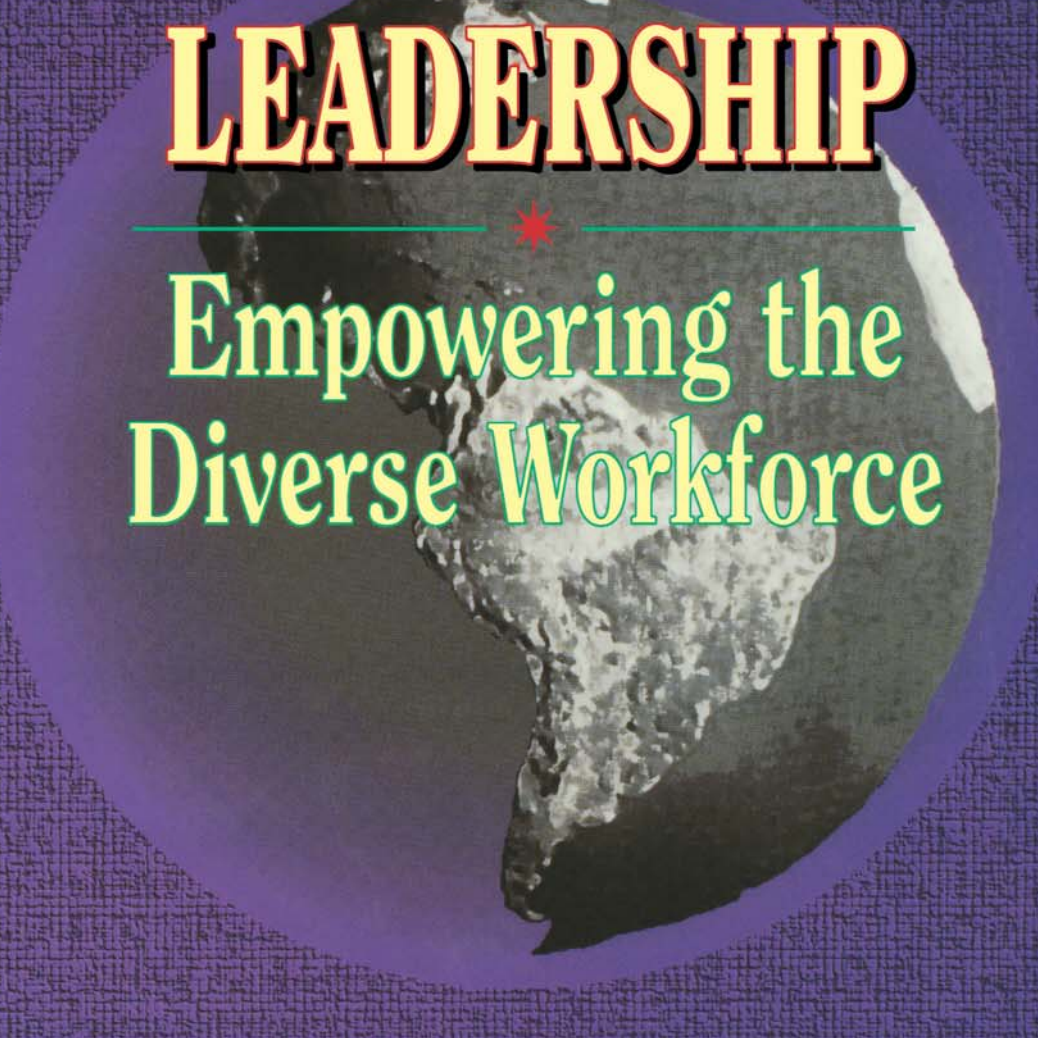


TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP



Empowering the
Diverse Workforce

George F. Simons
Carmen Vázquez
Philip R. Harris

TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP

**Empowering the
Diverse Workforce**



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Transcultural Leadership Empowering the Diverse Workforce

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CIP

To you, the women and men who form every level of today's
workforce, as you build our common tomorrow
out of the richness of your diversity today.

