



Management Across Cultures

Challenges, Strategies, and Skills

Fourth edition

In today's highly competitive global economy, it is said that most managers are – or soon will be – *global* managers. They may work in their home country, but they are still influenced by global events and have to manage a diverse workforce. As such, they need both multicultural competence and global management skills to work and manage successfully across cultures.

This new edition pairs a richly illustrated text with management applications, key concepts, discussion questions, and web-based cases and exercises aimed at current and aspiring managers. Each chapter is accompanied by a Manager's Notebook, highlighting field strategies and encouraging students to develop multicultural competence that will be highly valued by future employers.

Exploring the challenges and opportunities facing global managers, the authors examine the global manager's cultural, organizational, and managerial environments and help the reader to develop a range of skills, from communication and leadership to negotiation and global team management.

This text is designed for courses in International Management, Cross-Cultural Management, and International HRM at advanced undergraduate, Master's, and MBA levels.

Richard M. Steers is the Kazumitsu Shiomi Professor of Management and former Vice Provost for International Affairs at the University of Oregon, USA. A past President and Fellow of the Academy of Management, he has authored over two dozen books and numerous research articles on topics ranging from employee motivation and organizational behavior to cross-cultural management. He served as senior editor for the *Journal of World Business* and co-editor of *The Global Mindset* (2007) and the *Cambridge Handbook of Culture, Organization, and Work* (2009). He has lectured extensively and served as a visiting professor at Oxford University, Erasmus University, Nyenrode Business University, Hanyang University, Yonsei University, University of California, Irvine, and the University of Cape Town.

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There has never been a time in the history of the world when cross-cultural understanding and skills were more important or more necessary. *Management Across Cultures* is written by two of the luminaries of the field and could not be a better guide for managing in a global economy.

Nancy Adler, *S. Bronfman Chair in Management*
McGill University, Canada

It is a truism that there is no one theory of management that fits all situations. The manager of today needs critical analytical skills that take into consideration diverse operating environments and cultural differences. This book provides a spectrum of cultural perspectives in which contradictions are discussed rather than rationalized, to emphasize the need for flexibility, in contrast to reliance on traditional axioms.

Soon Ang, *Goh Tjoel Kok Chair and Professor of Management*,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Management Across Cultures is a must read for any current or aspiring leader. The days when leaders could just think about domestic business are gone. Only those who understand and have the skills to manage across cultures have any hope of success. As a consequence, this book is one they should read and have on their desk for frequent reference.

Stewart Black, *Professor of Global Leadership and Strategy*,
INSEAD, France

Steers and Osland are rock stars of research and teaching on global management. A veritable dream team with years of experience in writing texts, they joined forces for the latest edition of *Management Across Cultures* and the result is simply superb! I give this book my highest possible recommendation.

Nakiye Boyacigiller, *Emerita Professor and former dean*,
Sabanci University, Turkey;
Past President of Academy of International Business

In this fourth edition, the authors have brought all their expertise from their distinguished careers and created a masterpiece of a textbook. I am especially impressed with its strong focus on cross-cultural skill-building in addition to knowledge conveyance and case analysis. For any instructor who teaches an international management course that focuses on developing skills in addition to imparting knowledge, this book is the entire package.

Mark Mendenhall,
J. Burton Frierson Chair of Excellence in Business Leadership,
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, USA

With theoretically sophisticated content and cutting-edge management applications, this is likely the best cross-cultural management textbook on the market. With its interdisciplinary focus, a wealth of real-life examples, captivating cases and practical exercises, the book is timely, relevant, and engaging for both novice and expert audiences.

Betina Szkudlarek, *Associate Professor of Management*,
University of Sydney, Australia

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Richard M. Steers
Joyce S. Osland



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Cases, Exercises, and Inventories

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2. Anna Håkansson – from Sweden to Bahrain
3. Can European-style Codetermination Be Exported?
4. Samsung's Management Challenge in Mexico
5. Building Relationships at a Japanese *Kaiseki*
6. Leadership Succession at Alibaba, China
7. The World Runs on Batteries, Congo
8. Negotiating Energy Contracts in Nigeria
9. Building Global Teams at L'Oréal, France
10. Living the Dream in Hong Kong
11. Flexible Security in the French Workplace
12. Managing the Daichi Sankyo-Ranbaxy Partnership, India
13. Women, Work, and Economic Security in Germany
14. Playing Hide and SEEK, Australia and China
15. Developing Local Communities at Dilmah Tea, Sri Lanka
16. Perils of Being a Junior Manager, Japan and USA
17. The Rise and Fall of Carlos Ghosn
18. Garment Manufacturing in Bangladesh
19. Working with Virtual Partners, Netherlands and Argentina
20. Strategic Leadership at Toyota and Hyundai

Exercises

1. Mapping the Multicultural Classroom into Learning Teams
2. Cultural Preferences Baseline and Teamwork Implications
3. The Donor Services Role Play
4. Decision-making and Organizational Models

5. Mastering Direct and Indirect Communication
6. The Perfect Square
7. Global Business Code of Ethics
8. Growers versus Agribusiness
9. The Inner-outer Circle
10. The Expatriate Interview

Inventories

Information regarding third-party inventories is available on the instructor's website.

- **Diversity Icebreakers.** Incorporates a questionnaire assessing individual preferences for interaction, communication, and problem-solving styles with a set of unique group processes to develop a shared understanding of how to capitalize on group diversity. Available in nineteen languages.
- **GlobeSmart Profile.** An online inventory to assess and compare an individual's preferred work style across five cultural dimensions, and how this profile compares with people from other cultures, countries, colleagues, and teams. Available in thirteen languages.
- **Intercultural Effectiveness Scale.** An online inventory to assess an individual's global management skills for interacting with people from other cultures. Dimensions include continuous learning, interpersonal engagement, and hardiness. Includes pre- and post-measurements for changes in multicultural competence. Available in seven languages.



