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Management Across Cultures

The third edition of this popular textbook has been revised and updated throughout to explore the latest approaches to cross-cultural management, presenting strategies and tactics for managing international assignments and global teams. With a clear emphasis on learning and development, this new edition introduces a global management model, along with enhanced "Applications" and "Manager's Notebooks," to encourage students to acquire skills in multicultural competence that will be highly valued by their future employers. These skills have never been as important as now, in a world where, increasingly, all managers are global managers and where management practices and processes can differ significantly across national and regional boundaries. This book is suitable for students taking courses on international management, as well as those on executive training programs.

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Management Across Cultures

Developing Global Competencies

THIRD EDITION

Richard M. Steers
Luciara Nardon
Carlos J. Sanchez-Runde

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Guided tour

Learning strategy for book

The learning strategy for this book is organized around a 3-stage developmental process:

Global challenges

Stage I begins our analysis by discussing both the challenges facing managers and how various managerial roles and responsibilities can often differ across cultural and organizational boundaries.

Global understanding

Stage II focuses on developing a deeper awareness and critical analysis of the complex cultural, organizational, and situational contexts in which global managers increasingly find themselves.

Global management

Stage III then builds on this foundation to focus on developing specific multicultural skills managers can use to survive and succeed in today's competitive global environment.

Recognize global challenges:

1. Management across cultures: an introduction
2. Global managers: challenges and responsibilities (with global management model)

Develop global understanding:

3. Cultural environments (including map of cultural environment and Appendix summarizing various models of national cultures)
4. Organizational environments (including map of organizational environment)

Develop global management skills:

5. Communicating across cultures
6. Leading global organizations
7. Negotiating global partnerships
8. Managing ethical conflicts
9. Managing work and motivation
10. Managing global teams
11. Managing global assignments
12. Lessons learned

A **global management model** is introduced early in the text to guide in the development of critical analysis skills as the book progresses.

Learning strategy for chapters

Each chapter also follows a learning strategy aimed at building bridges between theory and practice using a range of real-world examples, applications, discussion questions, and cases.

Chapter introduction

- Management challenge
- Chapter outline

Chapter content

- Concepts, research, and examples
- Applications and questions
- Manager's notebook: - summary points and action strategies

Chapter review

- Key terms
- Discussion questions
- Case study

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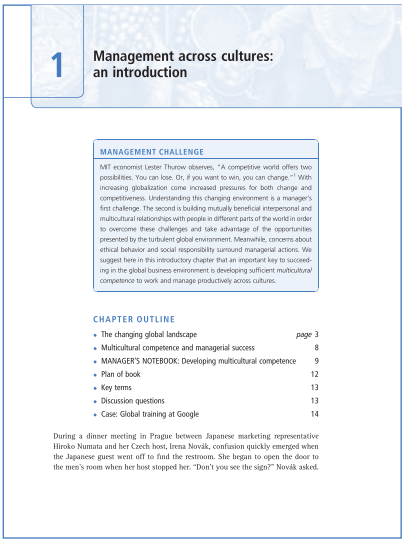
Chapter introduction

Each chapter begins by highlighting the **management challenges** that serve as the basis for the chapter. **Chapter outlines** organize the text.



1 Management across cultures: an introduction

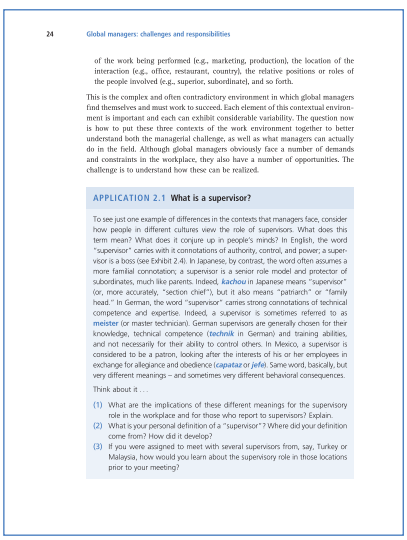
MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

