

The importance of global leadership and understanding other cultures

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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Introduction It has been d with great concern that national culture has had tremendous impact on the vision and interpretation of the world around us particularly in global leadership. Large corporations today seek to have executives with global mindsets and close-cultural leadership skills because of the diverse differences in culture in various parts of the world (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House 2006, p. 68). This paper seeks to clarify on the importance of executing a global mindset and close-cultural abilities in management and leadership for large multinational corporations. I worked for an environmental protection corporation in Brazil as a financial manager four years ago. We had an American operations manager who stayed shortly and fired because he wasn't able to adapt to our culture. All he wanted was to incorporate the American culture in our industry which merely failed to work. Typically in Brazil, due to our high in-group collectivism, managers dislike leaders who are individualistic, independent, and autonomous, and these were the characteristics of the American manager. We came into conclusion that we should have managers with global mindset and diverse cross-cultural understanding. Firing managers wasn't the best thing to do but to find ways of letting them learn our culture and adapt to it. The essence of developing global leadership is the ability to effectively influence people who aren't like the leader and come from different cultures. Global leaders need a global mindset to succeed and to tolerate high level of ambiguity (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House 2006, p. 67).. A global mindset helps managers know how to bridge the gap between two cultures and can be able to blend into any cultural setting and work effectively. This is the reason why large

corporations need executives with global mindsets and cross-cultural leadership abilities. Given that there are diverse cultural differences in different countries, an American manager must do things differently in different countries in terms of management. For instance, an American manager has to make sure that his/her actions and decisions are not viewed as individualistic in Brazil. This is because in Brazil unlike in America, leaders who take self-governing decisions and who act alone without engaging the group are never preferred. Consequently, an American manager must ensure that the group feels involved in making decisions and that others' views are taken into consideration. Moreover, an American manager working in France must tone down the personal side of relationships and be business oriented. He/she must be more careful and be selective in contacting other executives according to what is more valued in France which isn't the case with U. S. Additionally, an American working in Egypt may find that what he regards as a normal informal leadership style may be seen as powerless and unworthy of a leader in Egypt (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House 2006, p. 80). The manager therefore needs to change and be seen as deserving of his leadership status and role to build and maintain group harmony. The manager needs to pay his/her respects and call on the key executives in the organization of Egyptians and start the process of building personal relationships, which is not the case with the American culture. These attributes therefore imply that whatever leads to success in U. S. does not necessarily lead to success in the other countries Egyptian managers tend to have an elitist, transcendent perception of leaders as they view them as a distinct category. They want the leaders to be unique, individualistic,

superior, and class-conscious. On the other hand, Americans have a more benign and simplistic view on their leaders. They simply regard them as successful people but not extraordinary ones or superhuman and breed apart. There is quite a number of ways corporations can enhance their pool of global leaders. First, they can make a large volume of information on global issues and cross-cultural reports readily available to their managers (Mobley 2010). This can be achieved through the use of special issues of journals and use of software packages such as multimedia packages. Secondly, formal education and training can also be useful in developing global leaders. Thirdly, work experience and international assignment has been the most successful and effective method of developing global leadership capabilities (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House 2006, p. 81). However, there are a number of challenges facing the efforts to develop global mindset and cross-cultural leaders. Tolerance and ambiguity is an important attribute of a global leader (Goldsmith 2003). Unfortunately, this is typically a very uncomfortable position for many people and very few engage in learning it because it requires learning new ideas quickly and letting go of what one has already learned. Moreover, cultural adaptability (a manager's ability to understand other cultures and to behave in a way that helps to pursue goals and build steadfast and positive relations with local citizens) is not easy to many people because it may bring into question one's own identity (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House 2006, p. 85).. Conclusion Managers with a global mindset and cross-cultural understanding are highly desirable to great international corporations. The essence of global leadership is the ability to effectively and efficiently influence people who are

different from the leader and who come from different cultural backgrounds (Cyitkovich & Gundling 2011). In order to succeed, global leaders need to have a global mindset, tolerate all levels of ambiguity, and execute cultural adaptability and flexibility. References Javidan, M., Dorfman, W., Luque, M., & House, J. (2006). In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE. *Academy of Management Perspective* academic journal ; Feb2006, Vol. 20 Issue 1, p67-85 Mobley, W. (2010). *Advances in global leadership*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited Press. Goldsmith, M. (2003). *Global leadership: the next generation*. London: FT/Prentice Hall Press. Cyitkovich, K. & Gundling, E. (2011). *What is global leadership? : 10 key behaviors that define great global leaders*. Boston: Intercultural Press.