



# Strategic Resilience: Unlocking Opportunities in an Unpredictable World

## The Power of Proactive Planning in Serviced Accommodations

*Most of the time, success comes to those ready to handle uncertainty...*

Chess prodigy Joshua Watskin coaches beginners to start with the end game. Focus just on the kings and pawns, he says. By removing the complexity up front, players will develop resilience to the chaos of the opening and middle of the game, fortified by the confidence they've built in how they play the end game.

In business, setting aside complexity and focusing solely on the desired end result can work much the same way. It can serve as a guiding light through uncertain times. *Here's the catch* — unlike chess, the business world isn't limited by fixed rules or a defined board. Focusing too much on the desired result can lead to biased thinking. The world is complicated and unforeseen influences can derail even the best-thought-out strategies. Therefore, it's best to prepare for multiple outcomes and remain ready to adjust as new information emerges.

*Continued...*



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At Synergy, we believe planning with the desired end in mind, while accepting the realities of unpredictability is the key to strategic resilience. This is how we face an ever-changing business environment — not by guessing, but by preparing.

This report outlines the current travel and mobility business climate, emphasizing the need to build strategic resilience through preparation and partnership with your corporate housing provider. By examining the economy and industry trends set against a backdrop of Synergy's ongoing investments, we aim to show how we can, as an industry, lean into today's challenges and redefine them opportunistically.

Our goal is to reaffirm our commitment to our guests, clients and partners. We aim to provide insights into why Synergy is uniquely positioned to help businesses achieve their corporate housing goals through client-centric solutions, enhanced technology and an unwavering commitment to sustainability.



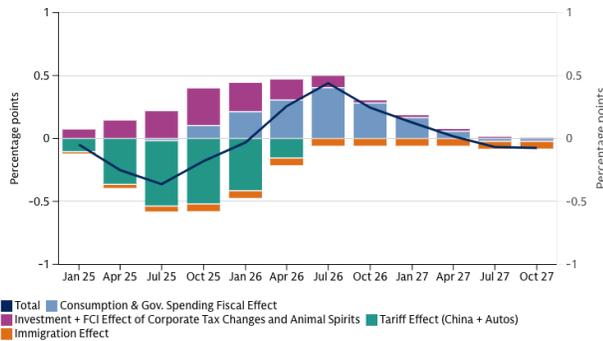
## Global Economy

Research suggests another promising year of global economic growth ([GDP +2.7%](#)) in 2025. As uncertainties settle, we're already seeing major global economies cut interest rates in response to cooling inflation data and in turn stock indexes responded with positive, record-breaking growth.

Despite this supposed positivity, serious headwinds remain. Inflation and supply chain disruption are an ever-present concern, mainly due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and escalating tensions in the Middle East. Look no further than the ride [oil prices](#) have been on.

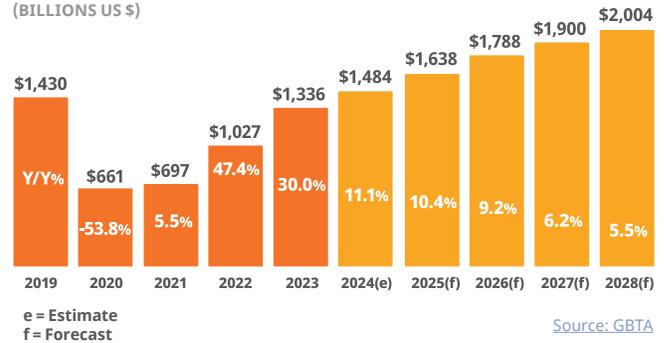
Recent election results in the US are predicted to trigger trade tensions within China and the Eurozone, alongside immigration restrictions which could have an impact on talent mobility. Additionally, political instabilities, like [France is experiencing going into 2025](#), could trigger a financial crisis for the eurozone's second largest economy and powerful European Union member. Needless to say, investors will remain cautious as we move into the new year and beyond.

