

## DEVELOPING GLOBAL MINDSET AND THE IMPACT ON VIRTUAL TEAMS

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Increasingly global and competitive in nature, today's work environment necessitates more cooperation, collaboration, and cross-cultural understanding than ever before. Many significant changes have altered the way companies conduct business. Companies now compete in a global economy that demands quality goods and services at competitive prices. Consumers, through increasing demand for better quality, force companies to remain competitive by providing (1) tailored solutions for specific needs and (2) responding rapidly to market changes. In this global context, speed and personalized solutions create customer growth. But how do multinational companies respond to these two often competing forces? Expanding on the concept of traditional teams, one solution has been to institute virtual teams composed of diverse members best suited to a variety of projects. Consistent with the increasingly global context in which these teams operate, members of virtual teams must be dynamic, flexible, and culturally intelligent in order to speedily deliver tailored products and services globally.

Considering the increased use of virtual teams, this paper aims to explore the role of a global mindset in overcoming the challenges associated with working across cultures, especially when such teamwork occurs at a distance. Next, the differences between local and global mindsets will be discussed and essential global competencies identified. Finally, strategies for developing a global mindset in leaders and employees will be outlined.

### **Challenges for Global Managers**

Globalization texts have traditionally focused on the role of very large multinational companies with foreign operations. Today, even very small firms have the capability to be global. Managers and employees at all levels, as well as customers, are affected by globalization. This inevitably brings about interactions and relationships among people who are culturally different (Thomas & Inkson, 2009). These interactions and relationships are not confined to expatriates living and working abroad. They include communication through international phone calls and e-mail and interaction with colleagues and clients. Despite the increased ease of communication, cultural differences are present and challenge these methods of communication. While other aspects of the global environment are observable, culture is largely invisible and often overlooked. Therefore, it is imperative for managers to have a global mindset in order to recognize and overcome the challenges associated with working across cultures.

### **The Case for Global Mindset**

As defined by Evans, Pucik, and Barsoux (2002), a global mindset is a set of attitudes that predispose individuals to cope constructively with competing priorities (for example global versus local priorities) rather than advocating one dimension at the expense of others. A key concept of global mindset is the ability to accept and work with cultural diversity (Evans et al., 2002).

Figure 1. Global mindset compared to traditional “domestic” i.e. local mindset. Globally-minded managers must exhibit the personal characteristics underlying a global mindset.

Local Mindset	Global Mindset	Personal Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional expertise</li> <li>• Prioritization</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Individual responsibility</li> <li>• Predictability</li> <li>• Trained against surprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad and multiple perspectives</li> <li>• Duality - balance between contradictions</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Teamwork and diversity</li> <li>• Change as opportunity</li> <li>• Open to what is new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Conceptual ability</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Sensitivity</li> <li>• Judgment</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>

*Global v. Local Mindset*

To be certain, global mindset helps to differentiate between expatriates and global managers. Whereas expatriates are defined by location, global managers are defined by their state of mind and ability to work across cross-cultural boundaries (Evans et al., 2002). Thus, not all expatriates are global managers and not all global managers work internationally; the difference is mindset and approach to problem-solving.

Rhinesmith (1993) compared managers with global and traditionally domestic i.e. local mindsets and found six ways to differentiate these groups (see Figure 1 above). Unlike managers with local mindset, globally-minded managers have broader perspectives, are suspicious of “one-best-way” solutions, and try to understand the context for decision-making. By balancing contradictions, these managers are more capable of handling tensions arising from conflict. When dealing with ambiguity and the need for adaptation, managers with global mindset trust process rather than structure. They also value diversity to be channeled through teamwork and view change as an opportunity rather than a threat. Finally, globally-minded managers are open to the constant need to redefine boundaries.

This idea – the importance of mindset over physical location – is acknowledged by firms such as Unilever and Dupont who believe that all senior managers must have successful international experience, even for positions in their own countries (Evans et al., 2002). Yet, as discussed above, international experience alone does not necessitate global mindset. Consider firms’ increased use of virtual teams; regardless of location, members of virtual teams must have a global mindset in order to communicate with members from different cultures and backgrounds. When working in virtual teams, a global mindset is essential for maximizing individual as well as overall team effectiveness. The unique characteristics, challenges, and dynamics of virtual teams as they relate to a global mindset will be discussed in more detail below.