Preface

Success in the global economy requires a number of ingredients, including innovative ideas and products, cutting-edge technologies, access to raw materials and competitive labor, solid financing, savvy marketing strategies, and sustainable supply chains. The central driver in this complex endeavor, however, is the manager – who is perpetually caught in the middle of these various forces. 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 an organization, with a concomitant increase in personal rewards. Failure to deliver, however, often slows one's career advancement if it doesn't stop it altogether. The stakes are very high for managers and organizations alike.

In this pursuit, the difference between winners and losers is often the ability of managers both to prepare for upcoming challenges and opportunities and to recognize such opportunities when they emerge. Seeing opportunities for the future without adequate preparation or preparing for the future without adequate study of emerging opportunities are both recipes for finishing in second or third place.

Rationale for this Book

With this in mind, a logical question emerges: *What do managers need to know to survive and succeed in today's complex and turbulent global business environment?* Certainly, they need the business skills mentioned above, but there is something else. Managers must understand how to work with other people and organizations around the world to get the jobs done. They need a capacity to build working relationships that facilitate mutual benefit. We refer to this quality as *multicultural competence*, and it is the focus of this book.

To develop multicultural competence, managers must improve their proficiencies in working across cultures, because this is where most future threats and opportunities will be found. They must develop an ability to distinguish between cultural differences and similarities across borders, as well as differences within single countries. They must develop an ability to tease out the subtle contradictions and dualities that are rooted in various cultures, and accept that easy answers may not

exist. They must also develop an ability to adapt traditional management skills, such as leadership, negotiation, and communication, to fit cross-cultural or multicultural venues. We refer to these as *global management skills*, and herein lies the essence of effective global management.

This book is aimed at managers from around the world. 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, situations, and actions may often vary – sometimes significantly – across cultures. Our goal in this book is to help managers develop an enhanced behavioral 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, by better understanding cultural realities on the ground and then using this understanding to develop improved coping strategies, future managers will succeed where many of their predecessors did not.

We draw heavily in this book on recent research in cultural anthropology, psychology, economics, and management as they relate to how managers structure their enterprises and pursue the day-to-day work necessary to make a venture succeed. We further emphasize differences and similarities across cultures, since we believe that this approach mirrors reality. We 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, we focus on learning and providing a useful guide to both the intellectual and the practical development of managers seeking global experience.

Our aim here was not to write a bias-free volume, 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 learning process. Rather, our intent was to write a book that simultaneously 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.

Learning Strategy

Throughout this book, our emphasis is on developing critical analysis skills, 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. Such understanding can facilitate a manager's ability to prepare and 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 – period. By integrating these two perspectives – explorations into both the cultural drivers underlying managerial action and common management strategies used in the field – it is our intention to present a more process-oriented look at global managers at work.

To accomplish this, we propose a *three-stage learning strategy* to guide managers in their developmental activities:

- **Stage 1.** This strategy begins in Chapter 1 with an exploration of the challenges and opportunities facing global managers. Here we examine the changing nature of global business and global managers. Basic global business understanding represents the foundation upon which management development is built. Various types of global managers are reviewed. Finally, we introduce the twin concepts of multicultural competence and global management skills that form the basis for the remainder of the book.
- **Stage 2.** In Chapters 2–4, we explore the global manager's workplace, which incorporates three interrelated parts: the cultural, organizational, and managerial environments. Added to this is the need to recognize a variety of situational contingencies or context variables that serve to make virtually any global work environment unique.
- **Stage 3.** Finally, in Chapters 5–10, we explore six critical global management skills that are important for interpersonal, as well as managerial, success in the global workplace. These are cross-cultural communication, global leadership, managerial ethics, global partnerships, global teams, and global assignments. Chapter 11 then summarizes what has been learned throughout the book and discusses where we go from here. What are the future challenges facing global managers?

Each chapter begins with clear learning objectives, and concludes with a Manager's Notebook that highlights specific strategies for successful skill development and implementation and a Chapter Review section that includes a summary, key concepts, and discussion questions. Management applications are incorporated into each chapter to illustrate how concepts work in the field. Cases, exercises, and video clips are available on a companion website for use with this book. Three third-party self-assessment inventories are also available for added learning. Taken together, it is our hope that we have provided a useful guide to developing the skill set managers will require to tackle the challenges – and opportunities – in the coming years.

Acknowledgements

In writing this book, we were able to draw on our research, teaching, and consulting experiences in thirty-five countries around the world. We also learned from our global colleagues, strategic partners, and students, and believe that these experiences have made this a better book. The field is fortunate in having so many knowledgeable and committed scholars who are dedicated to quality research and conscientious teaching. Indeed, few projects of this magnitude could be successful without their many contributions.

Any successful book is a joint venture between authors, colleagues, instructors, students, and publishers. In this regard, we were fortunate to have received help and support from colleagues, instructors, and outside reviewers aimed at making this volume useful for readers interested in global management. This includes Luciana Nardon and Carlos Sanchez-Runde, who helped create earlier editions of this volume but are now pursuing other academic endeavors. We also thank Ramanie Samarantunge, Subamaniam Ananthram, Di Fan, and Ying Lu, who helped develop cases in support of this text. Student comments, both in our own classes and those of others, have helped us improve the final work.

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