

FACE-TO-FACE WITH:

Adam Jones-Kelley
President and CEO
Conway Inc

Adam Jones-Kelley is a leading expert in cross-border investment and corporate expansion strategy. He has worked with Conway, Inc., for 17 years and served as President for four. Prior to becoming President of Conway Adam managed the award-winning international magazine *Site Selection*.

Adam has two decades of experience in economic development, publishing and marketing. He's been a featured speaker at events around the world and has been interviewed for various news media in the US and Europe. Adam has consulted for dozens of government economic development agencies on six continents, helping them position themselves to attract domestic and foreign corporate investment and create jobs.

Adam is also an accomplished writer, having produced original content for *Site Selection* magazine, *OnSite Travel* and *The FDI Report*.

Over the last four decades Adam has visited more than 80 countries. A deadly parasite in Ghana nearly killed him, as did stepping in front of a tram in Prague, adventures which he dutifully chronicled for the aforementioned *OnSite Travel*.

Adam grew up in Atlanta, Georgia and Auckland, New Zealand. He and his wife, renowned photographer Soo Jones-Kelley, reside in Peachtree Corners, a suburb of Atlanta where they're raising a pair of rambunctious kittens.

This idyllic life leaves Adam a little restless. He's an avid adventure-sport enthusiast who enjoys activities such as bungee jumping and diving with sharks, and does philanthropic work for endangered and abused animals.

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In your own opinion, why do you think Free Trade is important to the development of airport cities?

- Anyone is familiar with the frustration of going through customs at the airport. Getting off the plane, bureaucracy is often the first taste people get of a new location. While travelers see security screenings as mostly legitimate, they grow less and less tolerant to wasting time in red-tape, and just want to get to business as quickly as possible.
- Goods arriving in an airport city are no different. They lose value as delays increase and competitiveness as tariffs grow. In a global economy, the development of FTZ within airport cities is becoming not only important but necessary to their development.
- As principal gateway for goods and people in their region, airport cities must maximize their attractiveness by streamlining flows in and out. Deregulation and lowering both tariffs and non-tariffs barriers will be one, if not the marker for a modern airport city in the eyes of investors.

What are the essential skill sets in planning and managing *aerotropolis* development?

- Besides the entire tool-box necessary to plan and manage *any* economic development project (planning, real estate, government relations, marketing, economic analysis and sound understanding of competitive assets), the rest comes down to having the right vision.
- Airport cities are the promise of a brand-new urban thinking for the 21th century. Decision-makers lost their right to make mistakes as they are implementing new standard for increasingly urban population.
- The integration of major transportation hubs, such as an international airport, within living and business areas requires to rethink traditional urban development models. It also requires to anticipate how new technologies in the near future will change ways of lives, transportation and industry trends.

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What do you feel are the most likely scenarios or changes that the airport city or aerotropolis industry will face in the next 5 years in Europe?

- 5 years ahead is a short period of time for emerging economies. But it has become the same beat for developed economies. One cannot ignore that industry-changing innovations are occurring more often, and are less predictable. Think about space engineering: 5 years and a few crashes after SpaceX launched its reusable rockets development program, the prospect of cheap space transportation is now a reality.
- Robots and automation are one of the most disruptive force to come: changing which labor skills we value, how we work, how we live, bringing tremendous industry, legal and ethical challenges. I will tackle this with my panel on November 17th.
- Also, sustainability. This is important for Europe, even more for China. The current course of urban development is still heading to an ecological catastrophe. Airport cities must develop with a sustainable dimension at their core. Public scrutiny will hold urban developers more and more accountable in that matter.

What do you think is the role of UBM Airport City (ACE) and how does this benefit the industry?

UBM/Airport Cities World Conference and Exhibition provides a fantastic opportunity to bring experts from around the world and different professions to share their experience. The choice of Qingdao, a metropolis spear-heading economic development in China, offers the perfect platform.

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