



**The Global Engagement
of San Diego/Baja California**

**REGIONAL SUCCESS STORIES:
Global Engagement Strategies
for the San Diego/Tijuana Region**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new age of global competition made possible by revolutions in international trade and technology have made “regions” increasingly important arenas of decision-making. Regions have particular advantages in the new global economy because:

- Regions are functional arenas of activity that can be conceptual and/or geographic in scope. They are limited not by man-made borders, but by imagination and natural environment.
- The flexibility of regions makes possible the development of tailored strategies that maximize the strengths of their geographic positions, physical characteristics, local economies and human capital.

The techno-global revolution brings important challenges for any region’s civic leaders, policymakers and residents. A region’s stakeholders can work to maximize the gains from globalization, spread the benefits equitably and minimize costs. Today’s information-based global economy has given rise to different — but often complementary — new strategies for success:

Trade Flows: The freer flow of commodities, capital and labor is a hallmark of contemporary globalization. In this increasingly integrated world system, a region can achieve greater competitiveness by reducing costs through specialization and investments in transportation infrastructure.

Industry Clusters: Regions can also foster continued in-migration and investment because of pre-existing forms of production, the nature and consequence of organization, and the interaction of actors within that region. Strategically locating industrial groupings and providing linkages to related industries and services bring benefits from physical proximity and agglomeration.

Learning and Innovation: “Learning regions” can succeed through the innovation and intelligence of their highly educated workforce, investments in world-class educational and research institutions and the presence of high-technology industrial clusters. High levels of interaction between private- and public-sector actors contribute to synergies and social interactions that enhance the economic competitiveness of the region.



One or more of these strategies have been employed by successful regions in the global economy. Three highly competitive regions in the United States provide useful illustrations of both successful implementations of these strategies and the challenges that can accompany that success. Each provides object lessons for San Diego and Tijuana to develop their own tailored strategies for regional coordination and development.

Miami illustrates the possibilities of maximizing trade flows by becoming a major hub for transportation and international commerce. South Florida has thrived on the networks of immigrant groups and their linguistic knowledge, as well as the region's trade-oriented mindset. But Miami's corresponding cultural conflicts and urban problems hold important lessons for other would-be global multicultural regions like San Diego and Tijuana.

Seattle provides an important example of the role of industrial clusters (aircraft and computer science) in regional development. Seattle's innovative approaches to dealing with sprawl and population growth provide a useful model for community-based planning for equitable and sustainable economic growth in the new global economy.

Silicon Valley shows that learning and innovation can be facilitated through higher education, tolerance for diversity, and support of "risky" ventures. Silicon Valley's high land and housing prices, and the deteriorated public school system in California, raise questions about equity and the prospects of continued competitiveness that raise caution in the planning of high-tech growth within a region.

Given that regions have different capabilities and natural advantages, it is imperative that decision-makers and affected communities evaluate their available resources, needs and goals to design tailored regional strategies for global engagement. Again, the keys for successful planning are a shared understanding of the goals for the region and a willingness to work together in developing the strategies to be employed.

The study of success stories suggests that strategic planning to engage the global economy on a regional scale requires careful coordination across multiple arenas of policy and across different jurisdictions of policymaking. Building cross-sectional alliances among public, private and nonprofit sector organizations to deal with emerging problems can be critical in implementing a region's larger strategies. Also, promoting community involvement by making information and opportunities for dialogue available can help planners to connect with stakeholders to resolve problems at the regional and local level. Providing a region's inhabitants with a shared world view can help to promote "regional citizenship" and cooperation.

For the nearly 5 million people in the greater San Diego/Tijuana region, developing a regional perspective can be an important step toward recognizing and dealing with shared problems, as well as capitalizing on its comparative advantages as a binational region. By combining their respective advantages and minimizing the constraints that exist within and between them, the cities of San Diego and Tijuana could become a successful binational region of major significance in the global marketplace.

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