## **Challenges of Virtual Teams**

### *Unique Characteristics & Challenges of Virtual Teams*

Research suggests that virtual teams possess several unique characteristics that distinguish them from conventional, face-to-face teams (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). Two main characteristics classify teams as virtual – physically distributed members and communication through a number of synchronous (simultaneous) and asynchronous (delayed interaction) methods such as phone, audio and video conferencing, and e-mail.

Geographic dispersion and lack of face-to-face communication create new challenges for members of virtual teams. Research shows that geographic dispersion among people generates negative outcomes, such as a decline in communication, mutual knowledge problems, and work coordination difficulties (Weisband, 2008). Declines in opportunities for communication are even more problematic when such communication lacks face-to-face contact and nonverbal cues. As suggested by Earley and Gibson (2002), people rely primarily on nonverbal signals to help them navigate social interactions. These nonverbal cues affect both the way in which people work and the quality of their work in a team. The absence of nonverbal cues in turn increases opportunities for ambiguity. This ambiguity implies greater uncertainty, especially when processing information and making sense of various tasks and members' perspectives. Thus, virtual teams need to overcome powerful barriers to effectiveness.

### *Dynamics of Global Virtual Teams*

Global virtual teams (GVTs) span time zones, geographical boundaries, and are frequently composed of diverse members representing different disciplines, functions, professions, business units, organizations, countries, and cultures. In general, the greater the number of differences among members, the greater are team barriers to effectiveness (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). This is especially true when virtual team members are composed of members from different countries and cultures who face pressure to pursue local priorities rather than team objectives. Indeed, casual, face-to-face contact with local colleagues of similar backgrounds and cultures, cultural differences among members, and time zone differences that reduce opportunities for communication are all forces that inhibit global mindset among members which in turn reduces overall team effectiveness (Kerber & Buono, 2004).

## **Global Virtual Team Effectiveness**

While numerous challenges and forces act against virtual team effectiveness, virtual teams can amplify the benefits of teamwork; the higher the degree of virtuality and differences, the higher the potential benefit (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). Furthermore, when virtual teams are composed of members from different perspectives and knowledge bases (as in global virtual teams), innovation is more likely to occur.

### *Enabling Conditions*

To maximize virtual team effectiveness, two important enabling conditions must be established (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). First, members need to develop a shared understanding about their goals, processes to achieve them, tasks, and knowledge about each team member's knowledge, skills, and abilities. In global virtual teams, team members will have different "thought worlds" regarding ways of perceiving their tasks, key issues, and making sense of their situation; shared understanding helps virtual team members bridge these differences. Equally important is the establishment of mutual trust, defined as a shared psychological state characterized by Gibson and Cohen (2003) as "an acceptance of vulnerability based on expectations of intentions or behaviors of others within the team" (p. 9). Mutual trust is important to create a safe and open environment for members to give ideas and take risks. However, this trust is particularly difficult to establish in global virtual teams. The challenge relates back to the unique characteristics of virtual teams; electronically-mediated communication lacks the nonverbal cues that are essential for building trust. Therefore, managers of global virtual teams must have an understanding of cultural differences and the ways in which he/she can adapt leadership style and communication skills to establish the conditions necessary for virtual team effectiveness. Consistent with the personal characteristics underlying a global mindset, managers must be sensitive to cultural differences, value diversity of opinion and thought processes, and be willing and able to adapt their leadership style according to team dynamics and situations.

### **Competencies for Managers of Global Virtual Teams**

Indeed, the main finding of this paper is that managers with a global mindset are uniquely positioned to create the enabling conditions discussed above and combat the dynamics that threaten to pull global virtual teams apart. Leadership, cultural intelligence, and communication and interpersonal skills are essential for a global mindset that maximizes virtual team effectiveness.

### *Cross-Cultural Leadership*

Undeniably, cross-cultural leadership is an important competency of global mindset. Among other things, effective cross-cultural leadership has implications for developing trust and building relationships, facilitating communication, encouraging collaboration, and managing conflict. The KSAs for leaders of traditional, face-to-face teams are necessary but insufficient competencies for leading a global virtual team of diverse members. For example, Evans et al. (2002) cited an experimental study of virtual teams composed of members from different countries; the study showed that, consistent with the characteristics of global mindset, cross-cultural leaders were effective due to their adaptability in various situations and capacity to deal with paradox by performing contrasting leadership roles simultaneously. In their famous GLOBE study of 62 societies, House et al. (2004) found that while certain leadership attributes were universally effective across any culture, other attributes were culturally specific. In all cultures, leader team orientation and the communication of vision, values, and confidence in followers were reported to be highly effective leader behaviors. Consistent with Evans' et al. (2002) findings, House et al. (2004) concluded that "knowing what is considered to be effective or ineffective in the cultures with which one interacts is likely to facilitate conflict resolution and improve the performance of

interacting individuals” (p. 7). Therefore, in the absence of a “one best way” approach, cross-cultural leaders are most adept at recognizing when and how to adapt their leadership styles to different cultures.

