DEVELOPING MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN TODAY'S INCREASINGLY GLOBALISED WORKPLACE

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OVERVIEW

This white paper – 'Developing Multicultural Leadership Skills in Today's Global Environment' – looks at the changing face of the workplace and how globalisation, the rise of technology and increasing workplace diversity have all made the need for competent multicultural leaders and managers essential.

However, this white paper will also argue that the downturn in the economy, a lack of investment in developing fundamental management skills, combined with changing demographics, mean that we now have a talent crunch where many of today's and tomorrow's leaders do not have the skills required to drive business success in the global marketplace either themselves, or through others.

And what is more, they are not growing the organisation through developing leaders for the future, simply because they do not have the skill set. So, in a growing number of organisations, we have a talent crunch now, and we are preparing for a talent crunch in the future. Something has to fundamentally change.

The paper examines the dynamics of today's workplace and the challenges facing managers around the world as the workplace evolves. It looks at the critical need for organisations to invest in developing core management skills and what competencies and skills are required by multicultural and, in an increasing number of cases, remote leaders and managers today. The paper examines how these skills can be leveraged to improve business performance and achieve greater cohesion between teams with different backgrounds.

Initially, however, let's take a look at the fast changing environment in which today's leaders must operate.

1. THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE CHANGING WORKPLACE

The past decade has brought about unprecedented change in the workplace. The transition to a global economy and the exponential rise in technology has ushered in a 24/7 workplace and a culture of working anywhere, anytime.

In order to remain competitive, businesses and their managers have had to learn and adapt to doing business on a global stage and address a number of key drivers in the workplace. These include the following:

1.1 The Increased Diversity of the Workforce

Today, the majority of workforces have employees from multiple races, nationalities, religions and age groups, creating a critical need for leaders to be competent in cross-cultural interactions and the management of multicultural, cross border teams.

The makeup of today's global workforce is undergoing a significant demographics shift. We now have four generations working side by side and in less than four years time, nearly half of the workforce will be made up of Millennials or Generation Y – those who were born between 1980 and 2000 (although definitions vary).

Millennials come with certain characteristics, although this can vary by region. Typically, they are positive and confident, used to working in teams, and are often multi-taskers. They also want to see where their careers are going and are always looking for their next challenge. They are highly technology literate and use technology fluently as they go about their daily lives. Many are consummate networkers and crave the human touch as much as the access to new technologies – a point that is all too often missed when this group is targeted with development.

In addition to the Millennials, the workplace includes the Traditionalists (born between 1925 and 1945) who are coming towards the end of their careers and value discipline and stability; the Baby Boomers (1946 to 1963) who are idealistic and competitive but dislike change; and Generation X (1964 to 1980), who want greater flexibility in their working practices with a need for career portability and work-life balance.

A key challenge for leaders and managers is listening to, understanding and addressing the different attitudes, preferences, expectations and needs of each generation.

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> "

Traditionalists 1925-1945	**Baby Boomers** 1946-1963	**Generation X** 1964-1980	**Generation Y/ Millenials** 1980-2000s
Value logic and discipline, stability, want a legacy.	Idealistic, competitive, questions authority, dislikes change, recognition, stellar career.	Work/life balance, career portability, flexible, some anxiety, dislike micromanagement.	Value diversity, technologically superior, change, want meaningful work.

50% of workforce in < 4 years

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In addition to this, there is also the increased globalisation of the workforce.

Many multinational corporations have moved away from being organised around self-contained national entities and instead have structures that transcend borders and integrate business across countries.

Furthermore, this increased globalisation has also encouraged HR departments to put in place more diversity programmes. In the US and Canada, for example, a survey of more than 2,500 senior HR and training executives by Novations Group found that 40% of organisations have already expanded the scope of their diversity and inclusion programming.

In summary, there is a growing importance for managers and leaders to be multiculturally aware, knowledgeable and skilful. Demographic changes are set to continue at a rapid pace, making a need for such competencies more critical than ever before. Managers today are facing a perfect storm so to speak – a changing workforce both demographically and culturally.

To ensure that today's diverse teams are effective, leaders must adopt approaches that acknowledge the new multicultural environment. One of the key issues facing managers and leaders today is how do I talk to and manage someone from a different cultural background be it age, gender or citizenship?

1.2   Talent Mobility

Over the last decade, demand for global mobility of talent has also increased, as new markets have emerged, resulting in a flow of talent predominately from west to east but from east to west as well.

A 2010 survey undertaken among 700 chief HR officers and senior executives in 61 countries around the world by IBM's Institute for Business Value, for example, revealed that some 45% of Indian firms and 33% of Chinese ones said that they planned to take on staff in North America, while 44% and 14% respectively expected to expand into Western Europe.