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FOREWORD

Here is a book that values the American experience of diversity in a global context. Throughout its history, the United States has had more ongoing, day-by-day experience in integrating greater numbers of people of diverse backgrounds into its workforce and society than has any other nation in the world. There are, of course, glaring failures and moments of history for which the piper has yet to be paid. Nonetheless, a great deal of the philosophy and technology for managing differences has had its origin on these shores.

Despite the stresses, conflicts, and aggravation of building bridges across cultural chasms at work and life, old and new Americans have continued to call upon their deepest values of equality, neighborliness, and love to make it better. Today, in this moment of opportunity, Americans are mobilizing to meet the global challenge of diversity with more resources and on a scale greater than that found in any other part of the world. As a result, *Transcultural Leadership* provides a case study utilizing the North American experience to better understand global development, as the workforce throughout the world, from England to Australia, from the former USSR to France, becomes more diverse and more multicultural.

The task before us is to apply what we do know, and learn what we do not, to make ourselves an even better nation and a more global citizenry. There could be no better starting point than the workplace, where difference must daily be molded into collaboration. The road will not be easy, but it takes us in the right direction. We are fortunate to have this book to guide us with its simple, practical, and timely wisdom.

This book appears at a critical time, when diversity and multiculturalism are encountering a powerful backlash. Since 1980, we have seen a sore lack of response from our national political leadership in the areas of intergroup relations and civil justice (with the singular exception of the Americans with Disabilities Act). It is a time when the nation and its enterprises feel betrayed by its educational institutions, and resent paying for the destruction of cultural values and the disil-

clusionment of aspiring African-Americans, Hispanics, women, and other newcomers to the workforce, to say nothing of the members of its traditional workforce. There has been a significant rise in the number of racial and ethnic hate crimes. Rape, spouse beating, and child abuse are also on the increase. More than ever, therefore, it is incumbent upon business and industry leaders to take the lead. Many now recognize that their involvement in this area today, besides being an ethical priority, is essential to doing successful business. They will find the authors of this book, who have taken a position of commitment to fairness, practicality, and collaboration, to be their strong allies.

Bob Abramms, Ph.D.
President, ODT Associates
Amherst, Massachusetts

SERIES PREFACE

To thrive and, in many cases, to survive in the 1990s, it is necessary for organizations to globalize in strategy, structure, and people. Companies have realized that developing strategies or managing people as if the internal and external environments of the organization had not changed is a major mistake. "Bashing" others rather than taking the inward journey and becoming a revolutionary learning organization is dysfunctional and counterproductive to corporate survival. As expected, many organizations in various countries have taken the inward journey and are effectively managing this challenge. Some are not.

The books in the *Managing Cultural Differences Series*, including the first edition of the first book, *Managing Cultural Differences* (1979, 1987, 1991), through *Dynamics of Successful International Business Negotiations* (1991), *Transcultural Leadership* (1993), *Multicultural Management* (1993), and the forthcoming *Developing Global Organizations* (1993), have as their main purpose the making of a significant contribution to the effort of globalization in all of its dimensions. The books in the series have been widely accepted in academic circles and by practicing internationalists.

As series editors, we are pleased that Gulf Publishing Company has risen to the challenge of addressing questions of people, culture, organization, and strategy in a rapidly changing, highly interdependent community.

Philip R. Harris, Ph.D.
Robert T. Moran, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Transcultural Leadership addresses a new global reality. Today productivity must come from the collaboration of culturally diverse women and men. It insists that leaders change organizational culture to empower and develop people. This demands that employees be selected, evaluated, and promoted on the basis of *performance and competency*, regardless of sex, race, religion, or place of origin. Beyond that, leaders must learn the skills that enable men and women of all backgrounds to work together effectively. This volume, the third in the *Managing Cultural Differences Series*, elaborates on the insights of the parent text by Drs. Harris and Moran (1991).