US YEAR OVER YEAR GDP GROWTH



Source: Goldman Sachs

GLOBAL BUSINESS TRAVEL SPEND (BILLIONS US \$)



Source: GBTA

### By the numbers

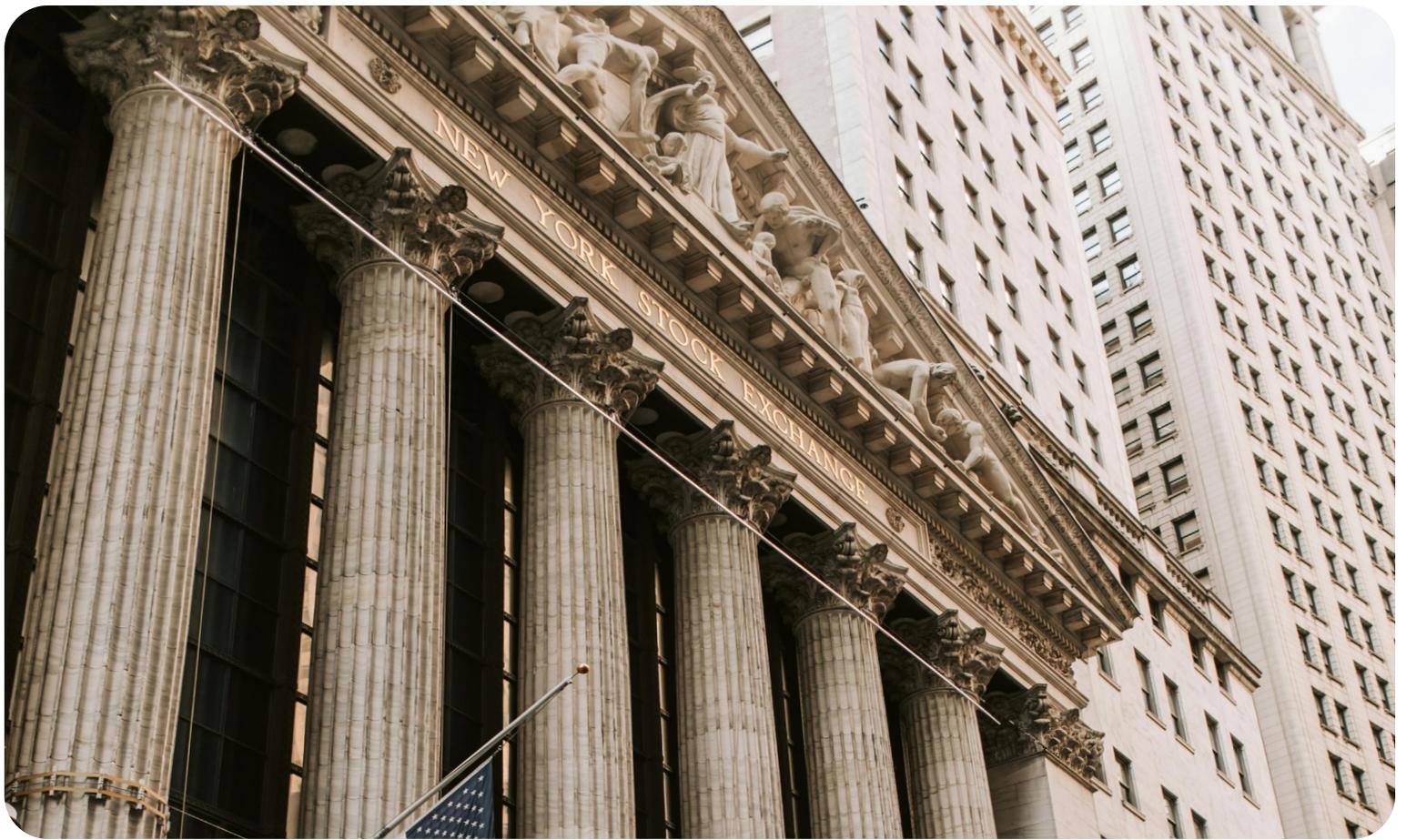
At the time of this report, the US economy remains strong and avoided the recession so widely predicted in 2024. [GDP growth rebounded to 3.0%](#) in Q2, driven by factory construction and consumer spending. With geopolitical threats opening the door for further inflationary pressure, Goldman Sachs still projects [worldwide GDP to grow 2.7%](#) in 2025.