As we continue through the next decade, global mobility and interaction will continue to grow yet further and become the norm, making multicultural leadership skills even more essential.

1.3   The Rise in Technology

Hand in hand with the evolving demographics of the workplace, the rise in technology also continues to have far reaching implications for multicultural organisations.

On the one hand it has changed the way that organisations do business, removing organisational and cross-border boundaries and connecting people from all walks of life. Yet, as any manager or anybody working in HR knows, this is a double edged sword. Local legislation and workplace issues also have to be addressed, such as the issue of work-life balance with people working longer hours and being expected to stay connected to work even during holidays.

Technology enablement clearly raises many management issues such as 'how can I get the best out of my multicultural team, particularly given that I have to manage many members remotely?' This trend towards remote working is explored in more detail in section three.

" The silver lining of globalisation is that the shift towards expansion will require companies to redirect their workforce to locations that provide the greatest opportunities, not just the lowest costs and at the same time re-imagine their management strategies to reflect an increasingly dynamic workforce. "

Denis Brousseau, Vice President for Organisation and People, IBM Global Business Service

1.4   The Economic Environment – Doing More With Less

Finally, the economic downturn of the past few years has also created additional challenges. The financial squeeze has forced managers to focus on the here and now, and in many organisations fire-fighting immediate challenges has taken priority over investing in people for long-term growth.

The result is that managers have had to do more with less resources and as a result of the increased focus on short-term performance and costs, the development and management of organisations' most important asset – their people – has suffered.

Redundancies and downsizing have only exacerbated the problem, with some individuals being thrust into management positions too early without the necessary preparation and training for the role in hand.

This has resulted in a lack of basic yet essential management skills in today's organisations. Quite simply, managers aren't receiving the core training they need to manage in today's multicultural environment. This pressing issue is addressed in more detail in the next section which looks specifically at the talent crunch which is becoming increasingly apparent.

What are the skills they need?

Managers today need to do things differently when managing global teams as opposed to what they would do when managing in their own country and with domestic teams. Filters, perceptions and interpretations can be radically different when operating across boundaries in terms of what is seen, heard and done. In such circumstances, managers' skills in relation to developing a common language of understanding, managing people remotely, and their ability to communicate will be put under the spotlight like never before.

The need to empower and talk to your teams rather than relying on emails which can be misinterpreted (while at the same time using technologies to its greatest effect), and the ability to create communities of practices which can become self-organising and less reliant on managers will all come to the fore. It is also important to understand the difference between being a coach and a manager and be able to put in place cross-functional liaison with your wider peer group to enable broader team co-working.

In summary, the workplace is changing like never before with a need for managers with multi-faceted skills. Unfortunately, as the next section will illustrate, not enough organisations are rising to the challenge and giving managers the skills and tools they need – hence the talent crunch.

What managers require today is radically different to how managers have been developed, trained and coached in the past. In essence, this paper is a call to action for HR, L&D and Training companies to support these new developments and better support the growth of this critical cadre of managers and leaders who need our help.

> **Managers today need to do things differently when managing global teams as opposed to what they would do when managing in their own country and with domestic teams.**

2. TRAINING AND THE TALENT CRUNCH

So how is L&D reacting to this challenge? The picture is currently mixed. What is clear that while the workforce recognises the problem and the need for new skills, they don't know who to go to in order to obtain these skills.

2.1 A Seeming Lack of Confidence!

Out of all the white papers I have written over the past two years, probably the most striking theme I have come across is the general decline in confidence that employees have in both their HR & L&D departments and their managers to deliver the skill sets they need.

Cegos Group's 2011 survey of training practices across Europe, for example, found that only 36% of staff go to HR Directors and Training Managers for information on professional training provision with 55% going to their managers.

However, when it comes to the actual delivery of training, employees turn to expert coaches and tutors for the training itself with only 14% of employees turning to their manager versus 48% asking for help from a coach.

There is similar data to this in the US where in an interactive survey we did among participants at the US's leading L&D conference, ASTD 2011, only 20% of respondents said that their employees preferred to work with their managers for their on the job training

If ever there was a wake-up call this is it, demonstrating that employees don't value what managers can bring to training anymore – due to the fact that they have been sidelined every bit as much as other employees. And if you put this in a multicultural environment, the issues are multiplied even further with all the different cross-boundary factors coming into play as well.

2.2 Not Enough Management Training!

Linked to this is the fact that not enough management training is available today anyway – even if there are doubts as to its effectiveness in teaching multi-cultural skills.

The Cegos 2011 European L&D survey among more than 2,500 employees in the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, for example, found that over 20% of people do not receive any training at all. In addition, investment in leadership skills is actually falling in some regions.