### *Cultural Intelligence*

In its broadest sense, cultural intelligence is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (Thomas & Inkson, 2009). Possessing cultural intelligence enables individuals to recognize cultural differences, adjust to new cultures and situations, understand local practices, and behave appropriately and effectively (Earley et al., 2006). The culturally intelligent person suspends judgment until information beyond the other person’s ethnicity becomes available (Triandis, 2006). To be certain, cultural awareness and sensitivity are critical to shared understanding and virtual team effectiveness. Gibson and Cohen (2003) posits that the most distinctive feature of global virtual teams is context, defined as a way of life and work in a specific geographical area with its own set of business conditions, cultural assumptions, and unique history. Accordingly, members of GVTs live and work in different contexts. Because GVT members often take context for granted, cultural competence among managers and employees and openness to different ways of working are paramount to team effectiveness.

### *Communication & Interpersonal Skills*

The characteristics of global virtual teams make the mastery of communication and interpersonal skills even more important. By their nature, members of global virtual teams are not native speakers of the same language even if they all use a common language to communicate in the team (Gibson & Cohen, 2003). Because of time and distance, communication is generally limited to relatively short episodes. In addition, research suggests that the greater the cultural differences are between sender and receiver, the greater is the expected difficulty in communicating (Pantelli & Chiasson, 2008).

Though initially daunting, globally minded leaders and managers can overcome these challenges by addressing the enabling conditions of virtual team effectiveness; that is, by developing a shared understanding and building trust among members. Accordingly, communication to build shared understanding should include clarity around goals, tasks, and procedures to reduce ambiguity. Open and prompt communication among members should be used to build trust, resulting in cooperative relationships. Especially in the case of global virtual teams, leaders must facilitate open communication to increase information exchange about the process and relevant tasks, other members’ credibility and trustworthiness, as well as common values and team norms. When working across cultures, globally minded managers must keep contextual differences in mind. Language styles (implicit versus explicit), message content (fact versus emotion-based), and the way in which messages are conveyed (through formal or informal channels) all must be taken into account and tweaked to communicate more effectively (Gibson & Cohen, 2003).

## **Strategies for Developing Global Mindset**

The basic characteristics of global mindset, as discussed previously, are the use of broad and multiple perspectives as well as the ability to balance between contradictions, value diversity, foster teamwork, and exhibit openness. Regarding global virtual teams, cultural intelligence teaches employees and managers ways to effectively work across cultures. Interestingly, Thomas & Inkson (2009) noted a paradox of cultural intelligence. That is, in order to acquire cultural intelligence one must practice by working in culturally different environments and/or with culturally different people; however, in order to work effectively with these different people in different environments, one needs to first be culturally intelligent. Indeed, a variety of experiences and training involve strategies for developing cultural intelligence and facilitating global mindset in managers and employees.

### *Experiences*

International transfers and assignments, membership in cross-border project teams and task forces, and regional or global coordination roles are all strategies for developing global mindset. Typically reserved for leaders and high potentials, Evans et al. (2002) believes that international transfers and assignments are the strongest mechanisms for developing global mindset. The reasoning is that these international experiences foster the development of integrative leadership skills, develop skills in handling cultural diversity i.e. cultural intelligence, and develop “doing” and “being” skills such as championing global strategy, facing conflict, and handling complexity. Cross-border project teams and task forces are a less expensive option that allows individuals to work through local versus global pressures and related problems. Their purpose is to bring team members of different perspectives together to learn a set of skills underlying global mindset. This skill set includes the abilities to work with people who have different perspectives, set goals on ambiguous tasks, and work through interpersonal conflict. Regional and global coordination roles have a similar purpose; individuals in these roles are purposely exposed to competing priorities, multiple perspectives, and teams with diverse membership. Again, the purpose of all these experiences, whether or not they involve relocation, is a shift from local to global mindset.

