

## Small Cities and Towns Can be Global Cities.

**The Idea of a Global City.** There are two well-established types of organization that operate throughout the world independent of their national affiliation: the global city and the multi-national corporation.

Global cities, while bound physically within a nation, transcend this anchor with imagination and infrastructure. Global cities are economic development machines connected to their value-added counterparts around the world. They continue to prosper with innovations that progressively diminish the relevance of national borders and governments.

Small U.S. cities also provide global partners with value-added services and access to market at a U.S. location...a two-way street with the small town tapping global markets and providing global markets access to U.S. customers.

Multi-national corporations, less place-bound, trade in the world with intense ease. Firms such as Exxon, General Electric and IBM all operate everywhere; they communicate and trade directly with customers and suppliers through systems and relationships that transcend sovereign boundaries.

Cities become “global” when they acknowledge the world beyond their borders and engage in far-reaching and interactive trade, business, culture, education and entertainment. Global cities are places where people invest, trade, live, visit and enjoy.

Historically, the city was the original model for business and trade. The economic viability of the city was established in Sumer, Greece and Northern Europe well before states and nations emerged. The nation-state is a relatively recent socio-cultural invention; brought on by the Westphalian Peace of 1648. With “globalization” the world is reverting to the original “global city” model.

America’s cities are finding less economic and financial support from state and federal sources while at the same time finding more constraints. Even with the many constraints, cities need to work towards being economically and financially self-supporting. They are already on their own to find jobs and incomes for their citizens and elastic revenue bases for their municipal operations. Expanding the scope of the local economy to engage with the world is essential for local economic growth and financial independence.

Cities, like corporations, now need a business plan to extend the reach of their economies. Economic development plans for global cities, large and small, are starting to resemble multi-national corporate business plans.

City plans also reflect a shift in strategy. Recruiting large firms to a small city is a declining part of the overall program. Relationships and processes associated with established local businesses are more important. Attracting small, entrepreneurial firms is part of the program.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century economic development strategy for a self-supporting small city is based on growing local businesses, attracting entrepreneurs and securing an infrastructure that provides access to and from international partners and investors.

**The Qualities of 21st Century Global Cities.**

Today, global cities are hosted by nation-states, but they transcend their national governments. The established global cities, namely New York, London, Tokyo and Singapore, dominate their national economies and trade relatively freely around the world. And, they host international enterprises that do the same.

Challenging the established cities of the world are emerging global competitors. Paris, Berlin, Hong Kong, Chicago, Mexico City, Sao Paulo and Miami, among others, are cities that have an identity and purpose independent of their host nations. The 21<sup>st</sup> century will have many aggressive cities that vie for international trading relationships and the resulting prosperity.

Every city of the world is unique, yet they all have essentially the same basic qualities. Small cities with unique assets and attitudes have the same opportunity as larger regions. The importance of city size has diminished, and, in some cases, largeness is a detriment.

Essential qualities of global cities, large and small:

- **Visual impact** creates a strong first and lasting impression, especially a downtown through its skyline, its architecture, its street life and its public realm with memorable parks, museums, galleries and theaters.

- **A thriving export sector** that generates income from international sources and direct foreign investment.
- **Unique industries** that form an identity and a base for an export sector.
- **Financial services** now a common source of wealth for today’s global cities.
- **Tourism** as the great way to import people and money in a “reverse” export economy and to showcase a city’s virtues. Small city international tourism is growing.
- **Diversity** as a strength; there is a place in the multi-national corporation and the global city for everyone who contributes value.
- **Infrastructure, services and facilities** that support world class business, investment, trade, education, arts and lifestyle. Small cities can be well connected to world systems.
- **Relationships and partnerships** with a wide range of like-minded organizations.
- **Branding and imaging** that mixes glamour, attitude and unique lifestyle with economic substance.
- **Lifestyle** offering entertainment and residential appeal. The Global City and its neighboring communities almost always offer a wonderful lifestyle for business executives, employees and their families. Small cities compete well on this basis.

**Using Unique Market Features to Leverage**

**Growth.** In addition to the first-tier world cities, there is the second level that are striving to grow their presence in the world. The Austin’s, Denver’s, Indianapolis’ and many more. Orlando is one with potential. The City of Orlando has unique features that attract world attention. It, like other cities, is leveraging its one strength to build second and third strong market niches.

**The Orlando Region is an Emerging Global City.**

The City of Orlando has unique economic features. Tourism, space exploration and gaming technology have a strong presence in the seven-county region now home to 3.5 million people.

