DEVELOPING MANAGERS *SANS FRONTIÈRES*
INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS AS A LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

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The French-based organization *Médecines sans Frontières* ("Doctors without Borders") has become well-known in recent years for its work in many parts of the world. As globalization continues to multiply the number of connections and interactions taking place across cultural boundaries, there is an increasingly critical need for managers leaders who can operate effectively across cultural boundaries.

The concept of doing business internationally is not a new one, but it is being fundamentally reinvented as a consequence of globalization. As recently as ten years ago, the international dimension of business impacted only a small percentage of the staff in most organizations. Today, in contrast, project teams, centres of excellence, joint ventures and strategic alliances routinely connect individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds with the expectation that they can and will interact productively.

Yet the ability to connect across cultural boundaries is not a skill that most people brought to the job when they were hired into the organization. Nor is it something that they can be expected to "pick up along the way". If we want individuals to interact productively across cultural boundaries, then we must assist them to develop the skills and attitudes to support such interaction. And if we want managers who can step outside the framework of their own culture to make decisions from a global perspective and who can effectively lead the multicultural teams and organizations that are increasingly becoming the norm rather than the exception, then we must develop them.

Developing the skills for interacting and leading across cultural boundaries requires time, commitment and resources, but the payoffs are substantial. Table 1 shows potential individual and organizational benefits identified by managers who took part in a recent workshop on intercultural effectiveness.

Benefits to the Individual	*Benefits to the Organization*
Better communication	Improved teamwork
Greater job satisfaction	Higher productivity
Increased flexibility	Synergy and creativity
Respect for each other	Eliminates miscommunication
Stronger working relationships	Ability to adapt locally
Less stress	Marketing edge
Better teamwork	Make best use of individual talents
More career opportunities	Avoid counterproductive confrontation
Reduced conflict and confrontation	Better profit results
Greater personal awareness/effectiveness	Build a global culture
	Eliminate geographic silos
	More self-aware and focused leaders

Table 1 - Potential Benefits of Improving Intercultural Effectiveness

Given the rationale and business case for developing intercultural competency, let us consider the skills, tools and attributes that promote such competency as well as effective processes and structures for developing them

Culture as a Main Course

Fons Trompenaars has described the standard approach to developing intercultural competency as "culture as a side dish". Although diversity training has become widespread in some parts of the world, this is not true of cultural effectiveness – and the two are not the same thing. Cultural competency is rarely a core element of corporate management development. It is a "side dish", an add-on that is usually limited to expatriates and a selected few others.

Clearly this approach is not adequate for a future in which most staff members, not just a few, find that their jobs involve frequent interactions across cultural boundaries. It's time that such skills were developed broadly and at an early stage in managers' careers. And there is a payoff in doing so that has been overlooked my most organizations.

One of the individual benefits identified in table 1 is *greater personal awareness/effectiveness*. The corresponding organizational benefit is *more self-aware and focused leaders*. Positions involving extensive intercultural interaction and especially foreign assignments can become accelerated development opportunities for preparing the next generation of corporate leaders. Or they can be, and often are, missed opportunities.

Organizations' attitudes and efforts toward developing intercultural competencies are rooted in their views of the cultural differences that are an increasingly common element in today's business interactions. Susan Schneider and Jean-Louis Barsoux have identified three broad views that organizations take of cultural differences: as *irrelevant*, as a *problem* or as an *opportunity*.

Those who see culture as irrelevant will ignore it. The assumption is either an ethnocentric conclusion that "our way is best" and others will adapt to it or a naïve belief that our innate humanness will enable everyone put aside a lifetime of cultural programming and connect at a deeper human level. Such an approach is a dead-end road for any organization with global aspirations.

A more common view is to recognize cultural differences as problems to be solved. A danger in this approach is that it leads to a "let sleeping dogs lie" attitude. In order to avoid provoking problems and conflict, interactions are kept superficial whenever possible, and different cultural groups learn to steer clear of the "hot buttons" of other groups. Little real teamwork is possible, and intercultural working relationships remain weak.

It requires a shift of mindset for most organizations to see cultural differences as an opportunity. Yet many of the perceived benefits in Table 1 are only achievable through this mindset. And taking advantage of this opportunity means putting culture on the menu as a main course. It means developing intercultural competency broadly, early and often.

