical big city to the likes of Aric Zion, CEO of marketing agency [Zion & Zion](#), who has lived in Phoenix for 13 years.

"Phoenix can be like a really big small town," Zion says. "It doesn't have the cachet that an LA, New York, or Chicago has."

The PR world in Phoenix comprises mostly small agencies and local client work. Some larger national agencies have offices there as well, including Allison+Partners and Havas PR.

"By far, the [majority of] firms that operate in Phoenix are homegrown," Zion adds. "There's hardly anyone who opened an agency office here but came from another state."

That's because of the small-town feel of Phoenix. The city ranks behind Houston and Philadelphia in terms of population, but doesn't have the same fast-paced, glitzy, sexy feel of other big cities, Zion explains.

One draw for potential clients, Zion says, is that agencies in Phoenix have lower overhead costs and can do more work on the same budget than agencies in bigger, more expensive cities.

The challenge of the small-town feel is that agencies often have trouble landing out-of-state clients. Zion says his firm is one of only a few that has a significant amount of business outside Arizona.

The city is growing, especially in the tech sector. Intel has its second-largest office, just outside Phoenix. Other tech companies such as GoDaddy, headquartered in adjacent Scottsdale, Yelp, and Shutterfly also have bases in the city.

Arizona State University has campuses across the city and more than 80,000 students enrolled. ASU also has one of the highest-ranked communications schools in the country, the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

"It provides a lot of great young talent for agencies," Zion said. "Out of our 40 people, 11 started as interns."

Life isn't all work in Phoenix. With an average of 299 sunny days per year, making it one of the sunniest cities in the U.S. and earning it the nickname Valley of the Sun, Zion says outdoor activities such as hiking in the desert mountains and boating in the lakes surrounding the city are Phoenixians' idea of fun.

"People coming from out of town get here and the client accounts turn out to be smaller or it's not as exciting as what they did before [in bigger cities]," Zion says. "But as far as lifestyle goes, your dollar goes a lot further. The city has a great quality of life. There are lots of outdoor activities, and housing is much less expensive than other places."

**Fast facts:**

1: The hottest recorded temperature in Phoenix was 122 degrees on June 26, 1990, according to the National Weather Service. The city gets an average of only 8 inches of rain each year.

2: Phoenix is both the state capital and county seat of Maricopa County. It is the most populous state capital in the United States and the only one with a population of more than 1 million residents.

3: Four other cities are part of the greater Phoenix area: Chandler, Glendale, Scottsdale, and Tempe, which has a population of nearly 4.5 million and covers 2,000 square miles, about the size of Delaware.

4: Greater Phoenix has more than 62,000 guest rooms at more than 450 hotels, more than 40 resort properties, and more than 200 golf courses.

5: The median household income in 2014 was \$46,881. The unemployment rate as of April 2015 was 5% and the poverty rate was 23%.

## **Check in**

**PRSA Phoenix Chapter**

[prsaadmin@phoenixprsa.org](mailto:prsaadmin@phoenixprsa.org)

[phoenixprsa.org](http://phoenixprsa.org)

**Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce**

201 N. Central Ave., 27th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85004

(602) 495-2195

[phoenixchamber.com](http://phoenixchamber.com)

**Arizona Small Business Association**

4600 E. Washington St., Suite 341

Phoenix, AZ 85034

(602) 306-4000

[www.asba.com](http://www.asba.com)