The Orlando Region is already an established destination in the world market of tourism and leisure. People from around the world know “Orlando” as a desirable place to visit with:

- Walt Disney World, Universal Resort, SeaWorld and a wide range of hotels, entertainment venues in a high-quality tourist environment,
- NASA’s Kennedy Space Center, and
- Daytona Beach and NASCAR, with
- A system of international airports anchored by Orlando International Airport and its direct flights to many global cities.

In addition to the world-renowned tourist and leisure accommodations, the Orlando Region hosts many other activities that are recognized and appreciated throughout the world.

- UCF and its sister educational institutions,
- A bio-medical cluster with Medical City,
- Florida Hospital and Orlando Health,
- A high-tech cluster based on digital media, lasers, modeling and simulation,
- The Port Canaveral deep water seaport, and
- The nationally competitive Orange County Convention Center.

**The Orlando Region’s Export Sectors.** The main mission is to develop and expand the Orlando Region’s export sector, including:

- **Tourism** is the Region’s current leading export sector.

- **Modeling and simulation** as another export business that continues to bring federal expenditures to local businesses.
- **Education** as an industry currently attracting many international students and national conventions.
- **Bio-medical research** is a growing export industry in the Orlando Region. The world - class research universities and institutions attract notice and investment.
- **Technical Services** such as water resource engineering are nascent but promising, and exportable. The universities and colleges, along with the engineering and technical service firms in the Orlando Region have a valuable and exportable business. The world needs potable water; Orlando engineers and scientists know how to provide it.

**Principles for a Global City Business Plan.** The Orlando Region is poised to leverage its current assets to enhance its place in the world’s economy. To expand its position as an emerging global city, a few things must happen.

1. **A Community-wide Commitment to become a Region of Global Significance** – The regional business community has an opportunity to become a growing force in the global economy. State laws are helpful, the climate is mild, the education systems at all levels have responded to STEAM and the lifestyle is comfortable.
2. **Branding** – A good story already exists. A good world-wide image of Orlando has been established. The next step is to continue to translate that specialty brand and image into a broader range of economic developments based on the many achievements already accomplished.

3. **Leadership** – With leadership from the business community, the business community can continue to pursue global ambitions. The City can assemble the resources and the regional partners to lead a campaign that leverages existing assets to achieve global objectives.

4. **Education** - Alvin Toffler once opined that more education was taking place in convention centers and conference halls than in the formal education system. True or not, the Orange County Convention Center and the many hotel and specialty meeting centers host a wide variety of professional and trade organizations with conferences and training programs. Education is a great economic sector to highlight and leverage as an economic generator.

5. **Partnerships**

- **Internal.** The EDC, a council of 100, or similar organization, can serve as the vehicle to channel the full participation of the tourism industry, the bio-medical industry, the modeling and simulation industry and others to exploit the airport, the seaport, the university, the sports and cultural amenities and the great lifestyle to grow the internationally-based economy.
- **External.** Partnerships between global cities and multi-national corporations play to the strengths of each. Identification of a corporation with a well-known city is advantageous to both parties, if the city provides benefits that serve the business. Identifying and building this infrastructure is critical to the direct-foreign investment strategy and the Export Plan.

6. **International Relations** – Global cities, like multi-national corporations, have trading partners, special relationships, executive and student exchange programs and a function within city government equivalent to the U.S. State Department with ambassadors and all. These are economic ties that far exceed the Sister City approach.

**The Export Plan.** The Plan, led by the business community and supported by the public sector, will:

1. Identify private and public industries and specific firms that are successful, and those that can become successful, exporters,
2. Identify sending and receiving firms for direct foreign investment and the path for accommodating this exchange,
3. Establish public infrastructure programs for services and facilities, including banking, customs, concierge services for visiting foreign exchange missions, sites and facilities for goods and services and sources of financing,
4. Provide education and training to support new Orlando region-based global firms,
5. Coordinate trade missions to coincide with private business activities,
6. Tap statewide organizations, and federal resources, to support the export sector,
7. Prepare a 20-year plan for financial independence; state and federal funds should be considered non-recurring capital funds; all operating funds should come from recurring local sources - plan for the eventual elimination of state and federal financial support for the City, and
8. Continue to provide a great lifestyle for executives, employees and their families when they arrive as visitors or residents.

**The Cycle of Participation in the Global Economy.** The players in the global game are multi-national businesses, global educational institutions, statewide business and education organizations and city governments participating in global systems.

In Florida, Miami is beyond doubt a city that actively participated in global trade, travel, technology and entertainment spheres of the world. Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville have oars in the water but have yet to transcend their present status into multi-faceted global economies. But, the day is young...