The book's primary audience is the manager as leader, whether supervisor, project manager, or CEO. Implementing the insights and suggestions in these pages belongs to contemporary leaders, whether in operations, marketing, or human resource development. The global marketplace daily grows more culturally integrated and diverse in terms of customers, suppliers, and workers. Although we write primarily from a North American viewpoint, we realize as international consultants that these phenomena are worldwide and what we say will be modified for use abroad. For example, *empowerment*, integral to the current thinking of American management, is likely to be adopted overseas in time. Becoming an Information Society requires knowledge and workers who are better educated and encouraged toward self-management wherever they are.

Our words confirm what readers see for themselves—women are entering professions, occupations, and industries formerly denied them. Their numbers in the global workforce not only have increased, but in many vocations, exceeds that of men. Other barriers that excluded people from our workforce are being eliminated, be they national frontiers, ideologies, unwritten taboos, or discriminating regulations. In the pursuit of a better life, a transcultural migration of labor from Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa is in full swing. Workers flow freely from south to north, and from east to west, and vice versa,

whether as illegal aliens, refugees, emigrés, expatriates on assignment, or simply volunteers. Business opportunities attract marketers abroad. The shortage of experienced personnel or economic circumstances prompts the return of older workers. How international joint ventures, acquisitions, and mergers further the process are described in another volume of this series, *Multicultural Management*.

Urban areas like Los Angeles and Toronto now contain millions of workers who, among them, speak scores of languages as their native tongue and struggle with English as a second or third means of communication. If variety is the spice of life, then today's workforce is one of the most highly flavored in history. It is the context in which we must manage, motivate, and collaborate for the common good, to achieve economic survival, no less prosperity.

Transcultural Leadership fills a gap in management development. It is about how diversity affects your everyday activities. It deals with conversations, meetings, interviews, making decisions, as well as with obtaining agreement, resolving disputes, providing appropriate training and performance reviews. It tells how to handle people from diverse backgrounds whether planning, working, or eating lunch together.

The book has a glossary of key terms used in the field of diversity. Other aids include instruments and checklists for data gathering, minicases and critical incidents for analysis and application, illustrations and graphics for nonverbal communication, references and other resources pertinent to each chapter, and a special appendix.

Chapter One is the key to understanding what follows. It focuses on the changes in the environment of business and in the workforce that make "Transcultural Leadership" a necessity. Chapter Two deals with managing intercultural breakdowns in communications and relationships when people have different mental maps. Chapter Three examines cross-cultural communication, and shows how to facilitate it within a diverse workforce. Chapter Four suggests ways to listen to others and hear the unspoken language contained in nonverbal messages, as well as to establish rapport with people who perceive things differently. Chapter Five offers leadership and motivation insights for those who would become truly transcultural managers. Chapter Six addresses management issues and stresses that occur with diverse staffs. Chapter Seven takes up the delicate issue of feedback and performance appraisal with diverse employees, especially those with differing cul-

tural inclinations about work assessment. Chapter Eight looks at collaboration among workers with those who differ in gender sexual preference. Chapter Nine explores the tasks involved in organizational culture change and mentoring. Chapter Ten concludes with observations on how to empower the diverse workforce.

George F. Simons
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Philip R. Harris
La Jolla, CA

CHAPTER 1

“WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS” AND OTHER HEADLINES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Portions of this book were written:

In the rain forests of Puerto Rico.

On Wall Street.

In the gas fields of Sumatra.

At the Midwest corporate headquarters of two Fortune 100 companies.

On the docks in Rotterdam.

At the United Nations.

During management seminars in Brussels, Havana, and Brisbane, and many points in between.

In a space project laboratory.

In a headhunter's longhouse in Borneo.

While recruiting in the Canadian Rockies.

In a New Jersey clothing warehouse.

On a chemical tanker in the North Pacific.

Aboard countless delayed flights, and waiting for connections at Atlanta, Heathrow, Changi, and most of all O'Hare.

And, occasionally, at home.

Five different kinds of computer systems processed the text, which was then conveyed by mail, courier, telephone, telefax, modem, satellite, and electronic mail. The manuscript has been stored on legal pads, ram cards, floppy disks, audio cassettes, and videotape.