This positive outlook is reflected globally with GDP projected to grow by +2.7% in 2025, thanks mainly to China ([4.5% 2025](#)) and India's ([6.7% 2025](#)) impressive growth alongside bounce back of the UK and Eurozone's markets.



#### Takeaways from the Global Economy

While the economy, as a whole, appears stable and reflects growth, uncertainties remain that can curtail that sentiment very quickly. In this economic environment, analyzing your corporate housing provider's strategy through a "proactive" and "reactive" rubric is best. Are they operating in response to a hot and cold economy and popping up wherever the latest trends suggest? Or do they have a long-term, proactive strategy that reflects the realities of an uncertain global economy?



## Synergy's Value Within the Global Economy

Synergy plans for and mitigates uncertainties through strategic investments in local guest services, partnerships, sustainability and technology. We partner with our clients to anticipate their needs and develop the necessary infrastructure to support those requirements.

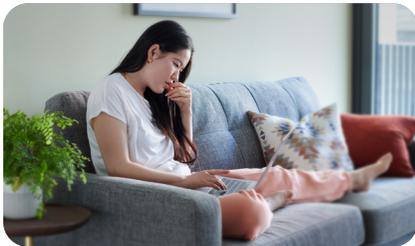
One recent example includes the development of a global crisis management team, designed to anticipate, prepare and respond effectively to crises, both regionally and locally. Synergy's support to its clients during the onset of the Ukraine War saw an unprecedented response to bring more than 360 guests to safety in a matter of hours. This all-encompassing approach focused on preparedness and anticipation while leaving space for flexibility, agility and most importantly, the utmost client and guest care.

Synergy's expansion into India is another example of our proactive and strategic approach to program management. We didn't react to the growing demand for corporate housing across the country; we anticipated and facilitated it with local solutions: team members, tax services and experienced leadership.



## Business Travel & Mobility

Most of us have been holding our breath, waiting and anticipating the industry’s spending to bounce back and return to normal, much like a child screaming from the backseat, “Are we there yet?” The good news finally arrived — 2024 was the year.



### Business Travel

Based on recent data from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), global business travel spend was estimated to reach a record **\$1.48 Trillion in 2024**, finally topping 2019 by an estimated \$54 million. Forecasts call for that number to climb to over \$2 trillion by 2028.

China (\$370.2B) and the US (\$361.6B) sit one and two respectively in terms of spending amount, while South Korea (27%) and India (22%) sit one and two respectively in terms of annual spending growth (Turkey was a close third at 21% growth).

While travel spending is estimated to exceed previous highs set in 2019, volume still lags. Inflation, reducing emissions and the trend of fewer trips but longer stays appear to account for this discrepancy. Technology disruption (AI and blockchain), sustainability, cost and safety remain the main focus points for travel buyers.

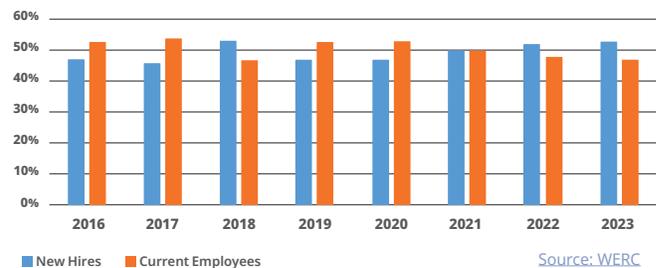


### Mobility

It is much the same on the relocation front. A recent [WERC survey](#) notes total relocations from 2016 through 2023 show a “stable, largely upward, trend.” This data is supported by a nearly even break between the percentage of “new-hire” and “current employee” moves through the same period.

The [evolution of corporate DE&I policies](#), government regulation, sustainability and workplace trends (such as [RTO policies](#)) are the top focus points for relocation professionals.

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF U.S. DOMESTIC RELOCATION, NEW HIRES VS CURRENT EMPLOYEES



### Takeaways from Business Travel & Mobility

Business travel and employee relocations show no signs of slowing despite downward pressure from inflation, technology disruption, cost increases, regulation and evolving remote work policy. With travel volume not keeping pace with travel spend, budgets are getting squeezed, handcuffing the resources business travel and mobility teams have to support business growth and reinforce loyalty within their company’s talent pools.



