

WHAT IS A WORLD TRADE CENTER?

International trade is the fastest growing business segment of the world economy. For instance, in the mid-1960's the percentage of U.S. GDP represented by global trade was approximately 2.5%. Today, it is nearly 25%. One in every five jobs created in the United States is attributable to some activity in global commerce. 70% of the world's purchasing power and 86% of expected global economic growth in the next 10 years will be located outside of the U.S. Domestic companies are increasingly looking for growth opportunities beyond U.S. borders. Lastly, the jobs created tend to be classified as "high value", on average 20% to 25% higher paying than jobs being created in the economy-at-large.

The primary mission of a World Trade Center (WTC) is to support the establishment and successful operation of a high-profile regional international trading enterprise. WTCs provide international trade assistance services to local businesses and are usually located in branded Class A real estate developments. As part of a worldwide alliance of WTCs, a regional WTC exists to enhance world trade opportunities, contribute to global economic development, and satisfy the most important targeted purpose: local job creation.

The objectives, therefore, of World Trade Centers are to:

- **Provide trade assistance** to primarily small-to-medium size businesses, who tend to be inefficient foreign traders yet are the backbone of worldwide business growth, and
- **Create Class A real estate development** that provides a regional focus for international trading activities, as well as announce a region's commitment to international trade.

Ironically, the commonality of WTCs is found in their differentiation. Specifically, what makes WTCs unique is that no two are similar, since each one represents a unique economic region and adopts the persona of its respective market. For example, WTC Istanbul is 26 million square feet and is the pivotal international trade facility for Turkey. On the other hand, WTC Lugano (Switzerland), at approximately 25,000 square feet, caters to Swiss/Italian private banking and wealth management. The characteristics exclusive to each WTC accommodates the differences in the trade ecosystems of individual countries. One of the strengths of the Association, therefore, is that there is "no one size fits all". WTC New York is geared to media and financial services, while WTC Curacao promotes tourism, and WTC Las Vegas (a joint venture between the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and the Consumer Electronics Show) is the dominant host of U.S. conventions. These differences dictate size, design program, location and other factors associated with WTC projects. Thanks to the WTCA's global network and prestige, WTC projects are the most recognized real estate brand in the world.

Throughout the WTCA organization there is significant ownership representation by governments, port authorities, universities, economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and other organizations who also act as members, tenants, or WTC license holders. Approximately 65% of all WTCs are controlled by public and private companies. This makes the Association one of the most effective B-to-B organizations in the world. In fact, some of the best performing WTCs blend the dexterity of a B-to-B organization with governmentally provided services to foster economic development and trade. While thousands of governmental entities are involved with WTCs around the world, the strength of WTCs lies in adjusting to market conditions.

Lastly, studies are available which demonstrate the billions of dollars in value-added trade volume that WTCs bring to their local communities, which results in demonstrable job creation. The WTC concept best exemplifies the often-used motto applied to certain forms of commerce: "one can do well and do good".