During this period we three writers went through two promotions, two corporate job changes, the start of a new business, a marriage, umpteen software upgrades, and two hospital stays. To our embarrassment we must admit to (mal)nourishing ourselves to global pro-

portions on snack foods, empanadas, manioc chips, keropok, goldfisch, cumi-cumi, nachos, and Texas toast.

More amazingly, we considered all of the above quite normal, in the new global workplace to which we as consultants and trainers to business and industry, not without considerable stress, are becoming acculturated. In the new global and domestic workplace we are all immigrants, experiencing culture shock on a daily basis. Pick up a newspaper and you will see why. Changes in the workforce and the workplace are among the hottest news items of the 1990s. Here is a summary of the headline stories:

Workplace Headlines

Headline: *Worker Numbers Falling.* The workforce is shrinking. Without the large number of recent entrants, largely women and immigrants, this decline would be even more severe. Traditional sectors of employment are also diminishing as new sectors open. As Joel Dreyfuss observed in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "The shrinking workforce gives the diversity issue a level of urgency that affirmative action never had." Veteran commentators such as George Ordiorne talk about "Beating the 1990s Labor Shortage," by urging recruiters not only to hire women, immigrants, and older and handicapped workers, but to aggressively pursue untapped resources such as temporary workers, part-timers, and even ex-convicts.

Headline: *Workers' Average Age Rising.* Baby boomers, once described as the "pig in the python" of the demographics of the American workforce, are aging, pushing the average age of all workers higher. Increasingly, people of retirement age are staying on the job, and recruiters are competing for their skills. America is not alone in this. Aging and a decline in the number of workers are also affecting the workforce of the European Community.

Headline: *White Male Worker a Numerical Minority.* While women will continue to increase as a proportion of the workforce (to a predicted whopping 47% by the end of the 1990s), the Bureau of Labor Statistics points out that white males, the traditional source of labor in the U.S., will drop to 39.4% of the labor force by the end of the decade.

Headline: *Former "Minorities" a Third of New Workers.* In the next ten years, as white male workers become harder to find, those who take their place will not only be white women, but, increasingly, minorities.

The number of Asians in the workforce will be up 80.6% and Hispanics up 75.3%, while African-Americans will show the smallest increase, 28%. Accounting for more than 80% of the net increase to the workforce between now and the year 2000, these microcultures will constitute 26% of the total workforce by the end of the decade.

Headline: *Immigration Unabated.* New U.S. immigration policies encourage many different kinds of newcomers, while the flow of illegal immigrants continues. By the year 2000, at least 10% of the U.S. workforce will be foreign born. They will account for more than 20% of the workforce's net growth. By the end of the next century, a full 50% of workers will likely be immigrants, or descendants of immigrants who arrived after 1980.

Headline: *Immigrant Patterns Changing.* In 1969, 78% of immigrants came from Europe and Canada alone; in the last two decades, 84% of newcomers came from Latin America and Asia, radically altering the cultural flavor of the workforce.

Headline: *America is doing it again!* Today's American-born citizens easily forget that the physical infrastructure of the United States was built by a mix of nationalities and cultures. Many immigrants fled wars or persecution of some kind, but all shared the dream of a better life. We still benefit from what they built: the Erie Canal dug by Germans and Swedes, the transcontinental railroad built by thousands of Chinese and Irish, and many other lasting (though sometimes now decaying) structures.

The American Advantage

"In the global economic competition of the information economy, the quality and innovativeness of human resources will spell the difference."

"In this regard, no country in the world is better positioned than the United States. It certainly has it all over Japan. Japan is a society that has one culture, one history, one race. Superb as the Japanese are, that is limiting. The United States, on the other hand, has the richest mix—including Japanese—of ethnic groups, racial

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groups, and global experience that the world has ever known, and it is the richness of this mix that yields America's incredible creativity and innovation. Since 1970, the United States has allowed more legal immigration than the rest of the world combined. They are the most aggressive, most entrepreneurial, most assertive people, who fight fiercely to get to the United States."