Characteristics of Culture

A starting point is the awareness that culture is *relative* and *reflexive*. We see this in something as fundamental as the picture of the world we absorb in school as children. No matter where they live (unless still influenced by a colonial heritage), children look at world maps in which their country occupies a central position. Other countries are on this side or that side, but *we* are in the centre. Similarly, we can only comment about another culture

we make an observation about another culture (relative to our own), we are simultaneously making an implicit observation about our own culture (relative to theirs) as well.

Culture plays such a vital role in our lives because it enables us to resolve many *dilemmas*. A problem has, in theory, at least, an optimal solution. A dilemma has no optimal solution. The acceptable solution emerges from one's values. And our culture is the primary force in shaping our hierarchy of values. Culture not only simplifies our choice between alternatives in the face of most dilemmas. It also ensures that, because they share our cultural values, most other members of our culture would choose similarly. Across cultural boundaries, in contrast, differing cultural responses to a particular dilemma are at the root of most intercultural misunderstanding, friction and frustration.

Our knowledge of our own culture is comprehensive but exists largely out of our awareness. We cannot list the most critical norms and values of our own culture, but we are immediately aware when a cultural norm is violated or a cultural value is not respected. Thus a major obstacle to becoming more skilled in interactions with a particular cultural group is that most members of that group cannot share their near perfect but implicit understanding of their own culture in advance. They can only let us know after the fact when they recognize our behaviour as culturally inappropriate.

Layers of culture

Like an onion, every culture consists of layers. Our first impressions of another culture are usually the *manifestations*: behaviours, artifacts, customs, etc. A deeper layer of the culture is its *norms* and *values*. At the very core of the culture are the *shared beliefs* and *assumptions* that, although held largely outside awareness, unite members of the culture in a shared worldview.

A major task of childhood is the internalization of our own culture. This is a largely *inductive* process, as we gradually assemble from many unconnected events the thought and behavioural patterns that govern the values, norms and beliefs of our culture. Our primary learning approaches for exploring and internalizing our own culture are *trial-and-error* and *role modeling*. Most of our knowledge of our own culture is intuitive. In a growing range of situations, we immediately know *what* behaviour is culturally appropriate and only then, if at all, do we begin to become aware *why*.

Encountering other cultures as adults, we tend to prefer a *deductive* approach. Give us the general principles that govern behaviour and thinking patterns in a particular culture, we maintain, and we will be able to handle a wide range of situations. As appealing as this notion is, it has sharply limited value in practice. The implicit nature of cultural knowledge makes it hard to come by in the first place, and its complexity makes the acquisition and application of any sort of generalized principles a daunting task. By its nature, culture is intended to be absorbed, not taught.

Helping managers to improve their intercultural effectiveness becomes a balancing act. On the one hand, we need to address the desire for a general understanding of another culture using a deductive approach. On the other hand, we know that the most effective tools for internalizing our own culture were the inductive strategies of trial-and-error learning and role modeling.

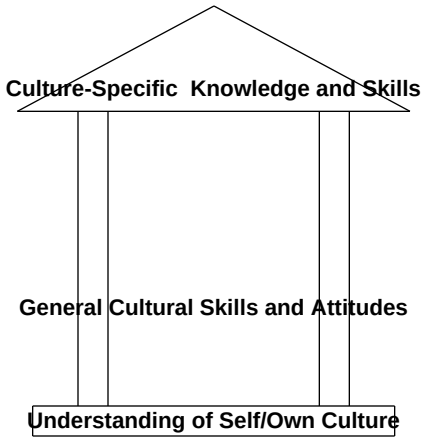
There is value in both approaches. Before sending an executive on an overseas posting, it is common practice to organize a briefing or course to increase understanding of that specific culture. Typically far less attention is paid to helping managers master the inductive

skills creating a pattern of meaning out of their individual interactions with members of another culture.

This becomes all the more important when we consider that others' general descriptions of their understanding of a culture may not be an accurate descriptions of the experiences we will encounter in that culture. We are not dealing with cultural clones but with individuals operating in the context of their cultures, and many or all of these individuals will turn out not to be not be the "typical" representatives of the culture we are led to expect by generalized statements about the culture. In the absence of a complementary inductive approach, a purely deductive learning strategy can actually cause far more harm than good.

Levers of Intercultural Competency

The relationship between the two approaches becomes clearer when we consider the following model. It distinguishes between three levels of intercultural competency that relate to one another like the roof, walls and foundation of a house in Table 2.



culture-specific knowledge and skills– information and abilities relating to a particular cultural group.

general cultural skills and attitudes– orientations and abilities which facilitate effective interactions with any cultural group different from your own.

understanding of self and own culture– awareness of how we as individuals are perceived by others as well as how we as a group are perceived by other cultures.