The same Cegos survey showed that job related technical skills remain the core focus of training, followed by areas such as professional efficiency, communication and languages as well as financing, purchasing and logistics. HR and leadership development accounted for just 11% of training amongst European learners in 2011 – down from 18% in 2010.

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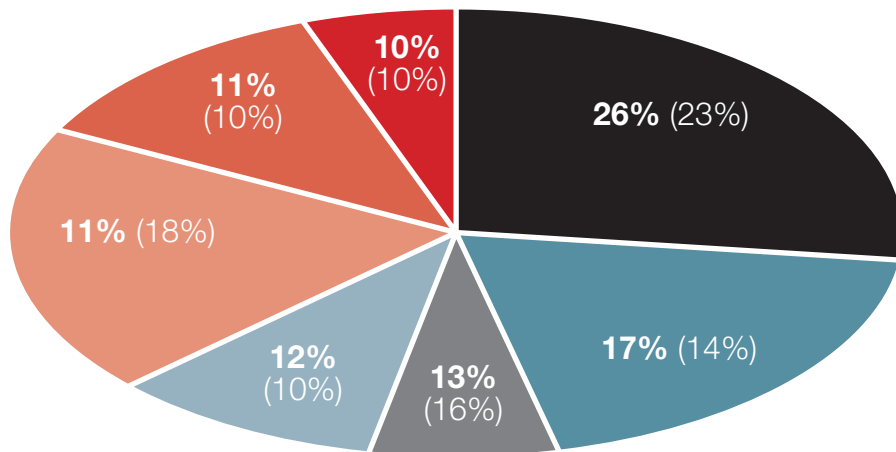
Legend:
- Job related technical skills
- Management, finances, purchasing, logistics, QSE
- HR, leadership, project management
- Commercial areas, sales, marketing
- Professional efficiency, communication, languages
- Company products & services
- Offices admin, internet

Domain focus for training courses in Europe

This decline in management training also mirrors a survey of 1,500 managers Cegos Group conducted at the end of 2010 and which found that one in four managers has had no management training.

Similarly, a Cegos poll of 132 learning professionals at the ASTD 2011 international conference in North America found job related technical skills to be the primary focus for 40% of respondents. However, investment in HR and leadership skills fared better with nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents citing these skills as the key focus of employee training, making this the second most important area for training amongst US/International organisations.
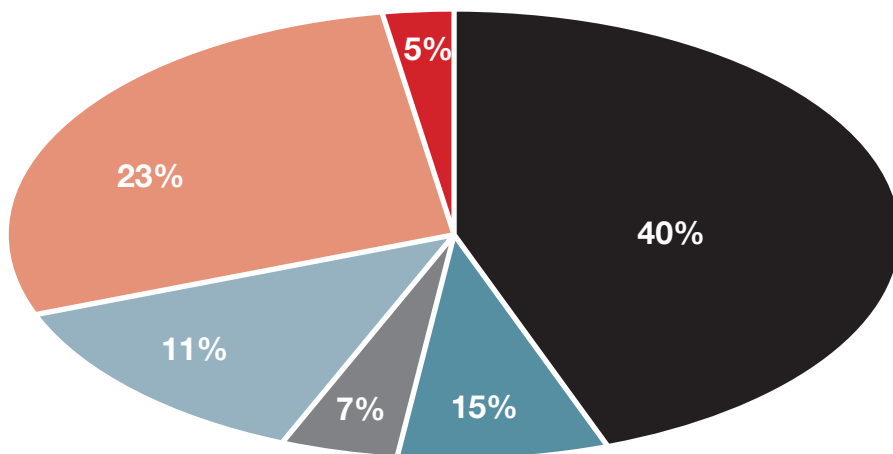

Legend:
- Job related technical skills
- Management, finances, purchasing, logistics, QSE
- HR, leadership, project management
- Commercial areas, sales, marketing
- Professional efficiency, communication, languages
- Company products & services
- Offices admin, internet (0%)

Domain focus for training courses amongst Cegos/ASTD 2011 respondents

What one can derive from this is that it appears that the development of leadership skills is valued more highly in multinational companies with US operations as a key enabler for achieving long-term business growth and success.

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Our survey at ASTD 2011 backed this theory up with HR, leadership and project management training cited as the top training domain for organisations by 23% of the ASTD survey respondents.

The Failure to Prepare Future Leaders – The Risks in the Legal Sector

There are few sectors where employees are so ill prepared in making the move from junior lawyer to partner, practice leader, and then managing partner than the legal sector.