"It is the habit of Americans to brag about previous immigrants and to complain about the current ones."

"In the 1990s the United States will have a younger population than either of its major competitors—Europe and Japan."

"America's great import is its people. Yet Americans have not even begun to experience the real potential of their fantastic human resource mix, which will be their competitive edge in the global economy as we move toward the next millennium."

—Excerpted from *Megatrends 2000*, by Naisbitt and Aburdene. Copyright © 1990 by John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene. Used by permission of William Morrow & Co., Inc.

The contribution of the world's peoples to the economic welfare of North America continues. The U.S. and Canada benefit from a brain drain of the Third World, as the most capable and ambitious flock here to work at our hospitals, laboratories, and universities. Where would U.S. service industries be without the refugees, migrants, and new immigrants from Mexico and other countries? What would happen to the U.S. gross national product without the investment of Japanese funds and management? Would we have developed a space frontier without the help of German and British rocket scientists? Today this tradition continues as international cooperation and multicultural teams lay the foundations of a new infrastructure in space.

Headline: *Service and Information Sectors Grow; Manufacturing Declines.* As Peter Drucker recently observed, "Now we are managing people paid for their knowledge. We have never done that, and we don't know how to do it." Managers and executives, technical and professional workers, are, as a group in the workforce, presently growing faster than average. It is not easy to shift workers from the declining sectors (see the next headline).

Headline: *New Workers Require Higher Skill Levels.* At a time when reading, writing, and making change for a dollar are no longer adequate skills for most occupations, fewer people are able to perform such simple tasks. Corporations, citing massive failure on the part of the educational system, now provide basic education for their employees, and at the same time raid other nations to recruit the brightest and the best. Poverty is on the increase as many Americans remain jobless and lack the education, resources, and motivation to start again. An aging personnel manager recently sardonically remarked, "I used to be worried about facing retirement. Now I know I'll never be out of a job—I can read and write."

Headline: *Job Mobility Upswing.* The shift from manufacturing to service economy is not the only factor unsettling job holders. Rapid obsolescence is quickly flattening old organizations and new ones are springing up in their debris. Workers in high-tech industries learn to keep their bags packed. The result is a workforce more dedicated to its own profession and personal interests than loyal to employers or companies.

Recruiting in the '90s

You are hiring for a large corporation, seeking the best entry-level candidates you can find. Today you have ten positions to fill. Eight of the jobs require more than a high-school education. When you walk into the waiting room there are only eight candidates. A close look at them reveals:

- 3 of the candidates are immigrants
- 4 are women
- 3 are young men under 25; 1 is older.
- 2 of the three young men are white.

When you examine their capabilities, you discover that:

- 6 have finished high school; 4 have not
- 2 cannot fill out a job application without help
- 1 cannot read

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To make matters worse you will later learn that:

- 1 is on drugs
- 4 of those you hire will leave in the next two years.

Does this group surprise you? These are the new entrants to the workforce. Today you happened to get a close-to-average cross section of them. Who is actually waiting in the employment office of your organization? What diverse challenges do they bring to you as a manager, and to your organization?

Headline: *The Melting Pot No Longer Boils.* Changes in the North American workplace are so sweeping that it is no longer possible, necessary, or desirable (if ever it was) to try to eliminate cultural differences of individuals and groups entering the “mainstream.” Melting-pot thinking assumes that cultural diversity is a temporary nuisance that will go away if we just put enough different people to work, give them fair wages and promotions, and, in general, blind ourselves to their differences.

North America will have a new culture, but not an assimilationist one. Janice Hepworth in her paper “When the Melting Stops,” points out that “. . . we can begin to plan for new and emerging diversity traits which may become permanent changes in a culture, and . . . lend support to those traits which appear to be emerging and conversely, mitigate against negative traits which threaten a culture’s balance.” Assimilation is a dead end. Acculturation, learning how to survive and thrive in this new environment, is the waystation to power in the new workforce (see Figure 1.1).