MIT economist Lester Thurow observes, "A competitive world offers two possibilities. You can lose. Or, if you want to win, you can change."[1] With increasing globalization come increased pressures for both change and competitiveness. Understanding this changing environment is a manager's first challenge. The second is building mutually beneficial interpersonal and multicultural relationships with people in different parts of the world in order to overcome these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the turbulent global environment. Meanwhile, concerns about ethical behavior and social responsibility surround managerial actions. We suggest here in this introductory chapter that an important key to succeeding in the global business environment is developing sufficient multicultural competence to work and manage productively across cultures.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The changing global landscape *page* 3
- Multicultural competence and managerial success 8
- MANAGER'S NOTEBOOK: Developing multicultural competence 9
- Plan of book 12
- Key terms 13
- Discussion questions 13
- Case: Global training at Google 14

During a dinner meeting in Prague between Japanese marketing representative Hiroko Numata and her Czech host, Irena Novák, confusion quickly emerged when the Japanese guest went off to find the restroom. She began to open the door to the men's room when her host stopped her. "Don't you see the sign?" Novák asked.



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of the work being performed (e.g., marketing, production), the location of the interaction (e.g., office, restaurant, country), the relative positions or roles of the people involved (e.g., superior, subordinate), and so forth.

This is the complex and often contradictory environment in which global managers find themselves and must work to succeed. Each element of this contextual environment is important and each can exhibit considerable variability. The question now is how to put these three contexts of the work environment together to better understand both the managerial challenge, as well as what managers can actually do in the field. Although global managers obviously face a number of demands and constraints in the workplace, they also have a number of opportunities. The challenge is to understand how these can be realized.

APPLICATION 2.1 What is a supervisor?

To see just one example of differences in the contexts that managers face, consider how people in different cultures view the role of supervisors. What does this term mean? What does it conjure up in people's minds? In English, the word "supervisor" carries with it connotations of authority, control, and power; a supervisor is a boss (see Exhibit 2.4). In Japanese, by contrast, the word often assumes a more familial connotation; a supervisor is a senior role model and protector of subordinates, much like parents. Indeed, *kachou* in Japanese means "supervisor" (or, more accurately, "section chief"), but it also means "patriarch" or "family head." In German, the word "supervisor" carries strong connotations of technical competence and expertise. Indeed, a supervisor is sometimes referred to as **meister** (or master technician). German supervisors are generally chosen for their knowledge, technical competence (*technik* in German) and training abilities, and not necessarily for their ability to control others. In Mexico, a supervisor is considered to be a patron, looking after the interests of his or her employees in exchange for allegiance and obedience (*capataz* or *jefe*). Same word, basically, but very different meanings – and sometimes very different behavioral consequences.

Think about it . . .

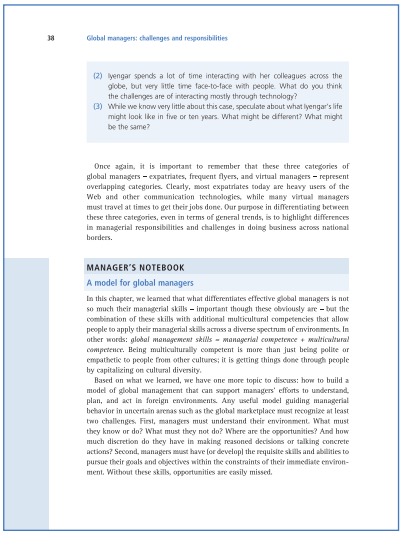
(1) What are the implications of these different meanings for the supervisory role in the workplace and for those who report to supervisors? Explain.
(2) What is your personal definition of a "supervisor"? Where did your definition come from? How did it develop?
(3) If you were assigned to meet with several supervisors from, say, Turkey or Malaysia, how would you learn about the supervisory role in those locations prior to your meeting?

Chapter content

The **text** brings together what we currently know—and, in some cases, what we don't know—about the problems global managers may face in the field and the global skills they require to survive and succeed. These materials are based on current theory and research.

Applications are interspersed throughout each chapter to illustrate how concepts under study apply in practice. Application questions encourage students to develop an understanding of what managers did in particular situations and how they might have done it better.

Manager's notebooks summarize chapter lessons and their implications for managerial action.



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(2) Iyengar spends a lot of time interacting with her colleagues across the globe, but very little time face-to-face with people. What do you think the challenges are of interacting mostly through technology?
(3) While we know very little about this case, speculate about what Iyengar's life might look like in five or ten years. What might be different? What might be the same?

