

One Belt- One Road

Connecting a small world with new trade routes

I recently attended a seminar at the Hong Kong Trade Development Council here in Chicago. The seminar reviewed the huge investment that China is making on the One Belt- One Road concept that will shift the balance of trade once completed. China is willing to invest billions to enhance trade.

In just 30 years, China has developed from a poor inward-looking agricultural country to a global manufacturing powerhouse. Its model of investing and producing at home and exporting to developed markets has elevated it to the world's second-largest economy after the USA.

Now faced with a slowing economy at home, China's leadership is looking for new channels to sustain its appetite for growth at a time when developing neighbors are experiencing rapidly rising demand.

The heart of the One Belt, One Road concept is the creation of an **economic land belt** that includes countries on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe, as well as a **maritime road** that links China's port facilities with the African coast, pushing up through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean.



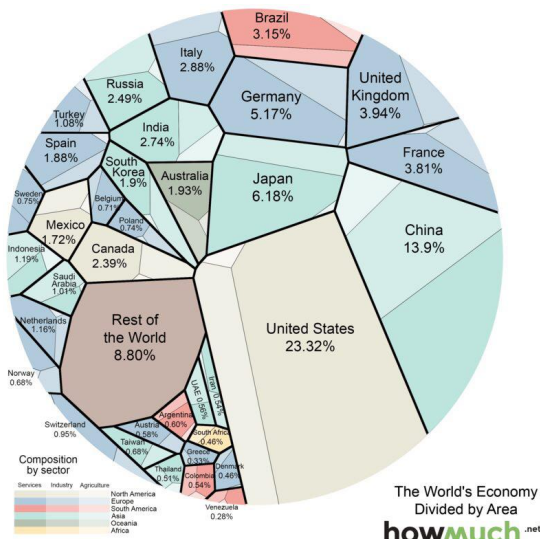
The **One Best- One Road** concept aims to redirect the country's domestic overcapacity (such as steel, cement, aluminium), and capital for regional infrastructure development, to improve trade and relations with Asean, Central Asian, European countries, and the world at large. This is an aggressive concept and infrastructure issues are critical to its success. High risk means high returns, if you can manage the risks. The **initiative has its challenges**; cooperation and coordination with partner countries over the long term are paramount for it to be a lasting legacy.

We all know the tales of Marco Polo, a Venitian navigator and trader who traveled accross oceans and desert terrain to discover another world. A world as big and as powerful as any place in Europe. A new partner to trade with. His travels encouraged others to also discover new trade routes and trade partners to exchange goods to grow richer and more powerful back in Europe. Kinda like trade show marketing, but no camels accross the desert to get there.



As China's silk was a major trade product, the route to travel there was coined the **Silk Road**. It was not just one road but rather a series of major trade routes that helped to build trade and cultural ties between China, India, Persia, Arabia, Greece, Rome, and the Mediterranean countries. There was no USA at this time, so much can be learned as history repeats itself.

China is growing faster than the USA , but the US dollar is still the strongest currency with the China Yuan Reminbi not far behind. As history continues to unfold, how will the US position its resources to stay on top? How, or will we, cooperate to support this initiative?



Nicholas Kwan, director of Research for Hong Kong Trade Development Council did a great job to support the concept and concluded to say- "The idea of one belt and one road is based mainly on the economy, but it has political and strategic implications. We at HKTDC work hard to provide our business associates with open and honest market intelligence from our global business network".



Now what does all this all have to do with trade show marketing? Today, the routes to trade are the *convention centers* around the world. Trade shows are a powerful tool to create new trade opportunities, but delivering the goods on time at a competitive price will still be a concern. Improving infrastructure issues around the world will go a long way to connect our common interests. Providing a quality product, at a fair price, and delivered on time is the goal, provided that we do not harm the environment, exploit precious resources, or a labor force to do so. It's a small world after all!

Every good idea has its challenges, but doing nothing produces nothing.

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood...

Make big plans, aim high in hope and work.”

Daniel Burnham (Chicago's planning Architect)