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By Cherie Duvall Jones | [Nation's Cities Weekly](#)

Boston is ranked as the No. 1 "Innovative City in the World," according to a newly released report by global innovation agency 2thinknow. Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino knew just that when he recently created a partnership to raise global awareness that his city is one of the world's foremost centers of intellectual capital and innovation.

Going live earlier this year, Boston World Partnerships, a nonprofit organization created to offer competitive advantages to growth-minded businesses, hit the ground running when it helped bring 600 new employees to the Fort Point Channel. The maritime channel, which separates South Boston from downtown Boston and feeds into Boston Harbor, is home to the Channel Center complex.

In March, Menino welcomed executives from Retail Convergence Inc., which owns and operates two **Internet** retail sites, and Cengage Learning, publishers of print and digital instructional and reference materials, to the complex. Retail Convergence Inc., announced that the fast-growing company would keep 125 jobs in Boston. The company, which added approximately 40 new jobs last year, expects to add another 35 jobs or more this year, with at least 20 of those new employees located in Boston. Cengage Learning brought nearly 500 employees.

"I'm delighted to welcome these companies to the Fort Point Channel--these **companies** are growing because their leaders are committed to innovation, and so am I," said Menino.

"Retail Convergence and Cengage Learning understand that doing business in Boston gives them the ability to attract and hire top-tier creative talent that will keep them ahead of the competition."

As an example of how Boston World Partnerships operates, John Palmieri, director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, said that the partnership generated the lead for Retail **Convergence** to remain in Boston.

"They found out that the company was looking to leave the city, and they worked behind the scenes with Boston Redevelopment Authority researchers and site location staff to ensure that Retail Convergence's executive team had a full appreciation for the bottomline value of the city's work force," said Palmieri. "This exposed them to a full range of real estate options both downtown and on the South Boston Waterfront."

Through word-of-mouth channels, Boston World Partnerships learned about Retail Convergence's suburban office space search. The organization then used its "connectors"--a global community of people who have ties to Boston's economy--to expand the demographic data and the real estate options available to Retail Convergence executives.

None of these sites turned out to be the perfect fit, but they did help to confirm Retail Convergence executives' appreciation for the South Boston Waterfront/Fort Point Channel District, a neighborhood that's steps away from Boston's Downtown Crossing and Financial

District and boasts a variety of historic buildings, cultural activities, **industries** and commercial activities.

While Boston World Partnerships generates high-quality leads for economic growth, each lead represents a specific, actionable opportunity to create jobs, attract a business, strengthen an existing Boston business, support entrepreneurship or enhance work force development. To achieve these goals, it uses its connectors, which is similar to an alumni organization.

"We decided to forgo traditional print ad campaigns and borrow the strategies that are similar to university alumni strategies," said Dave McLaughlin, executive director of Boston World Partnerships. "No city has ever tried this before.... We don't really do hard sells, we connect people to resources."

This network exists around an information-rich **website**, www.bostonworldpartnerships.com, and an array of social media tools, as well as events in the city and abroad where Boston professionals can come together to share ideas, insights and other resources to help Boston remain an international capital of innovation.

"Cities are where great ideas happen," said McLaughlin. "We're really determined to make our city more accessible to people who want to invest here. People are the greatest asset."

Details: To learn more about Boston World Partnerships, go to www.bostonworldpartnerships.com or send an **email** to info@bostonworldpartnerships.com.

The source of Boston's ranking as the Innovative City in the World is the 2thinknow Innovation Cities Global 256 Index. To view the ranking, go to www.innovation-cities.com/2thinknowinnovation-cities-global-256-index/. The final analysis, which ranks 256 cities, is based on 162 Innovation Indicators measured against current trends.