Once again, it is important to remember that these three categories of global managers – expatriates, frequent flyers, and virtual managers – represent overlapping categories. Clearly, most expatriates today are heavy users of the Web and other communication technologies, while many virtual managers must travel at times to get their jobs done. Our purpose in differentiating between these three categories, even in terms of general trends, is to highlight differences in managerial responsibilities and challenges in doing business across national borders.

MANAGER'S NOTEBOOK

A model for global managers

In this chapter, we learned that what differentiates effective global managers is not so much their managerial skills – important though these obviously are – but the combination of these skills with additional multicultural competencies that allow people to apply their managerial skills across a diverse spectrum of environments. In other words: *global management skills = managerial competence + multicultural competence*. Being multiculturally competent is more than just being polite or empathetic to people from other cultures; it is getting things done through people by capitalizing on cultural diversity.

Based on what we learned, we have one more topic to discuss: how to build a model of global management that can support managers' efforts to understand, plan, and act in foreign environments. Any useful model guiding managerial behavior in uncertain arenas such as the global marketplace must recognize at least two challenges. First, managers must understand their environment. What must they know or do? What must they not do? Where are the opportunities? And how much discretion do they have in making reasoned decisions or talking concrete actions? Second, managers must have (or develop) the requisite skills and abilities to pursue their goals and objectives within the constraints of their immediate environment. Without these skills, opportunities are easily missed.

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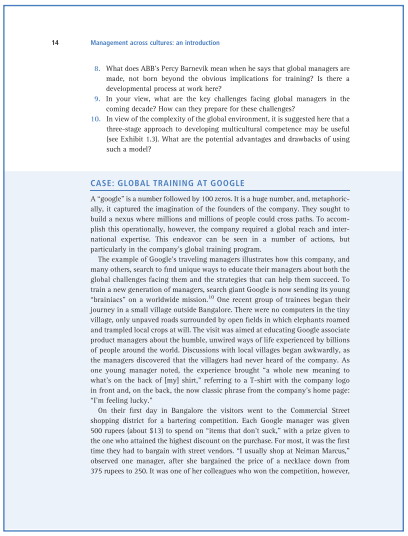

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8. What does ABB's Percy Barnevik mean when he says that global managers are made, not born beyond the obvious implications for training? Is there a developmental process at work here?
9. In your view, what are the key challenges facing global managers in the coming decade? How can they prepare for these challenges?
10. In view of the complexity of the global environment, it is suggested here that a three-stage approach to developing multicultural competence may be useful (see Exhibit 1.3). What are the potential advantages and drawbacks of using such a model?

CASE: GLOBAL TRAINING AT GOOGLE

A "google" is a number followed by 100 zeros. It is a huge number, and, metaphorically, it captured the imagination of the founders of the company. They sought to build a nexus where millions and millions of people could cross paths. To accomplish this operationally, however, the company required a global reach and international expertise. This endeavor can be seen in a number of actions, but particularly in the company's global training program.

The example of Google's traveling managers illustrates how this company, and many others, search to find unique ways to educate their managers about both the global challenges facing them and the strategies that can help them succeed. To train a new generation of managers, search giant Google is now sending its young "brainiacs" on a worldwide mission.[10] One recent group of trainees began their journey in a small village outside Bangalore. There were no computers in the tiny village, only unpaved roads surrounded by open fields in which elephants roamed and trampled local crops at will. The visit was aimed at educating Google associate product managers about the humble, unwired ways of life experienced by billions of people around the world. Discussions with local villages began awkwardly, as the managers discovered that the villagers had never heard of the company. As one young manager noted, the experience brought "a whole new meaning to what's on the back of [my] shirt," referring to a T-shirt with the company logo in front and, on the back, the now classic phrase from the company's home page: "I'm feeling lucky."

On their first day in Bangalore the visitors went to the Commercial Street shopping district for a bartering competition. Each Google manager was given 500 rupees (about $13) to spend on "items that don't suck," with a prize given to the one who attained the highest discount on the purchase. For most, it was the first time they had to bargain with street vendors. "I usually shop at Neiman Marcus," observed one manager, after she bargained the price of a necklace down from 375 rupees to 250. It was one of her colleagues who won the competition, however,

Chapter review

Key terms highlight chapter concepts for purposes of review, while **discussion questions** probe both the conceptual and managerial implications of the materials under study.