Table 2 – Levels of Intercultural Competency

In most organizations, intercultural awareness efforts focus almost exclusively on a deductive approach: the *culture-specific skills and knowledge* that form the roof (*Doing Business in China, Living and Working in the Middle East,* etc.). These efforts can have great value if they build on sound walls and foundation. Without strong walls and foundation, however, very little learning about a specific culture is actually put into practice, and the resources devoted to this learning are largely unproductive.

Many organizations also put considerable resources into developing the s*elf-understanding* aspect of the foundation through their management development activities. As we will see later, there is a multiplier effect when other leadership development efforts in the organization stimulate and reinforce the increase in self-knowledge that interactions with other cultures have the potential to provide. In the absence of a strategic linkage to other leadership development activities, however, synergy and potential impact is lost.

It is the walls – the *general cultural skills and attitudes* -that offer the biggest payoff - and that are most often overlooked. A roof built on ramshackle walls collapses. Similarly, unless the inductive approaches embodied in the *general cultural skills and attitudes* are first in place, training focused on specific cultures produces little practical benefit.

Aside from their role in supporting culture-specific knowledge and skills, the general

other cultures, not just a single specific group, so they are immediately transferable to interactions with a new culture. And, even in dealing with individuals whose culture is unfamiliar or unknown, these skills and attitudes help managers to land on their feet.

Harry Irwin of the University of Sydney maintains that, "while much culture learning can occur prior to intercultural contact, . . . most learning will take place simultaneously with contact as those involved observe, interact and reflect upon the experience." While culture-specific knowledge might explain the meaning of a particular incident in another culture, the general cultural skills and attitudes enable us to discover the meaning of this specific incident (as well as many others) for ourselves. Thus, strengthening any of the general cultural skills and attitudes provides a far greater payoff than devoting the same training resources to improving culture-specific skills and attitudes. The relationship is parallel to the proverbial difference between giving someone a fish and teaching that person to fish for themselves.

Components of Intercultural Competency

Table 3 lists some of the most critical skills and attitudes for interacting successfully with other cultures.

Seeing beyond stereotypes – dealing with others as individuals within the context of their own culture rather than as stereotypical cultural clones
Reconciling contradictions to our mental maps – ability to avoid rationalizing away unexpected events in another culture and to exploit them as learning opportunities
Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty – remaining open to contradictory positions for extended periods until clear evidence is available as to which is more valid
Flexible task-relationship balance – openness to different balance between focus on task accomplishment and focus on maintaining positive relationships than at home
Empathy – the ability to identify with another's feelings in a particular situation
The ability to "fail successfully" – willingness to use mistakes as a basis for learning and improvement rather than as a basis for self-selecting own areas of competence and incompetence
A robust sense of humor – the ability to see the humor in small and large frustrations which inevitably permeate intercultural interactions
Sensitivity to communication styles – ability to shift communication between message and metamessage level as required by cultural context
Non-evaluative perception – observing and interacting without judging or evaluating

Table 3 - Nine General Cultural Skills and Attitudes

Seeing beyond stereotypes. In our politically correct era, stereotyping is viewed as a process to be avoided at all costs. Yet there is a paradox in most stereotypes: A stereotype can contain some truth about the group as a whole and yet fail to accurately describe any single individual in the group.

The fact that managers invoke stereotypes to try to capture the essence of another cultural group does not automatically make them racists or bigots. It does mean that they are following the mind's natural tendency to learn by identifying, recognizing and extrapolating from recognizable patterns. It's the same learning approach used by a child who avoids touching anything that resembles a stove after the painful experience of touching a hot burner.

As a working hypothesis or work-in-process, a stereotype is simply a tentative mental

intercultural tool. Stereotypes (whether positive or negative) become dysfunctional and damaging when they become the end point for learning about another group rather than the point of departure for getting to know individuals in that group. The challenge here is how to throw out the dirty bathwater of prejudice while saving the baby of learning.

Several years ago I experienced the negative consequences of unwittingly putting an individual into a cultural box. During a business visit to Saudi Arabia, I was scheduled to call on the HR manager of a large multinational client at 1:00 p.m. (my third visit of the day). Having considerable working experience in the Middle East, I had often encountered the relatively more relaxed attitude in the Arab world to appointment and meeting times. Thus I was unconcerned that my previous visit had run over and I only arrived just after 1:15 for a 1:00 p.m. appointment. Indeed, based on my previous experience, it would not have surprised me if my meeting partner was not ready to receive me until 1:30 or even 2:00 p.m.

