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## ASK THE EXPERT

By Mark M. Sweeney, Senior Principal, McCallum Sweeney, Inc.



### Going Overseas: Risks and Rewards

This month, the Expert tackles a question on locating overseas, and tells another reader where to find critical real estate data.

**Q** What are the risks and advantages of locating a company overseas? Where can I find this information?  
—Anonymous reader

**The Expert Says:** No matter what business you may be in, there is likely a set of offshore locations that represent potentially significant cost savings or increased revenue. Whether it's a desire to tap into economical supply (labor, business services) or new demand (consumer markets), you may find yourself—like so many other Western firms—looking at very compelling numbers pointing to the need for an offshore facility.

The risks to overseas locations can be daunting. Considerable time and energy should be spent understanding the location you are considering.

First off, language may be a barrier. Finance, tax, and labor laws will be different and must be understood. Understanding national cultures and subcultures will be important for any activity as you deal with government and private sector people, and especially important if you are selling into the market. Corruption varies widely from country to country, and while it may be seen as the way to do business, engaging in the practice could put you at risk in the country in which you are doing business. Once established, you will now have a global supply chain that could be disrupted by in-country disturbances or even terrorism impacts on global logistics. And while not common, the ultimate risk of nationalization of your assets remains a non-zero risk in some locations.

**Q** My company has various warehouse facilities around the country. Is there a national database where I can find information on light industrial warehouse space?  
—James B., Athens, GA

**The Expert Says:** While there is a world of information on real estate, sites, and buildings, we have not found a single source that provides comprehensive nationwide data. With regard to available buildings, most of the national (and multi-

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national) real estate firms maintain databases, some more ambitious than others. Most state and many regional development organizations (including utilities) maintain databases of existing buildings, but again, there is a wide variance in their reliability.

Your focus may not be listings, but rather real estate market information—vacancy rates and lease rates and trends for those factors. In that case, all of the major real estate firms produce quarterly reports for most major metropolitan areas of the U.S. that report such data. These reports are often available free of charge by contacting a local agent of such a firm. Some regional and local development agencies can be a good source for this information as well.

**[» See last month's column, Ask The Expert.](#)**

***Do you have a relocation or expansion question for the experts at McCallum Sweeney? Submit your question below. The experts at McCallum Sweeney Consulting will be answering reader mail every month.***

First Name:\*

Last Name:\*

Title:\*

Company:\*

E-mail:\*

Would you prefer to remain anonymous?  Yes  No

Your question:

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