“ ...meeting the expectations of the lump-sum business traveler... has put immense pressure on housing provider cost and value ratios as they look to compete with the appeal of housing options found on peer-to-peer accommodation marketplaces.

## Synergy’s Value to Business Travel & Mobility

In a landscape where inflation, technological disruption and evolving work policies pressure budgets, Synergy’s total program management is designed to maximize every resource by adapting to market changes, understanding clients’ needs and aligning with their policies and goals. Recent initiatives such as the appointment of Chief Technology Officer Aaron Turner, the refinement of group travel processes for cost management and Synergy’s recent EcoVadis Silver Rating achievement demonstrate our dedication to keeping our finger on the pulse.

## Serviced Accommodation Trends

Where to begin? From sustainability to supply challenges to cost pressure to short-term legislation, advancements in technology, data security and duty of care — our industry has faced a lot over the last 12-18 months. So, let’s start with the heart of it all — the business traveler.



### The Business Traveler

Bleisure, or more recently “*objective stacking*,” is cementing itself out of a pandemic phenomenon and into a preferred travel style. As businesses approve fewer but longer business trips, travelers are taking the opportunity to combine work trips with personal goals.

As a result, travelers require ever-more versatile and comfortable accommodation — particularly as organizations increasingly seek flexible lease terms and housing arrangements that can adapt to their workforce’s changing preferences. In addition, we saw a shift toward lump-sum travel in 2024 as businesses looked to refine their approach to cost management. This is where flexibility becomes paramount.

### Sustainability

Sustainable housing design, amenities, and services remain a major selection driver for business travelers and corporations both due to shareholder interests and government regulations. Taiwan’s Climate Change Adaptation Act for example, has singled out carbon reduction and sustainability disclosure as imperative to reaching its 2050 carbon neutrality goals.

2024 also marked the inclusion of environmental reporting in the European Union. [California followed](#) suit in late October, becoming the first US state to require such emission reporting by corporations. As we look to 2025, lenders in India will now be required to disclose [climate finance risks](#) and to meet certain climate targets starting in 2027.

## Supply Challenges & Cost Pressure

Many factors have kept “supply” and “cost” challenges at the forefront of the service accommodation industry. With inflation, aging supply, high traveler expectations and slashed travel and relocation budgets, it’s not hard to understand why.

Such factors have led to challenges in meeting the expectations of the lump-sum business traveler looking to “objective stack” their business trip. This has put immense pressure on housing provider cost and value ratios as they look to compete with the appeal of housing options found on peer-to-peer accommodation marketplaces.

One key example of Synergy’s success in managing cost conscious solutions can be demonstrated in its effective delivery and cost-management of over 1,000 interns from just one client in the Asia Pacific region in 2024. By implementing refined group management processes, designed to reflect the state of the industry and client requirements, Synergy was able to support more than double the amount of guests as it did in 2023 while driving cost savings of +10%.

## Short-Term Legislation

Supply met another challenge in the form of increasing short-term housing legislation throughout 2024. As predicted, New York joined a growing list of cities cracking down on short-term housing supply. While it’s an effort with good intentions, it is no secret it’s impeding the industry’s ability to provide safe, secure and adequate short-term housing options (*under 30 days*) for business travelers.

## AI & Data Security

AI’s impact on the industry is still in its infancy as providers look for ways to seamlessly integrate the technology’s speed and power into their systems and processes. Some exciting advancements are on the horizon, including “AI travel agents” (e.g., *trip planning, concierge chatbots, etc.*), innovative, connected expense management tools, facial recognition apartment access and instant traveler and program insights and reporting.



While AI poses an enormous upside for the traveler experience, but it is critical to understand how best to position the value-add. People still prefer people when it comes to guest services. It is incumbent upon the industry to understand where people make a difference and where AI can add value.

Data security is one area in which AI will make enormous inroads. With ever-more sophisticated attacks zeroing in on partner systems and connected applications, AI can help providers identify vulnerabilities and help close gaps before nefarious actors can exploit them.

Synergy, for example, recently implemented a 24-hour surveillance program which leverages AI to identify cyber threats and rank these threats based on severity.



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## Duty of Care

Duty of Care remains a pivotal focus point for the industry, particularly in light of rising political tensions, the increasing severity of natural disasters and the ever-present threat of data security vulnerabilities.

With the rise of the lump-sum traveler and increasing constraints on travel and mobility budgets, robust risk management frameworks that leverage technology for real-time monitoring and communication are becoming increasingly crucial for the industry at large.

Tools like [International SOS](#) continue to gain momentum as travel managers seek to anticipate, prevent and better react to unplanned risks travelers may face during a business trip. An increase in risk such as weather events, social unrest, natural disasters and public health concerns are just some of the risks our industry has come into increased contact with in the last 5 years.



### ***Takeaway from Serviced Accommodation Trends***

While empowered travelers seek sustainable and appealing housing, they are often unaware of hidden challenges like inconvenient locations or unexpected disruptions. At the same time, clients face high expectations amid supply shortages, shrinking budgets, technological disruptions and data security threats. This convergence of pressures leaves travelers increasingly vulnerable, highlighting a critical gap in ensuring proper traveler safety and care as the trend to lump-sum travel continues.





## Preparedness Meets Adaptability

Below, we outline our 2024 strategic investments and positioning to highlight how we ensure our preparation is adaptable. In an industry marked by constant change, our ability to pivot swiftly and effectively is not just an asset — it's a necessity.

### Growth and Expansion

As Synergy navigates the evolving landscape of business travel, growth and expansion remain at the forefront of our strategy. In 2024, we focused on diversifying our US portfolio to serve our clients better and adapt to regional demands.

#### Highlights include:

- **US portfolio diversification/development:** Acquired Primestone Housing Solutions, expanding our US footprint and client base in the Southeast and Midwest (*Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and Carolinas*). This included an exclusive partnership with Ram Partners, a large multifamily property management company affording greater access to premier inventory throughout the region.
- **Opened an office in Houston, Texas** with local operations and guest services teams to support client shifts in business locations. Our operations now span Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio.



### APAC Emerging Markets

Expansion isn't just about the number of branded apartments we offer; it's about building a comprehensive program management solution with locally operated 24/7 guest services and client service, including local area and product knowledge, relationships and finance/tax services — all the while providing safe and secure apartments wherever needed.



#### Highlights include:

- Throughout the past five years we've focused strategically on growing our products and services in India and China, the [fastest-growing major economies](#). This proactive effort aligns with current global economic shifts while reinforcing our commitment to supporting clients' growth plans.
  - Continued to build our **team and infrastructure to support business hubs in India**, including secondary tier cities.
  - Strategic focus on **emerging markets like Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia** in the year ahead in an effort to support growing client and partner need.



## Strategic Leadership

People have been and always will be central to our approach to serving guests, clients and partners. Our strategic appointments don't just fill a role; they bring new experience, expertise and ideas, ensuring we are constantly retooling our team structure, operational systems and thinking to better prepare for the future.

### Highlights Include:

- **Named Cara Lingle Vice President of Global Supply Chain and U.S. Sales**, focusing on apartment supply innovation, strategic regional partnerships and revenue growth.
- **Appointed Aaron Turner as Chief Technology Officer (CTO)** to spearhead the delivery of key client and partner inventory, service and operational management systems. Aaron will also lead the integration of AI across our service suite to enhance our ability to provide timely service whenever and wherever it is needed.



## Technology

Synergy's technology investments enhance our ability to meet client needs around booking, data security, privacy and guest service. By leveraging Microsoft Azure's encryption tools, we ensure all our technology solutions protect client data, addressing a growing concern for businesses with stringent compliance requirements.

### Highlights Include:

- Development of **client portals and advanced integrated technology** were our key focus areas as we enhanced industry-forward client and supplier inventory portals, guest management systems and security frameworks.
- **Real-time availability**, faster booking times, more efficient and streamlined group move management systems and detailed reporting features for more precise forecasting and budgeting will be available beginning in early 2025.
- Increased focus on **AI-driven solutions for predictive, efficient and cost management services**. Optimizing housing logistics and improving guest experience will be critical to our future technological advancements. Additionally, we're looking to AI to streamline repetitive processes, reduce manual tasks and enhance the overall efficiency of delivering service to our stakeholders while maintaining the human touch where it matters most.

## Environmental, Social and Governance Initiatives

2024 was a breakthrough year for Synergy's ESG (*Environmental, Social and Governance*) initiatives. In particular, our **EcoVadis Silver rating** demonstrates our hard work and commitment to supporting our clients and partners in meeting their ESG targets. As evidenced by our Greenfeet emission report we are working towards our net zero goal.



### Highlights Include:

- Earned **EcoVadis Silver Rating**, placing us in the top 15% of all businesses for sustainability.
- **Achieved ISO 27001:2022**, the industry's top data security certification
- Launched **Grow and RISE @Synergy** management and leadership training.
- Participated on **DE&I industry panels** such as the CHPA Connect Diversity Workshop to spread awareness and collaboration across our industry.
- Further invested in our **GreenLeaf program**—a program where Synergy asks its supplier partners to complete a comprehensive sustainability questionnaire designed to support clients with making informed sustainability decisions when selecting accommodations.



- Published 3rd annual **GreetFeet emission report**, demonstrating our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and promoting sustainable housing. By monitoring our environmental impact across all properties, we've gained the ability to make data-driven decisions to reduce energy use, minimize waste and promote sustainability in every facet of our operations.
- **Tax compliance**—providing E-Fapiao in China and increased India GST registrations to 5 Indian states; Telengana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Haryana.



## Awards and Recognition

Recognition reflects unwavering commitment to excellence and meeting the highest standards of service in our industry. This year, we celebrated over 20 global supplier partners during our annual **Synergies Global Partner Awards**, highlighting achievements with honors such as *"Supplier of the Year"* and *"Diversity & Sustainability Program of the Year."* These awards underscore the strength and collaboration within our partner network.

Conversely, Synergy itself has been honored with some of the industry's most prestigious awards, a testament to our dedication to delivering exceptional services to our guests and clients.



**Company of the Year & Sustainable Business Award**  
- AMERICAS



**Serviced Apartment Provider of the Year**  
- EMEA



**Service Exceeding Expectations**  
- AMERICAS



**Outstanding Agility & Crisis Management**  
- EMEA



**Commitment to Excellence**  
- AMERICAS (Platinum)  
- APAC & EMEA (Gold)



**Best Serviced Apartment Provider**  
- APAC (Silver)

See more of our award wins [here](#).

*December 9, 2024*



## Preparedness in Action

As we reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025, one thing is clear: preparedness is our greatest asset in an unpredictable world. Throughout our 25-year history, Synergy has embodied this principle and it continues to guide our path forward.

In a competitive business environment where talent is the only true differentiator, we understand that corporations must invest in how they care and look after their people. Synergy provides the framework and infrastructure to ensure our clients can offer the best housing solutions, regardless of location or situation. Our total program management approach is not just about providing accommodations; it's about creating an ecosystem that cares, nurtures and reinforces loyalty amongst top talent.

As we move into 2025 and beyond, we do so confidently — not because we believe we can solve for the future, but because we're prepared for whatever it may hold. Our investments in growth, sustainability, technology and talent have created a robust foundation, allowing us to adapt, innovate and excel in any environment.

To our stakeholders – our guests, clients, partners and team members – thank you for your continued trust and support. Together, we're not just navigating the complexities of our sector; we're setting the standard for how businesses respond to unpredictability — proactive, prepared and in partnership.

We invite you to continue this journey with us as we adapt to new economic realities, tackle emerging challenges and seize exciting opportunities. Here's to a future where preparedness meets opportunity, a future where we unlock success together.

**Jack Jensky**

*Co-Founder, Synergy Global Housing*

Interested to know more about how Synergy can support you and your objectives? Contact us today and let's start this journey, together: [sales@synergyhousing.com](mailto:sales@synergyhousing.com)

Learn more about our locations & services visit: [synergyhousing.com](https://www.synergyhousing.com)

