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Creative Cities and the New Economy

During the 20th century America's economy developed around key characteristics that drove growth - efficiency, productivity and flexibility. Today, as we move into the New Economy, creativity becomes the central driving force.

New technology and the internet have accelerated change and have put creativity at the center of success for the public and private sector as we undergo this transition. Innovators in business have sped up the process of introducing new ideas and more efficient ways of doing business in the economy. As with the case in business, success for cities will depend on creativity. "Creative Cities" will be home to innovative businesses and organizations and the individuals who direct and propel them. Ideas and innovation are capital in the new economy.

Charles Landry, Author of *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, writes, *"Cities have one crucial resource – their people. Human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources. The creativity of those who live in and run cities will determine future success."*

Urban Assets in the New Economy

Without a doubt today's economy differs from the old manufacturing-centered economy. Today's economy is focuses on a world view. Landry further states; *"The maturing of the globalized network of cities and its connected competitive drive has led cities to change dramatically over the last 20 years. In this new global dynamic, all cities, small and large, need to reassess and rethink their role and positioning – regionally, nationally and globally. This challenges cities to think their opportunities and problems with ingenuity and to review their assets – or lack of them."*

Today, ingenious, creative cities want to move up the value chain and become a central hub of wealth creation by exporting, yet controlling from a distance, low-cost activities while attracting high-value ones to themselves. These activities include research and knowledge creation centers, headquarters, advanced manufacturing or cultural and artistic creativity.



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Ambitious cities succeed when they blend the dynamics of attraction, retention, resources and talent. These cities are moving from an “urban engineering” approach to urban development, to a ‘creative city-making’ approach.

Creating an Attractive Place to Live and Work

Core characteristics of communities, including density and diversity, have become attractive to young workers, “the creative class”, and to older baby boomers in the revitalization of cities. These characteristics include:

- Magnets for visitors- Cities are taking advantage of the tremendous expansion in the areas of tourism and recreation. Today, successful communities are leveraging urban and cultural / artistic amenities to create exciting destinations.
- Regeneration of the economic base – Many cities have realized that their choices are not limited to high tech or low tech, new tech or old tech. Many have worked to innovate and produce improvements in productivity incorporating advanced technology in older business sectors.
- Poised to seize new economic opportunities – Not limited to well known areas such as Silicon Valley, cities around the country are developing high tech sectors by attracting companies and stimulating the creation of new ones. They are leveraging their strengths in research and educational institutions and incubators to support the birth and growth of innovative enterprises.

Cities have one crucial resource – their people. Human innovation, imagination and creativity are replacing location, resources and market access as urban resources. Successful cities seem to have similar attributes in common – visionary individuals, creative organizations and a political culture sharing clarity of purpose.

A strong cultural perspective is crucial to the success of urban planning and one that can shape urban change alone is unites divisions across disciplines, institutions, and public, private and voluntary sectors.

Creativity is the new currency. Entertainment, culture, and art contribute to the reinvention of the community, creating a destination location and a sense of place for its citizens and the “new economy” companies that are relocating to creative cities.