Research Objectives

To better understand the current and future outlook of multiple Kansas City sectors regarding:

- Global Competitiveness
- Human Capital
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship*

*Insights from this research will fuel Strategic Growth Plans for high opportunity sectors

Note: Insights from the Innovation & Entrepreneurship objective have been removed from this report.
Facilitated discussion groups were conducted in August and September 2015 with:

- **Advanced Manufacturing**
- **Engineering, Architecture & Construction**
- **Animal Health & Life Sciences**
- **Finance & Insurance**
- **Logistics & Transportation**
- **Information Technology**

All discussions were facilitated by Clear Box Insights.

*In-depth telephone interviews were conducted in lieu of group discussions.*
Participating Businesses

Note: This is only a partial list of participants.
Summary Insights

Global Competitiveness
Global Competitiveness
Kansas City Advantages

Strong Workforce
- Midwestern work ethic
- Midwestern sensibility
- Intersection of smart and nice
- Pool of high quality talent

Quality of Life
- Low cost of living
- Sense of community
- Strong family values
- Good schools
- Safe neighborhoods

Centrally Located
- Airport convenient for domestic travel
- Easy to import/export goods
- Well-developed infrastructures
- Lack of congestion/traffic

Growth Potential
- Google Fiber
- Appreciation for homegrown talent/businesses
- Renovated downtown area

Business Benefits
- Lower cost of doing business
- University alliances
- Good value for high quality talent
- Collaborative/respectful industries
Global Competitiveness
Kansas City Disadvantages

Growth Barriers
- Finite potential clients
- Underleveraged Google Fiber synergy
- Growth could increase congestion/traffic

Perceptions
- KC not viewed as a major player
- Airport gives small town impression
- Hard to convince talent to move to KC

Logistics
- Difficult to travel internationally
- Bureaucracy
- Dealing with two states

Human Capital
- Limited skilled labor pool
- Competing for same talent
- Limited STEM talent
- Unrealistic expectations from grads

Capital
- Limited capital available
- Difficult to access capital
- Risk averse/conservative area
Global Competitiveness
Strategic Considerations

Smart, sustainable growth benefits all

- Economic growth supports these industries directly and indirectly by bringing jobs, infrastructure, and money to the area, contributing to making Kansas City a major player.

Change perceptions of Kansas City

- To become more globally competitive, changing perceptions of Kansas City as a whole is key; emphasizing its vast business resources including growth opportunities, capital, and talent.

Become more international

- To compete globally, Kansas City needs easier international travel (i.e., more flights, bigger airport), more international training at the university level, and prioritizing acquisition of international talent.
Summary Insights

Human Capital
Human Capital Challenges

- Not attracting enough talent to STEM fields
  - Limited exposure to industries
  - Not “sexy” or fast-paced
  - Lack of STEM training
- Universities teaching theory vs. application
- Gap between college grads and entry level jobs; unwillingness to “start at the bottom”
- Lack of skilled labor
- KC not seen as a major player
  - Difficult to attract outside talent
  - Low perceptions of KC
  - High risk if job doesn’t work out/limited options
## Human Capital
### Core Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality Traits</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial Spirit</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent/bright</td>
<td>Strong communicator</td>
<td>Flexible/adaptable</td>
<td>Anticipates needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can do attitude</td>
<td>Verbal and written</td>
<td>Willing to take a chance/guts</td>
<td>Collaborative/team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Cross-disciplinary</td>
<td>Asks how we can do better</td>
<td>Multiple managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honest/straight-forward</td>
<td>Client-ready</td>
<td>Independent thinker</td>
<td>Contributes/speaks up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Human Capital
Core Competencies (Cont’d)

Work Ethic
- Hard worker
- Good character
- Works well with others
- Willing to work their way up

Problem Solving
- Analytical skills
- Inquisitive/wants to learn
- Ability to troubleshoot
- Problem-solving skills

STEM Skills
- Basic math skills
- Computer skills
- Applied technology
- Mechanical abilities
**Human Capital**

**Strategic Considerations**

- **Work, live and play in Kansas City**
  - Position Kansas City as a high quality of life city: many job opportunities, low cost of living, good schools, safe neighborhoods, and culturally advanced.

- **Create synergy between academics and business**
  - Encourage alliances to create industry awareness, teach applicable skills, and better prepare students for working in the industry.

- **Provide skilled labor programs**
  - Make Kansas City a hub for skilled labor training to fill the employment gap and to bring skilled laborers to town.

- **Teach soft skills**
  - Create programs to teach soft skills, including communication, social skills, etc. to improve the existing and future workforce.