Will the violent fragmentation that plagues Europe and Africa become the norm in North America as well? Today’s diversity is a fresh challenge to transform the culture of work in ways that will guarantee our own survival and enjoyment and that of future generations. But this will happen only if we right the economy and find the means to value differences in such a way that everyone can share in the common good. As Zenie Barnett, our colleague, observed, “Equity is not the main prob-

lem of diversity. However, the lack of equity is a manifestation of the inability to properly manage diversity."

Diversity is the right issue, but it needs to be clarified and managed. The sharp focus of previous efforts like Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity made a difference for many disenfranchised people. Now a different effort is required. "Empowerment" gives that focus. It is the revolutionary twenty-first century alternative to the melting-pot mentality.

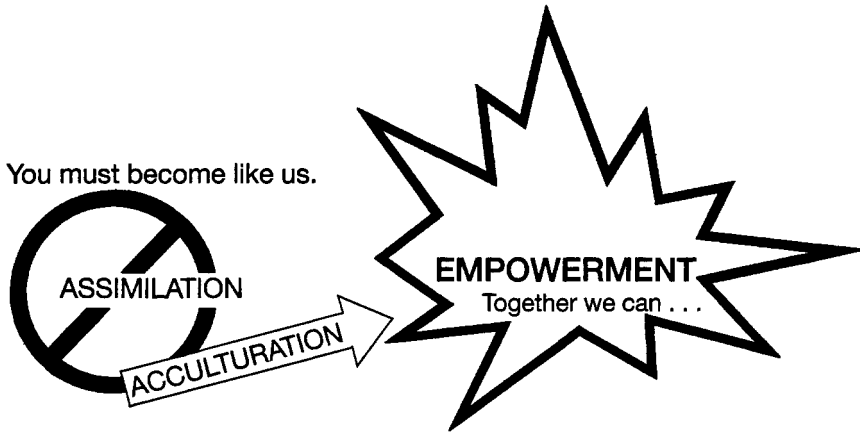


Figure 1.1 Acculturation, not assimilation, is the road to empowerment.

Headline: *Work Isn't What it Used to Be.* The New Workplace is anywhere and everywhere, and it is largely electronic. Francis Kinsman's book title, *The Telecommuters*, is very telling. Not only are individuals working from home, automobiles, planes, and other locations remote from the traditional work site, but entire electronic operations have followed manufacturing out of the country to become more competitive. Today you can ship your data halfway around the world, have it processed more cheaply during someone else's daylight hours, and have it back by opening time the next morning. The office itself is changing (see Figure 1.2). Robert Heller, author of *Culture Shock: The Office Revolution*, observes another mindshift: the office of the future is a tool, not a white-collar factory.

Headline: *All Business Is Global Business.* When Thomas Wolfe titled his 1939 novel *You Can't Go Home Again*, his principal character

reflected a nation that, on the eve of its entry into World War II, would never again be peacefully aloof from the cares of the world. Yet the dream lingers. The behavior and assumptions of modern-day U.S.

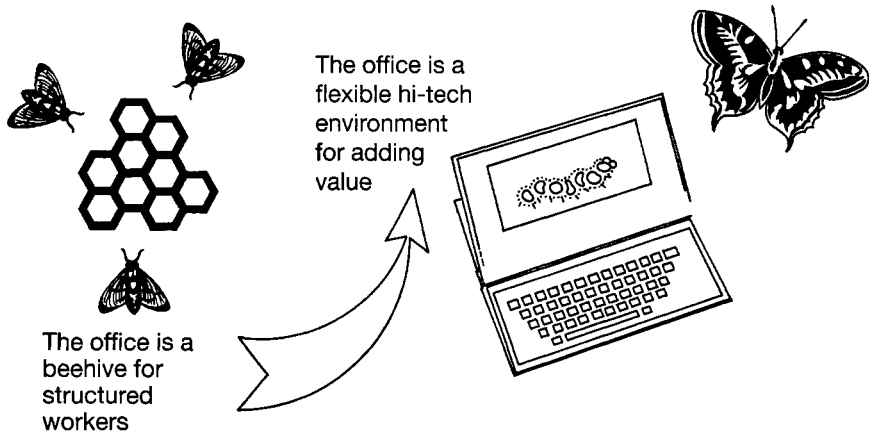


Figure 1.2. The office revolution.

