



# Powerhouses in Question: The Evolution of Global Business Districts

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# Powerhouses in Question: The Evolution of Global Business Districts

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# Powerhouses in Question: The Evolution of Global Business Districts

**Presenter**



**MARC LHERMITTE**  
EY



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**2025** Global Business Districts  
Attractiveness Report

# Powerhouses in Question

December 9, 2025

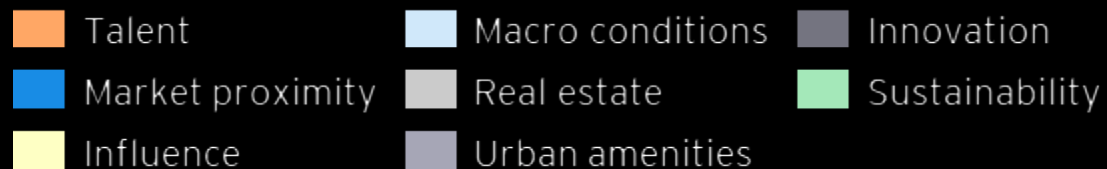


GLOBAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS  
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# A Global Report by EY and ULI for the GBD Innovation Club



- 30 GBDs benchmarked
- 2,400 KPIs
- 8 categories
- 250 ULI members and experts interviewed
- 50+ reports analyzed
- Advisory Committee
- 12 Case Studies





63%

of global leaders  
say that GBDs  
are **more attractive** now  
than in 2020

Source: 200 stakeholders surveyed (June-September 2025)

Still the **Economic Engines**  
of our World

**\$4.5**

Trillion GDP



over 7M (**GBDs**)  
226M (**cities**)



84 (**GBDs**)  
234 (**cities**)



# Strong Headwinds



Remote work and  
downsizing space



Economic and  
geopolitical issues

3.4

days/week of presence  
with big variations across 30 GBDs

60%

occupiers expect to reduce  
their footprint  
over the next 3 years

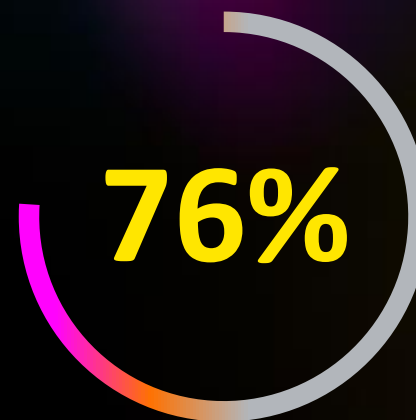
Sources: The Economist / CBRE / GBD Attractiveness Report 2025



# Talent is the ultimate currency

## ASKS

- Accessibility
- Safety
- Housing
- Mixed Use
- Vibrancy



Say that “Talent”  
is the top priority when  
choosing a business district

Source: 200 stakeholders surveyed (June-September 2025)



# The soft & Hard Power of Real Estate

## ASKS

- Managing the **Quality Gap**
- Navigating **Cost Pressures**
- **Placemaking** with Flex, Urban Design and Experiences
- Anticipating the impact of **AI**



40%

consider “fair value”  
a priority

**+14 points** vs. 2020

Source: 200 stakeholders surveyed (June-September 2025)



# The Dual Role of Technology

## ASKS

### Operational Efficiency

smart infrastructure,  
AI and data

### Innovation Ecosystems

between academia  
and business



27%

view AI initiatives  
as essential



19%

“strongly agree”  
that GBDs provide  
the ideal environment  
for innovation

Source: 200 stakeholders surveyed (June-September 2025)



# The Complexity of Sustainability

## ASKS

- Low-carbon **Mobility**
- **Energy** Efficiency
- Retrofit and **Repurpose**
- **Green** Spaces



**10%**

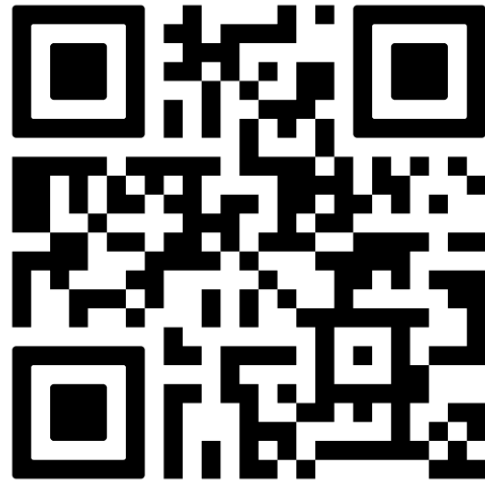
believe GBDs  
are on track  
to address climate risks

Source: 200 stakeholders surveyed (June-September 2025)



“

Business districts that don't change are **dead** – clinging to the status quo isn't an **option**.





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**TOM HARRIS**  
TIMES SQUARE ALLIANCE



**NICOLAAS WAANING**  
ING



**ELIE GAMBURG**  
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**LISETTE VAN DOORN**  
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