

## Book Review

### **Managing Cultural Differences**

Moran, R.T., Abramson, N.R. & Moran, S.V. (2014)  
9th ed., 592p. Oxon, UK; New York, USA: Routledge  
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Culture, cultural differences, corporate management and leadership are the main dimensions developed in this book. To enable the reader to gain a proper understanding of these complex topics, sixteen chapters have been strategically laid out. The first nine chapters deal with the interpretation or understanding of culture, and the similarities and differences between cultures. The remaining seven chapters focus on practicality and applications of the previous chapters in various contexts. The book always follows a methodical flow in the organization of the writing by providing, for each chapters, learning objectives, details of the content, sharing of experiences and a conclusion with few reflective questions. The book starts with a 'foreword' which sets out how the authors' journey began and highlights the goals and importance of their book. Given that the main goal of the book is to reduce cross cultural misunderstanding, the authors also emphasize on various aspects of culture. Issues such as culture leverage powers, the need to understand culture, the influence on society are covered. The intended readership extends beyond leaders and managers of companies to travelers as well. This book has the advantage of being very specific and detailed, so anyone in a cross cultural context can benefit from it too. The following review will summarize the pivotal chapters, namely, chapters one to nine. Chapters ten to sixteen focus on suggestions concerning doing business with people from various part of the world. Those regions are divided as follows: Middle East, Central and South America, East Asia, South and Southeast Asia and Australia, Europe, Africa and Canada and the U.S.

The first chapter, 'Global leaders, culture, and a changing world', being introductory, constitutes an immersion into the concept of culture. The authors constructively raise the issue of identity, xenophobia and the influences from various systems contributing to the understanding or lack of understanding between cultures. This chapter facilitates understanding on the meaning of culture through key terminologies and various notions such as sense of self and space, communication and languages, dress code and appearance, food and eating habits, time and time consciousness, relationships, values and norms, attitudes and beliefs, mental process and learning, and finally, work habits and practices. Transformations, changes, alterations, deviations from globalization have modified the way people live and work today, thus there are new attributes that leaders must have in today's competitive environment.

In the second chapter, 'Global leaders and intercultural communication', the authors reveal facts and data related to culture and communication, which can be verbal and / or non-

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verbal. It is interesting to read what it takes for a person to successfully be understood and avoid misunderstanding. The communication process and its variable are clearly detailed in the various sub-sections of the chapter. The classic communication flow is a sender transmitting a message to the receiver, but what if cultural parameters were involved in the process? Coding, decoding and encoding are then also part of the process which increases the risk of misinterpretation and conflict. This chapter presents models and key information to ensure successful exchange between different cultures or among individuals.

'Negotiating long term for mutual benefit', title of the third chapter, contains frameworks, data and research models related to negotiation. Skills and competencies, key elements to ensure a good negotiation, are required to be effective and those attributes are described and explained by the authors through adequate examples and definitions. The cultural aspect plays an important role in avoiding failure and conflict, and this is the reason why certain elements from the previous chapters are reiterated and reinforced. The authors also give suggestions on how to gauge the likelihood of cultural conflicts and address such occurrences.

The fourth chapter, 'Global leaders learning from others and change', discusses the importance of the exchanges between individuals. The way a company can progress and develop nationally may be by having international connections, and consequently, new or innovative solutions to problems may be necessary. How can practices from a different country help a company? Companies can make use of knowledge that is continuously being revised and updated, globally. In this chapter, Uppsala's Theory of Internationalization and also Barlett, Ghoshal and Breamish's research work are described to help the reader identify the importance of culture at the individual level and at the corporation level. Stereotypes, expectations, perceptions and adaptations vary with people thus there is a major need to explain how they can contribute and not interfere with the growth of either an individual or a company.

In this chapter, 'Women leaders in global business', the gaps between genders and inequalities are revealed, exposed and illustrated with facts and data. Credibility, stereotypes, believes from a country to another differ; it is therefore pertinent that the place and role of a woman at the management level is discussed. Is a company willing to send a female staff to Emirates Countries or South America knowing that this staff will have to face more challenges than a male colleague? Is it fair, correct, intelligent or sensitive? The situations and examples tackled in this chapter can help any company deal with these kinds of scenario.

In the sixth chapter, 'Motivating the global workforce: the case for diversity and inclusion', the notion of diversity, at different levels, is addressed. Knowing information about others, explicit or tacit, will help in solving problem, a skill recognized as the most important in today's global world market.  $D+I=P$  means 'Differentiation + Integration = Performance' or the ability to increase performance through individuals is another aspect highlighted in this chapter. The authors link the topics from previous chapters to 'leadership', which is critically examined.

'Global leaders set strategies for emerging markets', the seventh chapter, covers new aspects of a leader's attributes: setting a strategic plan and KSF (Key Success Factors), being able to do industry and competitive analysis and able to identify needed resources to fulfil the vision and mission of the company are examples of needs developed by the authors. Interestingly, the notion of ethics, cognitive biasness and psychological perspectives are explained in this part. It helps the reader understand new needs that can be sensitive in a collaboration process.

Once a staff is sent to a different location, whether within the country or abroad, he or she goes through various phases. 'Managing global transitions and relocations', the eighth

chapter, focuses on the process from pre-departure to return. Companies will tend to pay less attentions at the final phase of the process, taking for granted that coming back means back to normal or back to how it was before leaving. Actually, individuals may need time to readapt to their environment, and some may not be able to as they have been too changed during their stay oversea. Acculturation, culture lag, culture shock, future shock, organization shock, role shock and re-entry shock are various psychological areas identified and described in this chapter.

The ninth chapter, 'Global teams and global leadership' focuses on more attributes required for a leader at the international level. Synergies and characterizations, commitment, teamwork and work performance, team culture, human factor are other key qualities of a global leader. The Cohen and Bradford model or Moran and Riesenberger model are frameworks used in leadership. They are related to performance and its correlation with the organization system. The authors use key references, they explain the models and content to help the reader acquire the knowledge needed to excel in today's global market and cross cultural situations.

In conclusion, it can be said that this book has the advantage of being very complete. Indeed, it can be used in various domains such as research, education, training and development, management and leadership but also travelling preparations. This book can provide information such as data about society, corporations and multi-nationals; cultural practices and its implications and limitations; tools to structure a training programme for leaders and managers; cultural information to prepare an individual before an intercultural experience. Furthermore, the reader can find research models of intercultural management and examples that have been tried or tested among institutions and people, albeit from various countries. In light of its various benefits, this book is highly recommended as a reference for any reader interested in cross culture, leadership or management of individuals and multi-nationals.