Such career transitions often require a complete overhaul of the way lawyers work and interact with colleagues or clients, moving them away from just focusing on billable hours to managing teams and even being responsible for other business operations, such as marketing, recruitment, and HR. In short, it is the move from self-reliance to getting the most out of others. Furthermore, as law firms become increasingly global, multicultural leadership skills are entering the frame as well.

Yet, today, management training is the exception not the rule within global law firms. While some law firms have embraced management training – Linklater's in-house business school, for example – too many fast track lawyers have to learn on the job as they move into management roles. While learning on the job is indeed crucial, with the continuing focus on client billable hours, there are doubts as to whether this is an adequate substitute for management training.

And the risks? A decline in cohesiveness within global teams, declining employee morale and increased employee turnover.

2.3   The Quality of the Training – An Impending Leadership Crisis?

Other research also points to an impending leadership crisis in terms of the quality of the training.

According to a recent Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey of 367 leaders and 56 UK HR professionals, six in 10 leaders and HR professionals aren't happy with their company's leadership development programmes, and around two in 10 see them as ineffective. In addition, only a third of UK leaders and one in five HR professionals rate the quality of leadership within their organisation as 'high'.

Indeed, recent research from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) highlights a lack of trust and confidence in managers today. Their survey of 2,000 employees across the UK reveals that over half (55%) don't think their manager possess sufficient ability to do their job, linked in the perceived lack of confidence in managers that we have already described.

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Data like this raises all sorts of questions. What are organisations doing to ensure their managers are qualified to lead? And do they have the skills to engage and get the buy-in they need from their teams?

2.4 Reasons for Optimism

There are causes for optimism, however. The good news is that boardrooms are recognising there is a talent crunch and are prepared to invest more time in dealing with the issue.

A 2011 survey from PwC amongst 1,200 global CEOs shows that talent is now the number one issue on the boardroom agenda as recruitment activity begins to pick up and the competition for talent intensifies.

Managing talent has now overtaken risk with 83% of CEOs surveyed planning to change their firm's talent management strategy over the next 12 months. In addition, a McKinsey global survey among 1,597 corporate directors in April 2011 found that 67% of respondents want to increase the amount of board time spent on talent management over the next two to three years. The survey reports that 10% of board time is spent on talent management compared to 23% on business strategy, 22% on execution and 18% on performance management.

In today's global economy, talent shortages are particularly acute in high-growth markets such as China, India and South America, sometimes more so than in the rest of the world. A recent PWC survey found that around 40% of CEOs report difficulty forecasting talent availability in these regions.

The survey showed that over half of CEOs are planning to send more staff on international assignments in 2011 to counter this problem. The number of international assignments among multinationals has increased 25% over the past decade and PwC forecasts a further 50% growth over the next decade. In the talent market, skilled employees with experience in more than one country are increasingly considered as valuable as their specialties. Close to half of CEOs said they foresee problems deploying experienced employees in other countries.

In these scenarios, organisations must ensure that the talent deployed overseas are adequately prepared for the job in hand so that they can hit the ground running. In addition to the usual management skills required, individuals must be given the knowledge and skills they will require to work within the cultural framework they are deployed in. All too often managers relocating overseas manage by corporate template, in the style of their headquarters, risking the alienation of their colleagues and peers which can result in lower productivity and business performance.

In very culturally different regions, such as China, there is also a real need to upskill leaders and even trainers to be able to cope with a) developing managers and b) upskilling the same people to manage increasingly cross cultural teams. Furthermore, as countries such as India and China start to hire multicultural staff to boost their export efforts, they also need to understand the importance of taking into account flexible management styles in relation to culture and individuals.

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2.5 The Need for Management Training Investment and a New Leadership Dynamic

What many of these findings show is that there a clear case for more investment in leadership development and show that the training that is being delivered needs to be more effective and relevant to individual and business needs.

If action is not taken now, there won't be a pipeline of talented leaders for the future. Let us not forget that many high level positions are currently occupied by the baby boomer generation and as this generation nears retirement, new talent with the confidence to lead needs to come through to take over.

The future is going to see a whole new dynamic in terms of leadership requirements and we need to prepare future leaders for this challenge.

Without doubt we are entering an era where technology will be even more tightly woven into every aspect of our lives as it continues to drive a shift in how consumers behave and hence the way that companies do business. Leaders of today and tomorrow need to understand this paradigm shift and take action to ensure their companies remain competitive.

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3. WHAT MAKES A GOOD MULTICULTURAL LEADER?

Having identified the need for multicultural leaders and the perceived lack of training in developing them, this next section will examine the key prerequisites behind being a multicultural leader. Section 4 will then look at means in which such multicultural leaders can be created.

3.1 No One Size Fits All

Firstly, it's important to stress that there is no precise definition and it's not possible to confidently describe the perfect multicultural manager or leader.