Each chapter concludes with a **case study** for applying the problem-solving skills learned.

Learning strategy online

Instructors can access a comprehensive set of 600 downloadable **PowerPoint slides** online at www.cambridge.org/steers. These slides are designed to review the materials covered in each chapter, including key concepts, chapter applications, manager's notebooks, end-of-chapter discussion questions, and cases.

An online **instructional resources package** is also available to instructors that includes suggestions for use of in-text materials and PowerPoint slides; web links to author-recommended videos, cases, exercises, and simulations; team problem-solving activities; and supplemental downloadable global management cases and exercises by the authors.

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Preface

> This is a fantastic time to be entering the business world, because business is going to change more in the next 10 years than it has in the last 50.
>
> Bill Gates, Founder, Microsoft[1]

Success in the global economy requires a number of ingredients, including innovative ideas and products, access to raw materials and competitive labor, savvy marketing strategies, solid financing, sustainable supply chains, and predictable logistical support. The central driver in this endeavor, however, is the manager – who is perpetually caught in the middle. Indeed, no one ever said being a manager was easy, but it seems to get more difficult with each passing year. As competitive pressures increase across most industries and services, so too do the pressures on managers to deliver results. Succeeding against the odds often catapults a manager into the higher echelons of the organization, with a concomitant increase in personal rewards. Failure to deliver often slows one's career advancement, though, if it doesn't stop it altogether. The stakes are very high for managers and organizations alike.

With this in mind, what do managers need to know to survive and succeed in this complex and turbulent environment? Certainly, they need to understand both micro- and macroeconomics. They need to understand the fundamentals of business practices, including strategy, marketing, operations and logistics, finance, and accounting. They also need to understand issues such as outsourcing, political risk, legal institutions, and the application of emerging technologies to organizational operations. In addition to this knowledge, however, managers must understand how to work with other people and organizations around the world to get their jobs done. We refer to this as *multicultural competence*, and it is the focus of this book.

This book is aimed at managers from around the world. It is not intended to be a North American book, a European book, a Latin American book, and so forth. Rather, it aims to explore managerial processes and practices from the standpoint of managers from all regions of the globe – China and Brazil, India and Germany, Australia and Singapore – as they pursue their goals and objectives in the field. This is done in the belief that the fundamental managerial role around the world is a relative constant, even though the details and specifics of managerial cognitions and actions may often vary – sometimes significantly – across cultures. Taken together, our goal in this book is to help managers develop an enhanced behavioral

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repertoire of cross-cultural management skills that can be used in a timely fashion when they are confronted with challenging and at times confusing situations. It is our hope that future managers, by better understanding cultural realities on the ground, and then using this understanding to develop improved coping strategies, will succeed when many of their predecessors did not.

As a result, this book focuses on developing a deeper understanding of how management practices and processes can often differ around the world, and why. It draws heavily on recent research in cultural anthropology, psychology, economics, and management as it relates to how managers structure their enterprises and pursue the day-to-day work necessary to make a venture succeed. It emphasizes both differences and similarities across cultures, since we believe that this approach mirrors reality. It attempts to explore the psychological underpinnings that help shape the attitudes and behaviors of managers, as well as their approaches to people from other regions of the world. Most of all, though, this book is about learning. It introduces a *global management model* early in the text to serve as a guide in the intellectual and practical development of managers seeking global experience. Further, it assumes a lifelong learning approach to global encounters, managerial performance, and career success.

Throughout this book, our emphasis is on critical analysis, not drawing arbitrary conclusions or selecting favorites. This is done in the belief that successful global managers will focus more on understanding and flexibility than evaluation and dogmatism. This understanding can facilitate a manager's ability both to prepare and to act in ways that are more in tune with local environments. As a result, managers who are better prepared for future events are more likely to succeed – full stop. By integrating these two perspectives – explorations into the cultural drivers underlying managerial action and the common management strategies used in the field – it is our intention to present a more process-oriented look at global managers at work.