businesspeople are still surprisingly reminiscent of the 1930s, even though we now live in a global marketplace where the exchange of money and labor are no longer dictated by national governments and domestic enterprise. Management is reluctant to replan its domestic operations and prepare its employees for the world as it is. As *The Atlantic Monthly* put it, companies continue to do international business as “innocents abroad.”

“Think globally, act locally” must become more than an ecological bumper sticker. Bankers and brokers, who move information and money electronically and instantly around the globe, and haulers whose freight crosses more and more borders, are starting to understand the implications and possibilities of a global market. Many others are not. A comment made by Lynn Fritz about some motor carriers might be said of far too many of our enterprises: “The minds of some truckers may be overseas, but their hearts are in the U.S.” It is incumbent on every manager to realize his or her interdependence on the global economy even while going about the most ordinary tasks at home. Our parent book in this series, *Managing Cultural Differences*,

forcefully conveyed the message that global managers must be more cosmopolitan, and less provincial in both thought and action. Diversity and globalism are two sides of the same coin because they involve similar kinds of people differences, can be addressed by many of the same strategies, and require many of the same managerial attitudes. Throughout this book, we will connect the big picture with the little picture, to show how global change relates to your office or shop floor.

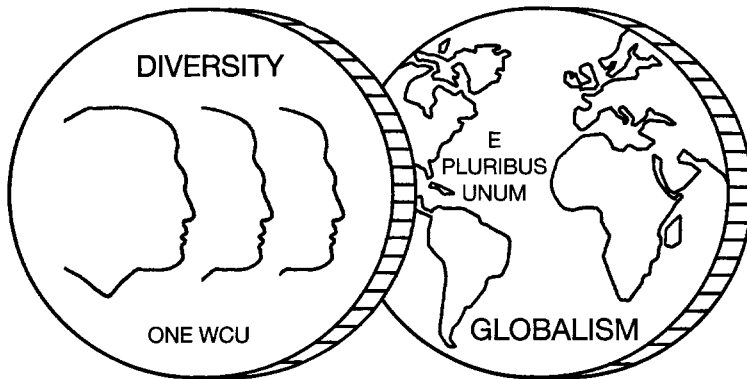


Figure 1.3. Diversity and globalism are two sides of the same coin—the new world currency unit of thinking.

Immigrants to Tomorrow

As was observed in *Managing Cultural Differences*, “Managers themselves are in transition to the new work culture.” Both executives and workers are experiencing a new kind of culture shock similar to what Alvin Toffler more than a decade ago dubbed “future shock.” We all land as immigrants on the doorstep of the 21st century. We are living in that future today and affected by its culture, but we are hardly acculturated to it. Few of us speak its language well, and while we are eager to make good in this new land, we are ill-equipped to take advantage of the full range of benefits it offers. Being immigrants, our old identity and roles are under assault. We look for something to hold on to, even when we are filled with enthusiasm for new frontiers.

Cultural Stress

Virtually everyone today experiences some degree of *culture shock*. Rapid change causes *stress* and *cultural fatigue*, whether we understand how it works or not. Three responses to culture shock are possible: *Resistance*—the rejection of the new culture and the tendency toward *fundamentalist* defense of one's own traditional values; *assimilation*—the wholesale rejection of one's own values in order to embrace those of another culture; and *acculturation*—learning to talk the language of another culture, while remaining rooted in the values and language of one's own. When it comes to the future, both individuals and organizations must go through a journey of acculturation.