Every workplace environment is different and will require different management techniques and skills to get the best out of the individuals and the teams involved. A 'one size fits all' approach does not work. While management styles must be aligned with the corporate culture and vision, it is also fundamental that local cultural needs are addressed and that the stereotyping of others is avoided.

3.2 Understanding the Cultural Context

A good multicultural leader understands that culture is influenced by far more than geographic location.

First and foremost, leaders must understand the cultural context that they are working in, the profile of their team and of their clients/customers, and the behaviours, nuances and issues that are important within the cultures making up their workplace environment.

They need to be very aware and knowledgeable about the environment in which they are working and restrained in passing judgement over cultural differences. This being said, however, it is also important not to over exaggerate cultural differences. Research actually shows that people's personalities are much the same around the world and culture must not be simply used as an excuse to 'do things differently.' Furthermore, if you look at global companies, such as Microsoft, IBM and Google, the company culture tends to override all else.

That said simply training managers to manage is not enough. There must be a parallel track of cultural immersion / orientation strategies to provide a solid toolkit for cross cultural managers to work with.

3.3 Strong Management Skills and the Need to Manage Remotely

Multicultural leaders need to have a solid grounding in core people management skills and be able to manage cross border teams in today's increasingly distributed workforce. This often means an ability to manage remotely. It also means getting more out of every team member and relationship in the workplace and helping people within their teams to work together better, despite any cultural differences.

Key attributes such as mutual respect and trust, as well as good communication skills underpin success in multicultural leadership as does having an adaptable and flexible approach to management. The workplace is rapidly changing and the future culture is likely to be very different from what we currently know. Those who cannot adapt to the future culture and develop new ways of thinking are not likely to succeed in the long-term.

> **While management styles must be aligned with the corporate culture and vision, it is also fundamental that local cultural needs are addressed and that the stereotyping of others is avoided.**

3.4   Good Managers Must Connect With Their Teams

It's time for managers to reconnect with their teams. Clearly, somewhere along the line during the recession, employees lost confidence in their managers and it's time now to address the issue. Training has a key role to play in reenergising managers and giving them the focus, motivation and confidence they need to reach out and strengthen their bonds with their team members.

Managing Global and Remote teams

Six key pointers for managing global and remote teams more effectively:

1. Establish clear working practices and policies.
2. Employees need to know what is expected of them, so set clear measurable goals and manage on results achieved.
3. Ensure good visibility and regular feedback.
4. Clear communication is key, use whatever tools work best.
5. Keep employees engaged in the team.
6. Take notice of cultural and local practices.

3.5   The Importance of Empathy & Self-Awareness

Successful multicultural managers need to be self-aware, especially as people from different cultural backgrounds have different expectations as to what an effective manager does. They need to always be aware of the context they are operating in and empathise with the values and viewpoints of all members. Successful leaders need to be able to adapt their mindsets and behaviours in order to connect with these other views – but not at the expense of their own values and viewpoints.

Having identified some of the criteria for a successful multicultural leader, it's now necessary to look at how such leaders can be developed. This will be the subject of section four.

3.6   Communication, Communication and Communication!

Finally, there is communication – so important in managing multicultural teams today.

Firstly, there is the importance of the human touch – the need to talk to people without being overly reliant on emails. There is a need to adopt communication mediums that more fully embrace the subtleties and nuances of cross-cultural communication – the use of video conferencing, for example, rather than just audio. The visual connection should never be underestimated.

Other cultural aspects need to be observed in communications. For example, managers must always be aware of national holidays, special events, or religious festivals and ensure that this flexibility and understanding is built into communications. Regular reviews, 10 minute catch ups and team reporting can all help to drive manager's own 'culture' of communication and expectation. Always think things through and don't be too quick to judge.

> "
> **Successful leaders need to be able to adapt their mindsets and behaviours in order to connect with these other views – but not at the expense of their own values and viewpoints.**
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4.   DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR TODAY'S MULTICULTURAL WORKPLACE

It is clear that leaders need to operate more effectively in international and multicultural environments than they do today. The demand for this skill is only going to increase.

So, having identified what makes a good multicultural leader, the next question we need to ask is how we can develop today's leaders with these necessary skills. What can we as L&D professionals do and what can managers do to help themselves?

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that there is no quick fix to the problem. Indeed, leadership techniques should continue to evolve as the dynamics of the workplace change.

There are, however, a number of techniques and approaches that managers and L&D departments can take to ensure that managers operate more effectively in a multicultural setting. Here are some top tips:

4.1   Back to Basics

Many organisations need to go back to basics. First off, L&D managers need to put in place a talent management strategy that identifies and addresses the development of multicultural managers and leaders within the organisation. Make sure that you have specific training courses that can help managers in their new role – helping managers manage remote teams more effectively, for example.

Investing in Future Management Skills – The Rezidor Hotel Group

Despite the perceived doom and gloom, there are some companies who are responding to the current talent crunch and are ensuring that their managers have the necessary skill sets to thrive in the new workplace. One such example is Rezidor Hotel Group (Radisson), one of the fastest growing hotel companies in the world with a portfolio of more than 400 hotels in operation and under development with 88,800 rooms in over 60 countries.

Rezidor has developed a Management Development Programme which focuses on developing, training and preparing existing Supervisors to become Department Heads across all areas of the business.

Lasting 24 months, the programme brings together a range of different learning methods, including face-to-face learning, e-learning and assessment centres, project work and on-the-job learning, and is complemented by mentoring from a senior manager.

The training takes place in a number of different properties within each region, providing not only a diverse range of learning opportunities but the chance to learn in new environments and different cultures. Relevant courses take place at The Business School @ Rezidor and cross-training also takes place with other candidates, helping to provide a breadth of different experiences.

> **" Make sure that you have specific training courses that can help managers in their new role – helping managers manage remote teams more effectively, for example. "**

4.2   Measures to Grow One's Own Talent

Companies also need to have measures in place to grow their own talent and recruit from within or outside of the business as necessary. Here coaching, mentoring and other training techniques have a key role to play in upskilling individuals across the global talent pool. L&D managers need to make sure these resources are available and 'would be' managers need to have an incentive to use them.

A local mentor or coach, for example, can be invaluable to a manager when finding out about the specific nuances in the locality that they are working in. Coaches can help managers ask those all important questions, such as 'How' and 'Why' which are so crucial in different cultures and provide the required close, local collaboration.

Managers must be able to help themselves through the seeking out of local mentors or external mentors to not only help them as managers but also to advise and support the team when needed – particularly important if the team is working remotely.

There are also a variety of different skills that managers can be trained in which will help them in developing multicultural awareness skills. Examples include emotional intelligence, time management, negotiation, strategic thinking, facilitation, creative thinking and problem solving skills to name but a few.

4.3   Find about Local Requirements

It's vital that both the L&D department and managers obtain knowledge on local legislation and working practices. What are employees and managers rights? Are there unions or workers councils that need to be included in any proceedings? It is also important to understand the subtle differences across regions in how problems are solved, performance is managed and success is rewarded.

The Challenges of Execution – The Importance of Thinking Local

While many companies understand the need for management training and have positive intent, things can sometimes go wrong at the execution stage.

One example, which I have direct experience of, is a major multinational company who was looking for managed service provision for its learning and development tracks. They outlined exactly the same needs for these services across the board – regardless of country, culture or region.

However, when it came to China – well into the process – the problem was highlighted by an external consultant who knew the culture that local Chinese legislation would make it 'illegal' to do what they wanted without specific licences which could take months or even years to secure.

The result was an extended process, a reworking of the requirement for certain countries and an extra six months without any action on what they actually wanted to achieve. This could have been avoided with a little up front research & consultancy locally, rather than remote strategic policy making based on the 'corporate culture' alone. The productivity and cost avoidance arguments alone make this a necessity, rather than a 'nice to do'.

> **"**
> **It is also important to understand the subtle differences across regions in how problems are solved, performance is managed and success is rewarded.**
> **"**

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4.4 Networking & the Importance of Technology & Communications

Networking with peers, customers and relevant industry and government trade bodies can be very important in helping managers understand their different regions and areas and how business is conducted. Get more involved in the local community culture.... The more you put in the more you'll get out.

Effective communications is also vital in multicultural leadership from managing people remotely to learning the local language.

Leveraging the correct technologies also enables great communication between managers and their team every bit as much as about doing the job in hand. Involve your team in evaluating options and agree on how to use the tools.

As in the case with all L&D functions, the effective deployment of the latest technologies will be essential in developing multicultural leaders in today's global environment. In the IBM survey cited earlier in this paper, it was found that the financially most successful firms were 57% more likely than less successful ones to use collaboration and social networking tools to enable global teams to work more effectively together.

Such technologies can be utilised in developing communities of practice (see separate box), providing the vehicles for new multicultural-based skills, and can facilitate the use of emerging learning and knowledge sharing tools.

Effective multicultural leaders will need to be able to effectively assimilate information and share insights among a diverse group of employees from different areas of the world. Technology will be crucial in enabling this.

4.5 Focus on the Management Basics

Amidst all the advice, it's important not to forget to be a manager and to focus on the basics. Apply your cultural learnings to your day to day management activities and focus on developing your teams but don't let culture considerations shape all your management decisions. Many of these transcend culture.

4.6 Build Communities of Practice

One of the best means of sharing knowledge, empowering teams and enabling them to become more self-organised is through the setting up of communities of practice (see separate box). A pilot communities of practice is also being led by the Human Capital Singapore Academy Singapore (see http://www.hcs.com.sg).

Multicultural leadership today plays perfectly into the concept of communities of practice. Not only are they a forum for the sharing of knowledge and information across cultures but, as they develop, they can become almost independent entities less reliant on the manager and more empowered. Communities of practice will be examined further in a future white paper.

> " **Involve your team in evaluating options and agree on how to use the tools.** "

Communities of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is, according to cognitive anthropologists, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, a group of people who share an interest, a craft, and/or a profession.

Today, communities of practice can play an important role in learning and developing multicultural leadership skills. It can also allow managers to allow their employees to coach them.

Such communities can be created specifically for the goal of creating and sharing knowledge. They can help managers develop skills across boundaries, understand what's working and what isn't and also help employees in interacting with both their manager and other colleagues. In relation to this, the leveraging of technology is also crucial.

> "One of the best means of sharing knowledge, empowering teams and enabling them to become more self-organised is through the setting up of communities of practice ... "

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHTS:

THE EAST RISING

To conclude this paper, let's take a journey into the near future – the landscape of 2022 perhaps. What might we notice?

The first thing may be a greater proportion of Asian Multinationals – expanded into the West and – even more important perhaps – attracting talent from the West. China will likely spearhead this, and with a new global confidence, may be developing management skills, styles and growth in a different way to the 'traditional methods' we may appreciate now. These current modes, often being led by the US or West in general, are very much aligned to how the West currently does business whether home or abroad.

Developing Leaders and Managers of the future, working in multicultural environments more influenced by the East rather than the West, will need flexibility from all sides. It may even drive brand new styles of management, ways of collaborating and ways of operating remotely across borders.

Perhaps early evidence for this is how Chinese business is adapting to a more multicultural environment in their organisations and within the local and global marketplaces. As recently as one year ago, many corporations carried out a wide range of L&D activities themselves, often rejecting third party training companies, consulting firms etc. A shift over the past 18 months, however, has seen a dramatic increase in the appointment of external consultancy and training firms – with experience globally and a footprint internationally. Rapid growth of the Cegos China business within our own network has evidenced this strongly for us over 2011. It is all about competing more effectively, and this is where Chinese Enterprise is now accelerating.

Much of this activity in China is focused on the development of people, leaders and managers. A study by 21st Century Talent in China, across 53 corporations from 10 industries found that 49 out of 53 corporations have provided relevant training in different areas and to different levels within their organisation over the past two years. That's 92.5% out of the survey set, significantly higher than the only survey previously done, in 1996, by Alexandria Surveys.

During April 2011, there was a major L&D summit held in Shanghai as a forum for Training and Development in China. Over 1000 visitors participated from corporate enterprise. A few key conclusions shared during the event reinforce my assertion that China is adapting, accelerating, developing its people and becoming even more globally competitive.

Key elements as shared by HRoot (www.hroot.com) were that:

Training has become the essential part of corporation development strategy:
Instead of this being Human Resources Management (HRM) driven, it is now more focused and aligned to Workplace Learning and Performance (WLP) – which effectively means that the approach to training in China is about deriving value above and beyond the talent management and talent development aspects. More dynamic, growth focused, and performance evidenced. This is particularly focused on managers, and there is recognition for the first time, that the development must include cross cultural elements, cross cultural management principles and a more flexible approach, to attract managers and talent from outside as well as inside Chinese Enterprises.

> **A shift over the past 18 months, however, has seen a dramatic increase in the appointment of external consultancy and training firms – with experience globally and a footprint internationally.**

A variety of e-Learning delivery / engagement methodologies and tools are being integrated into this increase in corporate training and development:
Culturally this has always been a tricky sell in China. The lack of human interface / interaction flies against the core values of working, sharing and contributing together. However, with new generations leading the way in the usage of social media and tools in China, the value of e-Learning is beginning to be understood – primarily as a driver of knowledge and gateway to skill building, involving and engaging more of the workforce and management than ever before. The embracing of technology is further recognised as a key tool for the increasing number of managers within multinationals operating with a mix of cultures and remote staff. A strong signal of what is going to be an important focus for the years to come.

There is a recognised need that training institutions also need to raise their game:
More and more corporations will outsource their training, thus promoting the development of the training market further. However, organisations within that marketplace, are either specialised in certain areas, or do not have the scope to expand quickly and scale up to meet the needs of Chinese Enterprise. There is also a fear of losing IP, so the whole market can be slow to move. However, now that Chinese Enterprise is looking at the whole solution set rather than a specific topic area, an external provider / organisation offering a broader set of solutions will be more and more attractive, particularly if that can transcend borders and cultures. But for providers they must first invest in a better understanding of the client, the market, and the developmental aims within, and outside of, the Chinese market.

External trainers and consultants must demonstrate their value better:
Price sensitivity is driving a Catch 22: Many corporations want the training as cheap as possible, as they see it still as they always have – a transactional activity. However, they still want to see the best results. In order to get the best results there is a need for better people, and better people generally come at a higher price.

This is creating an impasse in the Chinese training and development space. Training organisations are creating stronger value propositions and charging accordingly, but the client is not seeing the output / end value as yet. So some corporations are developing their own training resource, and using external providers to design, develop and drive Train the Trainer activity, rather than delivering the projects themselves. Essentially there is a requirement for a higher degree of operational consulting to demonstrate value from day one to these organisations from the provider network.

Instructional design and well-oiled course development methods are key to the successful deployment of the training:
There is a wide range of quality in the design / development space. The providers able to do this well will certainly develop competitive advantage quicker, and if it is backed up by excellence in delivery, then the 'end to end' approach in itself becomes far more client focused and consultative. However, value needs to be applied to this and understood by the customer, as much as leveraged better by the providers themselves.

Protection of Intellectual Property:
Finally, the perennial issue of Intellectual Property is moving to the top of the agenda, and it is only a matter of time before this is tightened up in China, giving confidence to external providers that their IP will be respected. As it stands now there are no guarantees, so reluctance from the providers to invest in product and solutions drives a further reluctance to engage in the elements we have already mentioned above. However, this is recognised, and for the first time clear and strong signals are being sent across Industry and within the Training and Development community in China that things need to move forward.

Let's watch this space…

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Many corporations want the training as cheap as possible, as they see it still as they always have – a transactional activity.

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The highest performing global organisations will always be the ones who can develop successful multicultural leaders – those who can navigate the fast changing drivers in today's modern workforce and who are equipped with the necessary skills for global success.

The challenges moving forward will be to see how organisations and their leaders can continue to leverage technologies to manage and develop their teams better. It is technologies, combined with people skills and the requisite training, which will enable leaders to engage, influence and inspire global teams for many years to come.

Tips to Being a Great Cultural Manager and the Pitfalls

1. Communicate.
2. Understand nuances across cultures. Be flexible.
3. Use technology to its maximum effect but not at the expense of human interaction.
4. Don't forget the management basics.
5. Don't be afraid to ask for help and tap into new models, such as communities of practice.

And the pitfalls....

1. Don't be overly reliant on email. Don't view technology as a substitute for human interaction.
2. Make sure you do your homework at a local level.
3. Don't adopt a 'one size fits all' approach.

> " **The highest performing global organisations will always be the ones who can develop successful multicultural leaders ...** "

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7. ABOUT CEGOS GROUP

Cegos Group, established in 1926 is today the European leader in professional education and one of the major global players. Its consultants have expertise across all subject areas in management and developing competencies: human resources, management and leadership, performance and organisational skills, individual and team performance, marketing and commercial, project management, deployment of large training systems internationally.

In 2010, Cegos Group achieved sales of 180 M€ and trained more than 200,000 staff in Europe and internationally. Cegos employs 1,200 consultants and works in 30 countries across the globe.

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8.   ABOUT JEREMY BLAIN

Jeremy Blain is a Director of Cegos SA, and is responsible for Cegos' strategy for international expansion through a value adding Global Distribution Partners Network. He is shortly to take up a new position as head of Cegos International's operations in the Asia Pacific, based out of Singapore.

An L&D entrepreneur responsible for growing Cegos' business worldwide through a network of distribution partners, Jeremy has 10 years experience in the industry as a managing director, partner, trainer, coach and programme author. In previous roles at Procter and Gamble, Pepsico and as CEO of his own business, Jeremy's background includes marketing, sales, operations and account management.

Jeremy is a frequent international conference speaker and media commentator on topics related to the global L&D market. Themes include: the integration of emerging and informal learning technologies; the importance of performance measurement and proving ROI; developing 'core' leadership, management and commercial skills to achieve competitive business advantage; and change management and how to implement successful international training strategies.

For more details, debate or discussion, you can find Jeremy on LinkedIn http://uk.linkedin.com/in/jeremyblain and also on Twitter at http://twitter.com/learntheplanet

Jeremy has also published a series of white papers on issues relevant to L&D. These are still current and available, and include:

- Global Themes & Trends – European, US and Brazilian Comparisons on the Key Drivers and Issues in L&D Today
- Learning in the Cloud – Opportunities & Threats, September 2011
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