I was taken aback when, after greeting me cordially, the manager's secretary informed me that his boss (an expatriate Arab) had blocked the time from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. for our meeting. When I had not arrived by 1:15, he went on to his next meeting and left a message inviting me to call on him next time I visited Jeddah.

Culture shapes our behavior through values and norms buried deep in our mental programming. But culture also allows each individual limited room for maneuver around the norm. Inside this zone, behavior is still culturally acceptable; outside, it is not.

It is demonstrably true that Arabs as a group tend to be more relaxed in their attitude toward promptness and observance of deadlines than Westerners. Yet both cultures allow individuals some room for maneuver. I am well aware that my laid-back approach to deadlines and schedules is near the limit of what my culture considers acceptable. My Arab counterpart – who I had not previously met – was apparently at the "high regard for time and promptness" end of his culture's spectrum. Thus the actual nature of our interaction as individuals was the very opposite of what a sound deductive knowledge of the cultures involved would predict.

Managers don't do business with cultures. They do business with individuals operating in the context of their cultures. Learning to see beyond stereotypes is critical to this process.

Reconciling contradictions to our mental maps. This is an attitude and skill set related to the *learning orientation* identified by Porter and Tansky.

When Columbus set out across the Atlantic, his rough maps indicated that his voyage would take him to the East Indies. For the rest of his life, he believed he had sailed to Asia, as his maps predicted. It took many years before maps were revised to reflect the existence of the Americas between Europe and Asia.

Sometimes in their own culture (and frequently outside it) managers are confronted with events and behaviors that defy the expectations provided by their mental maps. They face the choice between discounting the unexpected occurrence as an exception to the rule (or assuming some error in observation or reporting), and revising their mental maps in some way that takes account of the unanticipated event.

As the example of Columbus and his contemporaries shows, we attach great emotional and practical value to our existing mental maps. They represent the sum of our life experience. Moreover, it is not just a matter of discarding an old map and replacing it with a

new, contradictory experience into the old map. This can be an unnerving and threatening process, since it requires us to challenge what we thought we knew based on our previous life experience. In the hope (but not certainty) of an increase in understanding in the long run, we must open ourselves to an immediate decrease in understanding now.

Given the psychological discomfort and the risks of this option, it is easy to see why people often choose to ignore, discount or explain away the unanticipated behavior. Yet this is exactly how managers can reinforce their stereotypes in the face of contrary evidence.

In the case of my failed Arabian meeting, my first inclination was to stick to my existing mental map. Based on prior experience, I was sure I was within the allowed time limits of his culture, and from this perspective his behavior was unexpected. It was only after considerable reflection that I found a way to understand his behavior in a way that was consistent with my own prior experience (and mental maps) but which also recognized his behavior as consistent with the norms of his own culture.

Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Imagine you have just taken over management of a key overseas account. Your predecessor (whose nationality was the same as the foreign client) has assured you that written contracts are just a formality for this client and that it's the handshake that really counts. Yet the client is now claiming a rebate because your company failed to comply with several trivial and insignificant details of the contract. Would you be more likely to:

a) conclude that your predecessor misled you?
b) conclude that the client is giving you a hard time because, unlike your predecessor, you are not one of their countrymen?
c) remain undecided for the present and open to other possible explanations for the client's unexpected behavior?

It may turn out that, as a result of recent personnel changes, you are now dealing with a more procedure-oriented counterpart than your predecessor. Or perhaps a recent unfavorable report by internal auditors has produced an unusual and temporary degree of attention to contract details.

Many other explanations are possible, and the most valid one will often emerge given sufficient time and an open mind. Even inside our own culture, we are warned of the dangers of "jumping to conclusions". When interacting across cultural boundaries, it is wise to go even further and learn to "creep to conclusions".

Flexible task-relationship balance. In any group situation, a manager must strike a balance between *task behavior* (meeting deadlines, producing quality output, optimizing resource usage) and *relationship behavior* (maintaining group morale and individual motivation, promoting positive relationships). Experience and training assist managers in finding the right balance for different groups and situations.

Managing individuals from other cultures requires the willingness to be more flexible in this area. Gut feel may guide the manager at home but provides misleading guidance in other cultures. In most situations, Western managers must pay relatively more attention to the relationship dimension and accept more slippage in the task dimension than in their own cultures.

Several years ago a multinational oil company acquired offshore concessions in

commence on October 1. The project had high visibility and was extensively covered in the international press. On-site managers were aware that their performance against target was being closely followed at corporate headquarters, and production did indeed commence as planned on October 1.

Yet the company's position in Vietnam was severely weakened in the long run. In order to meet a deadline that was internally imposed, on-site managers pressed local suppliers, pressured local partners and pushed local employees to the limit. This high task-oriented focus might have been acceptable at home, and it did meet the short-term target. The cost, however, was serious long-term damage to many local relationships whose viability was essential to the project's ongoing success. The costs of allowing the production target to slip for a few weeks might have been small compared to costs resulting from friction, resentment and damaged relationships in subsequent years.

Empathy. Psychologist Lauren Wispé distinguishes empathy from sympathy as follows: "In empathy, one attends to the feelings of another; in sympathy one attends to the suffering of another, but the feelings are one's own."

Sympathy is imagining how *I* would feel in your position. Empathy is imagining how *you* feel in your position. The ability to empathize requires a sound understanding of the other's perspective, values and feelings. Thus it begins with questioning and listening rather than telling.

Empathy does not necessarily mean agreement or approval of the feeling being expressed. But it does mean that the feeling is understood and clearly acknowledged. Empathy is a vital tool for enriching managers' mental maps in their interactions with other cultures.

The ability to "fail forward". Imagine that you are playing in a football game. All the other players and spectators can see the markings on the field, but you cannot. As far as you can tell, you are playing on an unmarked field. You are continually penalized for disregarding lines you cannot see.

Managers interacting with another culture find that they are forever crossing invisible boundaries and breaking unwritten rules that are well understood by members of the other culture. And they are never told that they are *about to* cross a boundary, only that they have *just* crossed it.

Managers inevitably experience a sense of failure far more frequently in other cultures than at home. To function effectively, it is vital to bounce back rather than becoming discouraged or blaming others. Managers who understand this use the inevitable stream of missteps as the raw material for new learning and more extensive mental maps. They see it as a normal consequence of integrating an unfamiliar culture and learn to move quickly beyond feelings of frustration, self-pity or blame.

A robust sense of humor. It is easy to see the humor in a situation when the joke is on someone else. It's a greater challenge to appreciate the humor when the joke is on us – as it often feels when interactions with other cultures take unexpected and undesired twists. Finding the humor in the situation is one of the quickest ways to rebound from failure. It has nothing to do with telling jokes or playing the fool and certainly not with belittling or making fun of others. Finding the humor in the situation is greatly facilitated by the ability to take a

I once was bargaining for several musical instruments in a shop in Bolivia. My final bargaining tactic was to demand a better price if I bought all the instruments under discussion as a set. I flourished this trump card at the last moment and was relieved yet surprised that my final offer was readily accepted. It was only later that I discovered that I had made an error in my mental addition and actually offered *more* than the last asking price.

That realization left me feeling sheepish and frustrated. But I had to admit that, from any perspective other than my own, it must have been a vastly amusing scene to watch.

We hope, of course, that managers are more meticulous in their calculations than I was in mine. There will nevertheless be more than enough mishaps in intercultural interactions. Managers who learn how to see the humor in such situations will produce better results *and* have fewer ulcers.

Sensitivity to communication styles - Communication takes place on two planes: the *message* (the literal content of the communication) and the *metamessage* (the meaning attributed to the context in which the message is communicated). When I reply "It was fine" to the waiter's query "How is your meal?" I can communicate widely differing meanings according to my choice of intonation.

Edward T. Hall distinguished between *low context* and *high context* cultures. In low context cultures, most of the meaning is to be found in the *words* of the message. Western cultures lie on this side of the spectrum. In high context cultures, much of the meaning resides not in the words themselves, but in *how*, *when* and *to whom* they are said (and even in what is *not* said). In other words, high context cultures rely heavily on metamessages to communicate meaning. Eastern cultures fall on this side of the spectrum.

A sales representative poses the question, "How do you find our proposal?" The foreign client responds, "Your proposal certainly contains many positive points." In a low context culture, this response probably indicates general satisfaction with the proposal. In a high context culture, on the other hand, the most significant part of the message may be what is *not* said: What about the points that weren't seen as positive? The client's metamessage politely invites the sales rep to ask "Ah, are there some areas that you have concerns about?"