All three responses to culture shock imply some change to one's own culture. Those who *resist* the new culture inevitably harden their values and beliefs. These people become brittle and lack the flexibility that their culture, like a living organism, requires to survive in a changing environment. They either drop out of the mainstream and become marginal, or in the few cases where they wield great power, attempt to impose their values on everyone else. Those who *assimilate* forfeit their own culture and with it, often, self-esteem. To *acculturate* one must live in two worlds, often simultaneously, and attempt to divide life into separate compartments, creating considerable cognitive dissonance, e.g., having one view of authority at work, another at home, and sometimes not feeling good or confident or competent at either. Of these three choices, acculturation will be, for most people in the workforce, the most practical and realistic choice. For most managers, this means a shift from assimilationist, melting-pot thinking to acculturating themselves to the new workforce and helping others to do so as well.

<i>Assimilation—the one-way dead end</i>	→	<i>Acculturation—a shared street</i>
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In assimilation one culture is swallowed up by another. The values, customs, language, and ideas of one group are exchanged for those of the mainstream. This never happens totally. First, because the devouring culture gets “indigestion”—there are things that simply can't or won't be assimilated—and, second, since “you are what you eat,” the dominating culture winds up being changed by the people it tried to swallow up.

The impossibility of assimilation matters less than its melting-pot premises. Those already established in the culture say, "Why learn about the newcomers? They should learn about us and speak our language correctly if they want to work here." "If *they* would just . . ., all *their* problems would disappear." This mindset puts others down, and labels and judges *them*, e.g., "They're all lazy, arrogant, secretive, just not right, etc." It tells the newcomers, "Out with your strange behavior, your funny languages, your smelly food." The newcomer can also buy into the melting-pot mentality: "I have to be just like them." "Where I came from is bad, here is good." "No matter what it costs, I have to fit in." "Don't teach the children about the old country, let them be Americans."

Even managers who try to manage diversity can easily fall back into melting-pot thinking:

"I don't have time to figure out how these people think."

"I've tried to learn a few words of their language, but I feel dumb saying those things."

"There are just too many kinds of people in this organization to make exceptions. They just have to learn to toe the line."

"If I don't manage in a perfectly American style, I won't be accepted."

The tendency toward assimilation is persistent and global. An Australian artist used a meat grinder rather than a melting-pot to lampoon "white Australia," thinking that still makes Foster-drinking mince-meat of that country's newcomers (see Figure 1.4).

Aussie Assimilation



Figure 1.4. Assimilation "Aussie" style. Reprinted with permission from *Cross Culture* magazine. Copyright © Richard Lewis Communications.

Women, people of color, white males, new immigrants—none of us actually belongs in a meat grinder or a melting pot. Many cannot and, today, would not if they could, disappear into a cultural or organizational mainstream. More people than ever are demanding that organizations adapt to cultural differences that they find important. As a manager either you will make it mentally and emotionally clear how everyone can win collaboratively, or else no one will win. If you allow differences to turn political, they can be irreconcilable for a long time.

Our objective is *acculturation*, not assimilation. Acculturation means learning enough to not only survive but to thrive in a new culture. It is a shared street. Certainly, newcomers to a workplace must learn enough to do their job, become comfortable, and collaborate well within the organization they join. It's their job to do this, and management's job to help them. But in the new workplace everyone is a newcomer. The changes are so great and happen so quickly that everyone, from the lifetime employee to the new hire, can be suffering from culture shock and need acculturation. The transcultural leader helps the whole organization acculturate to the new workplace culture and become collaborative and productive in it.

The Journey of Acculturation

In becoming acculturated, we pass through several stages. Let's look at them one at a time:

1. We enter the new situation with some level of emotional *excitement*, often surprise, caution, or even enthusiasm:
 - *"What's going on here?"*
 - *"I suppose we can get along with these newcomers."*
 - *"Here I am, in the land of opportunity."*
 - *"I'll show everyone how easy it is to work for a woman boss."*
2. When things turn out to be much more difficult or different than we expected, *frustration*, *anger*, or even *depression* sets in. We have an intercultural breakdown. It is easy to get stuck in Stage 2: