

Fostering a Global Mindset

Relevant training and experiential learning geared toward developing the global mindset of each employee, and ultimately of the whole organization, is a crucial function of the Training department. **BY SIRIN KÖPRÜCÜ AND NEAL GOODMAN, PH.D.**



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The business world has been witnessing significant changes in the last 10 years, and there is no doubt there are more to come. Global foreign direct investment deals outbound from emerging economies are expected to multiply over the next 15 years, making foreign direct investment a major source of business financing, even in the U.S. Trade-to-GDP ratios are rising significantly in many OECD countries. Technology continues to reduce geographic distance, enabling more globally integrated enterprises to emerge. As a result, organizations—ranging from entrepreneurial to multinational corporations—increasingly seek professionals who can navigate the complexities of international business and develop credibility among people of different cultural backgrounds.

EMBRACING CHANGE

In his article “U.S. Entrepreneurs Need a True Global Mindset,” published in *The Huffington Post*, Ted Zoller, VP of Entrepreneurship at Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, writes, “The U.S. is by nature more insular than other countries with respect to new ventures.” He cites the size of the U.S. domestic market as one reason. “...whereas in smaller countries such as Denmark and Sweden, or in large but poorer countries, firms with high ambitions have long had to look to international markets to remain competitive, as their domestic

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markets couldn’t sustain them.”

He points out how the relative geographic and cultural isolation of the U.S. can be another challenge. Most importantly, he emphasizes the importance of being able to seek innovation in diverse perspectives and diverse locations rather than finding creative ways to carry a U.S.-born idea elsewhere.

Multinational corporations also acknowledge the changing market conditions, realize the opportunities that advanced technology offers today, and feel the need to change.

In a keynote speech delivered in 2011, IBM CEO Samuel J. Palmisano said, “It is so easy to stick with things that have made you a successful company or institution—a winning product, a profitable business model. It’s even easier to stick with what’s made you successful as a professional—what got you to where you are. Yet one of the core responsibilities of leadership is to understand when it’s time to change—the organization and yourself.”

Multinational corporations recognize the opportunities in being able to span boundaries by increasing accurate information flow with new technologies; the opportunities that come with collaborative thinking; and the opportunities that come through long-term orientation and developing people and systems that innovate.

NOW IS THE TIME

On the bright side, it has rarely been so exciting to be a leader in the history of business. This is the time to expand minds to the ways of the world and become curious like a child, to be able to relate to people with different perspectives with confidence and in a trustworthy manner, and to take advantage of exciting technology to know and navigate global business complexities with finesse.

This is the time to operate with a global mindset while celebrating one’s own roots and values. With a global mindset, today’s business leaders have the chance to bring innovation, economic sustainability, and peace not only to their geographic areas but to all societies they can engage in their business endeavors. As the 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer indicates, business leaders have the chance to bridge the gap of growing mistrust in societies.

Needless to say, relevant training and experiential learning geared toward developing the global mindset of each employee, and ultimately of the whole organization, has become a key training field and will equip organizations with the essential capabilities to innovate, engage, and prosper in these exciting times of the 21st century. **■**