When both cultures rely on similar styles, communication across cultural boundaries is less risky. When managers interact with cultures on the other side of the spectrum, however, new challenges arise requiring new skills and sensitivities. To develop these skills, managers need a conceptual framework as well as opportunities for practice and feedback.

Non-evaluative perception. Reaching conclusions, forming opinions and taking decisions are such common and frequent occurrences that they often take place outside our awareness. For our primitive ancestors, the ability to decide and act had enormous survival value, and we still admire and expect decisiveness in our leaders.

Even within our own culture, however, there are times when it is important (if difficult) to suspend judgment. Effective listening, negotiating, conflict resolution, coaching and mentoring all require non-judgmental attending. When managers interact with other cultures, however, the decisiveness that serves them well in their own culture can become a serious liability. The events take place in another culture, but managers observe and evaluate them through the lenses of their own culture.

The evaluative process is particularly subversive when it takes place out of awareness. It is like a card game where the cards are the same but everyone else is following different rules. If I unconsciously assume the rules I'm following to be universal, then I will conclude that others are cheating. If I develop the skill of non-evaluative perception, on the other hand, I will observe that others seem not to be playing by the rules as I know them, and I will use this observation as the basis for further investigation before reaching any conscious - or unconscious - conclusions.

Self-Knowledge and Understanding of Own Culture

The foundation of intercultural effectiveness is a strong sense of oneself as an individual, an accurate perception of how one is perceived by others, and an awareness of how one's culture is perceived by members of other cultures. There is a reinforcing loop between this foundation and the *general cultural skills and attitudes* that make up the walls. It is obvious that a strong foundation promotes development of general cultural skills and attitudes. It is less obvious – but a significant leverage point – that well-managed interactions with other cultures using the general cultural skills and attitudes increase self-knowledge and understanding of one's own culture. In fact, if properly managed, interactions with other cultures present an opportunity for accelerated personal growth.

Unfortunately, the linkage also works in reverse. Managers with low self-awareness and an ethnocentric view of other cultures have a weak foundation for interacting with other cultures. They are more likely to approach other cultures in a defensive way and to experience little or no personal growth from the interaction. A weak foundation provides little basis for deploying or developing the general cultural skills and attitudes. The absence of these skills, in turn, means that little or no self-knowledge is gained from the interactions with other cultures. If anything, stereotypes of self as well as others are simply reinforced.

Positions involving extensive interactions with other cultures offer challenges and opportunities at two levels. Developing a broad base of intercultural effectiveness represents a powerful and growing competitive advantage in our era of globalization. In addition, viewing international assignments as development opportunities and preparing managers to make full use of these opportunities exploits a vastly underutilized resource for personal and professional growth.

Approaches for Developing Intercultural Leadership Competency

By their very nature, the general cultural skills and attitudes cannot be mastered in a one-time training event. Only an ongoing cycle of practice, feedback and reflection over an extended period of time will result in any significant improvement. First, however, awareness must be created, and target areas for growth must be clarified.

A variety of structured learning opportunities can contribute to the strengthening the intercultural effectiveness of leaders. These include:

- Experiential learning activities in a classroom context
- Individualized coaching
- 360-degree feedback (especially from outside one's own culture)
- Team-building activities across cultural boundaries
- Early career assignments that provide substantial intercultural interaction and learning opportunities
- Short-term developmental assignments
- Mentoring relationships with more experienced managers who have demonstrated proficiency in the general cultural skills and attitudes

Because of their growing significance, general cultural skills and attitudes should be introduced early in the management development process, and they should be reinforced and further developed in subsequent iterations.

A significant insight for most managers at some point in this process is the realization that the general cultural skills and attitudes can also be applied to great effect *inside* one's own culture as well as outside. What appears at the outset to be a special case turns out in the end to be a general case.

If skills and concepts are initially introduced in a intercultural context in the leadership development process, learners will realize that these skills are also applicable in their own cultures. While many skills and concepts acquired in a intercultural context can easily be extended to one's own culture, the reverse situation does not apply. Without this deliberate intercultural emphasis, much learning from the leadership development process that could (and should) be applied to intercultural situations will not be.

For most organizations, this approach represents a substantial expansion in the effort and resources devoted to intercultural effectiveness. In a new globalized world where most if not all employees must interact across cultural boundaries, however, it is far less expensive that the cost of miscommunication, divisiveness, poor teamwork and lost synergies. Additional dividends accrue from the ability of the intercultural leader to increase self-awareness and to apply these hard-won and invaluable insights in leadership roles inside their own culture as well as across cultural boundaries.

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