### *Training*

To be certain, today’s large organizations need managers who are able to quickly adapt to multiple cultures and work well in multinational teams. The challenge is the same for members of global virtual teams. However, conventional methods of cultural training that rely on country-specific knowledge are inadequate especially in the case of global virtual teams with members representing multiple countries, languages, and cultures. To address these issues, Earley & Peterson (2004) discuss a new conceptual framework for intercultural training called the Cultural Intelligence or CQ approach (Earley & Ang, 2003). Training around cultural adaptation is based less on teaching culture-general values and/or culture-specific knowledge and more on assessing a manager’s specific competencies to provide training in various methods. In this case, the specific training methodology (role-play exercises, lecture, case studies, etc.) is less important than training content. Instead, managers are assessed on various CQ competencies and subsequent training is based on individual weaknesses. With CQ training to develop weaknesses, successful members of global

virtual teams will be able to find commonalities across members, determine effective and appropriate role allocations, and clearly define rules for interaction based on the needs and interests of team members (Earley & Peterson, 2004).

Triandis (2004) discusses practical approaches to building cultural intelligence in which individuals are taught to integrate large amounts of information, look for cues, and suspend judgment until collecting enough information. Training involves overcoming ethnocentrism, stressing the importance of empathy and placing oneself in the shoes of another's culture, and remaining open-minded to other cultures and methods of accomplishing tasks. The use of cultural assimilators, short case studies focusing on critical incidents leading to misunderstandings or miscommunication, is another technique designed to expose members of one culture to basic concepts and attitudes of another culture. Applied in a broader context, cultural assimilators can be used to teach how to approach and think about the concepts, attitudes, perceptions, customs, and values of culturally-dissimilar team members in multicultural teams.

Given the ever-increasing costs of international assignments, many companies today use in-house training targeted at a broader cross-section of employees to speed up the dissemination of global mindset. Cross-border projects, experiential methodologies, and action learning are key training methods for developing global mindset (Evans et al., 2002). Training methods at GE and IBM provide good examples. GE's management development staff in Crotonville designed intensive, experiential action learning programs with the aim of fostering the globalization of GE. As part of these (typically four-week) programs, multicultural action learning teams of GE managers were sent to China, the former Soviet Union, and India to work on specific, regional problems and collect information on best and worst practices. IBM learning executives, tasked with creating an environment consistent with the characteristics of global mindset, highlighted a number of practices including action learning teams similar to GE's model and worldwide training rollouts addressing the unique cultural differences in different regions (Lesser, 2007). Theoretically, any training designed to engage managers in exchanging ideas and solutions to business problems can be helpful in developing characteristics for thinking globally. Training methods to recognize different contexts and ways of adaptation are consistent with developing the global mindset advocated throughout this paper.

## **Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, the global economy forces companies to participate in a highly volatile, customer-driven market for quality products and services at competitive prices. At the same time, globalization necessitates communication with colleagues, clients, and customers across languages and cultures. The increased use of virtual teams is just one way companies are responding to global demands. Considering the rise of virtual teams, global mindset among leaders, managers, and employees is essential to overcoming challenges associated with working across languages and cultures. Indeed, various international assignments, cross-boundary teams, and cultural adaptation training can be used to develop individual weaknesses around global competencies. Leadership style awareness and flexibility, cultural intelligence, and communication and interpersonal skills to develop a shared understanding and build trust are key competencies of global virtual team effectiveness. Given the numerous challenges and forces acting against virtual teams, developing globally-minded managers is more important than ever. Managers with a global mindset are better able to maximize global virtual team effectiveness. When effectively managed, global virtual teams amplify the benefits of teamwork and possess greater innovation potential than traditional, face-to-face teams.



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## Annotated Bibliography

**Bell, B. & Kozlowski, S. (2002).** *A typology of virtual teams: Implications for effective leadership*. Retrieved February 25, 2010 from <http://gom.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/27/1/14>.

**Abstract:** As the nature of work in today's organizations becomes more complex, dynamic, and global, there has been increasing emphasis on distributed, "virtual" teams as organizing units of work. Despite their growing prevalence, relatively little is known about this new form of work unit. The purpose of this article is to present a theoretical framework to focus research toward understanding virtual teams and identifying implications for effective leadership. The authors focus on delineating the dimensions of a typology to characterize different types of virtual teams. First, the authors distinguish virtual teams from conventional teams to identify where current knowledge applies and new research needs exist. Second, the authors distinguish among different types of virtual teams, considering the critical role of task complexity in determining the underlying characteristics of virtual teams and leadership challenges the different types entail. Propositions addressing leadership implications for the effective management of virtual teams are proposed and discussed.