The title of this book reflects the twin goals in writing it. First, we wanted to examine how management practices and processes can frequently differ – often significantly – across national and regional boundaries. Managers in different cultures often see their roles and responsibilities in different ways. They often organize themselves and make decisions differently. They often communicate, negotiate, and motivate employees in different ways. Understanding these differences is the first step in developing global management capabilities. Second, we wanted to identify and discuss realistic strategies and tactics that can be used by global managers as they work to succeed across cultures. In other words, we wanted to explore how people can work and manage across cultures – and how they can overcome many of the hurdles along the way. We see these two goals as not just mutually compatible but indispensable for meeting the business challenges ahead.

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Like most authors who seek an interested audience, we wrote this book primarily to express our own views, ideas, and frustrations. As both teachers and researchers in the field, we have grown increasingly impatient with books in this area that seem to aim somewhat below the readers' intelligence in the presentation of materials. In our view, managers and would-be managers alike are intelligent consumers of behavioral information. To do their jobs better, they seek useful information and dialogue about the uncertain environments in which they work; they are not seeking unwarranted or simplistic conclusions or narrow rulebooks. Moreover, in our view, managers are looking for learning strategies, not prescriptions, and understand that becoming a global manager is a long-term pursuit – a marathon, not a sprint.

We have likewise been dismayed seeing books that assume one worldview, whether it is British, Chinese, American, French, or whatever, in interpreting both global business challenges and managerial behavior. Instead, we have tried diligently to cast our net a bit wider and incorporate divergent viewpoints when exploring various topics, such as communication, negotiation, and leadership. For example, asking how Chinese or Indian management practices differ from Australian or Canadian practices assumes a largely Western bias as a starting point: "How are *they* different from us?" Instead, why not ask a simpler and more useful question, to find out how Chinese, Indian, Australian, and Canadian management styles in general differ: "How are we *all* different from one another?" Moreover, we might add a further, also useful, question concerning managerial similarities across cultures: "How are we *all* similar to each other?" To achieve this end, we have resisted a one-size-fits-all approach to management, locally or globally, in the belief that such an approach limits both understanding and success in the field. Rather, our goal here is to develop multicultural competence through the development of learning strategies in which managers can draw on their own personal experiences, combined with outside information such as that provided in this book and elsewhere, to develop cross-cultural understanding and theories-in-use that can guide them in the pursuit of their managerial activities.

In writing this book, we were also able to draw on our research and teaching experiences in various countries and regions of the world, including Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, and Uruguay. In doing so, we learned from our colleagues and students in various parts of the world, and we believe that these experiences have made this a better book than it might otherwise have been. Our aim here is not to write a bias-free book, as we believe this would have been an impossible task. Indeed, the decision to write this book in English, largely for reasons of audience, market, and personal competence, does itself introduce some bias into the end result. Rather, our intent was to write a book that simultaneously

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reflects differing national, cultural, and personal viewpoints, in which biases are identified and discussed openly instead of being hidden or rationalized. As a result, this book contains few certainties and many contradictions, reflecting our views on the life of global managers.

Few projects of this magnitude can be successful without the support of families. This is especially true in our case, with all three of our families joining together to help make this project a reality. In particular, Richard would like to thank the three generations of women who surround and support him: Sheila, Kathleen, and Allison; Luciara would like to thank her mother, Jussara, for her unconditional support, and her son, Caio, for his inspiration; and Carlos would like to thank his wife, Carol, and daughters, Clara and Isabel, for their continued support and encouragement. Throughout, our families have been there for us in every way possible, and for this we are grateful.

Any successful book is a joint venture between authors, instructors, students, and publishers. In this regard, we were fortunate to have received useful comments from instructors and outside reviewers alike aimed at making this edition superior to the last. Student comments, both in our own classes and those of others, have also helped us improve on the first edition. Finally, we are indebted to the people at Cambridge University Press for their help and support throughout the revision and production process. They lived up to their reputation as a first-class group of people to work with. In particular, we wish to thank Paula Parish, Raihanah Begum, and Jo Lane for their advice, patience, and support through the project. We are indebted to them all.

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NOTE

1. J. D. Meier, "Lessons learned from Bill Gates," sourcesofinsight.com, 2013.

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