

BOOK REVIEW

ON MANAGING ACROSS CULTURE

Authors: Earley, C. & Mosakowski, E.
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This book collects ideas and best practices for aspiring and experienced leaders alike. It offers essential reading selected from the pages of the Harvard Business Review on topics critical to the success of every leader and manager in the public and private sectors.

This book includes 10 articles on the cultural intelligence quotient (CQ), as follows: *Cultural Intelligence*, by P. Christopher Earley and Elaine Mosakowski; *Managing Multiculturalism*, by Jeanne Brett, Kristin Behfar, and Mary C. Ken; *L'Oreal Master Multiculturalism*, by Hae-Jung Hong and Yves L. Doz; *Making Differences Matter: A New Paradigm for Managing Diversity*, by David A. Thomas and Robin J. Ely; *Navigating the Cultural Minefield*, by Erin Meyer; *Values in Tension: Ethics Away from Home*, by Thomas Donaldson; *Global Business Speaks English*, by Tsedal Neeley; *Rules for Managing Global Innovation*, by Keeley Wilson and Yves L. Doz;

Lost in Translation, by Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams; and *The Right Way to Manage Expats*, by J. Stewart Black and Hal B. Gregersen.

Earley and Mosakowski define CQ as the ability to make sense of an unfamiliar context and then blend in. CQ has three components: the cognitive, physical, and emotional/motivational matters of the leaders. The authors of this book have devised tools to show how to identify one's strengths and they have developed training techniques to help overcome weaknesses, including many case studies.

Brett et al. concentrate on multicultural teams, which can often frustrate leaders and managers. Cultural differences can create substantial obstacles to effective teamwork. However, cultural challenges can be managed if the leaders and team members choose the correct strategy and avoid imposing single - culture - based approaches on multicultural situations.

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Jung Hong and Doz advise that for a global company or organization to deploy multicultural teams strategically, HR should appoint a manager or leader to lead a program to develop and nurture them. This leader should be knowledgeable about the competence and skills of these individuals, and how they differ from those of other employees.

Thomas and Ely suggest eight preconditions for making the paradigm shift, as follows:

1. The leadership should understand that a diverse workforce will embody different perspectives and approaches to work and should truly value variety of opinion and insight.

2. The leadership should recognize both the learning opportunities and the challenges that the expression of different perspectives presents for an organization.

3. The organization culture should create an expectation of high standards of performance from everyone.

4. The organizational culture should stimulate personal development.

5. The organizational culture should encourage openness.

6. The culture should make employees feel valued.

7. The organization should have a well-articulated and widely understood mission.

8. The organization should have a relatively egalitarian and nonbureaucratic structure.

Meyer focuses on respecting four rules, as follows:

1. Do not underestimate the challenge.

2. Apply multiple perspectives of each culture.

3. Find the positive in other approaches.

4. Adjust and readjust your opinion.

Donaldson discusses the three guiding principles to shape ethical behavior: respect for core human values, which determine the absolute moral threshold for all activities; respect for local traditions; and the belief that context matters when deciding what is right and what is wrong. Moreover, he discusses the guidelines for ethical leadership using getting examples drawn from several organizations.

Neeley argues that global business speaks English, which is one of the most important elements in any organization especially in the business sector. Companies are increasingly adopting English as the common corporate language, no matter where they are based. Single language policies can help companies to avoid problems of communication, especially because English is used as the global language. However, I would add that the English language is also very important in other areas, such as academic sectors and organizations that contact with international organizations.

Wilson and Doz suggest 10 rules for managing global innovation, as follows:

1. Smart Small: To be effective, dispersed teams must develop a new set of competencies and establish a collaborative mind - set. This can be done by running small, dispersed projects involving just two or three sites before a project launch.

2. Provide a Stable Organizational Context: The project manager should

focus on creating an atmosphere of stability, and bolster the employees' sense of self-worth and loyalty to the organization.

3. Assign Oversight and Support Responsibility to a Senior Manager: The executive responsible for the project should see the dilemma immediately and take it to the executive committee. Consequently, a senior manager is needed, due to their experience.

4. Use Rigorous Project Management and Seasoned Project Leaders: With senior management support, a project leader can successfully introduce a protocol requiring that all initial communications on a topic should be conducted voice-to-voice because the misunderstandings that can result from e-mail communication between teams can often cause the schedule to slip.

5. Appoint a Lead Site: A leader should be appointed on-site because each site involved in global innovation will see the project through the prism of its own contribution and context, rather than putting the bigger picture first. Therefore, one must designate a leader on-site to take responsibility for delivering the project on time and on budget.

6. Invest Time, Defining the Innovation: Service delivery should include process flows, timelines, and knowledge requirements, which need to be thoroughly understood so that everyone working on the project has the same understanding of the goals and their individual contributions to them. Moreover, colocation builds relationships and trust up front, and supports the sharing of complex ideas, concepts and trust.

7. Allocate Resources Based on Capability, Not Availability: The

availability approach to staffing projects completely undermines the basic rationale for global innovation to bring together distinctive and differentiated knowledge and capabilities from around the world to create unique innovation.

8. Build Enough Knowledge Overlap for Collaboration: Enough knowledge should be built in the team based on the unique capabilities and knowledge that the members can bring.

9. Limit the Number of Subcontractors and Partners: In most innovation projects today, part of the work is outsourced or undertaken by development partners to access specific competencies, reduce development time, or cut costs.

10. Do Not Rely Solely on Technology for Communication: Although ICT (including e-mail, web meeting, social media platforms, online forums, and video conferencing) certainly has a role to play, these tools should not be over-relied on because they tend to mask differences between locations, which leads to misunderstanding and tension.

Trompenaars and Woolliams discuss the five most important dimensions, as follows: First, do we view our environment of the individual as internally or externally controlled? Second, which is more important, rules or relationships? Third, is failure the responsibility of the individual or of the team? Fourth, how much do we identify with our failures? Finally, do we grant status according to performance or the position? The authors also describe how some forward-looking organizations and companies are managing to reconcile cultural differences to create a powerful platform for innovation.

Finally, **Black and Gregersen** concentrate on how to manage expats for outsourcing abroad. When sending employees to work abroad, the organizations should consider three practices: first, they are expected to generate new knowledge for the organization or to acquire skills that will help them become leaders; second, they should assign overseas posts to people whose technical skills are matched or exceeded by their cross-cultural skills; and third, they recognize that repatriation is a time of upheaval for most expats and they use a variety of programs to help their people readjust.

In summary, I would say that all of the articles in this book are written by professors drawn from universities and specialists from organizations who work in interdisciplinary fields, including the Department of Organizational Behavior at London Business School; the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia;

Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs in New York City; International Management at Brigham University; a managing director at the Center for Global Assignments; a research institute and consulting firm; the University of Colorado at Boulder, and so on. All of the writers use case studies and they all focus on leadership in project management across cultures. This book shows how conflict in a team can be overcome where cultural norms and the employee's behavior can differ widely. This book is suitable for university teaching and for use in organizations who wish to manage human resources in diverse teams and in project management. In my opinion, the most important and up-to-date article is **Rules for Managing Global Innovation**. Finally, the case studies in this book will help its readers to understand this difficult and stimulating subject, and will help them to benefit from implementing change in their organizations.