**Bellingham, R. (2001).** *The manager's pocket guide to virtual teams*. Amherst, MA: HRD Press.

**Abstract:** This succinct guide to virtual teams discusses the skills necessary for managers to establish a strong foundation in their teams as well as methods for working within the virtual team environment. The steps important for laying the groundwork of a successful team are outlined followed by a discussion of leadership and how to facilitate teamwork and manage effective communications.

**Earley, P. & Ang, S. (2003).** *Cultural intelligence; Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Abstract:** Cultural intelligence is defined as a person's capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context. The book is organized into two major sections: Part I consists of a general introduction and presentation of the theory of cultural intelligence; Part II consists of measurement and application issues in using the concept of cultural intelligence in a work context.

**Earley, P., Ang, S., & Tan, J. (2006).** *Developing cultural intelligence at work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

**Abstract:** The challenge of globalization has left companies to struggle with national, regional, and local differences among their employees, shareholders, and customers. The idea of cultural

intelligence is introduced and its implications for managers in diverse work environments discussed. The focus of the book is to offer a consistent and new way of thinking about cultural differences from a personal standpoint. To this end, a self-assessment is provided so that the reader can focus on weak areas and seek improvement.

**Earley, P. & Gibson, C. (2002). *Multinational work teams; A new perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.**

**Abstract:** When adopting team-based systems across their global facilities, multinational organizations face special challenges. To date, a unifying theory regarding the process of team implementation and how to incorporate the cultural backgrounds of team members is non-existent. The purpose of this book is to extend and consolidate the evolving literature on multinational teams by developing a comprehensive theory that incorporates a dynamic, multi-level view of teams.

**Earley, P. & Mosakowski, E. (2004, October). Cultural intelligence. *Harvard Business Review*. 139-146.**

**Abstract:** Cultural intelligence is related to emotional intelligence, but it picks up where emotional intelligence leaves off. Cultural intelligence is defined as an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that compatriots would. Given this definition, three sources of cultural intelligence are subsequently discussed along with six cultural intelligence profiles and six steps for cultivating one's own cultural intelligence.

**Earley, P. & Peterson, R. (2004). The elusive cultural chameleon: Cultural intelligence as a new approach to intercultural training for the global manager. *Academy of Management and Learning and Education*. 3(1). 100-115.**

**Abstract:** The global economy and shifting political tides make the need for intercultural understanding and education obvious. Where historically the focus of intercultural training has been on preparing an individual to work in a new culture, today's organizations routinely ask managers to work in multinational environments and move from country to country. This challenge has created a strong debate about how to prepare managers for such challenging assignments. How ought people be assessed to understand their readiness for such assignments? Do high intelligence quotient (IQ) people adjust better than others to new cultural challenges? The topic of cultural adjustment and its assessment remains compelling but incomplete. The focus here is the development and exploration of the concept of cultural intelligence, or CQ, along with its implications for training and education for global work assignments. Our approach suggests that training for the global manager should include metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral components. The QC approach represents a significant break from conventional wisdom of focusing on cultural values for intercultural education.

**Edwards, A. & Wilson, J. (2004). *Implementing virtual teams*. Burlington, VT: Gower Publishing Company.**

**Abstract:** Being targeted at virtual team novices and veterans alike, this book covers all the basics as well as providing food for thought for more experienced participants and virtual team managers. The book is organized into four parts. Parts I and II offer answers to a diverse range of questions regarding the appropriateness of virtual teams, challenges, available technologies, and strategies to ensure virtual team success. Part III contains a number of case studies demonstrating both successes and failures in virtual team implementation. Part IV is designed as a mini-handbook on the implementation of virtual teams.

**Evans, P., Pucik, V., & Barsoux, J. (2002). *The global challenge: Frameworks for international human resource management*. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.**

**Abstract:** This book focuses on the human resource management challenges that accompany the process of internationalization and how to operate in an interconnected world where people are the source of sustainable competitive advantage. Designed for use on MBA and executive programs at business schools, the authors define the concept of a “global mindset” and aim to help people understand global mindset and the deeper set of attitudes that are needed to thrive in a world increasingly characterized by paradox and duality.

**Fiedler, F., Mitchell, T., & Triandis, H. (1971). *The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 55(2). 95-102.**

**Abstract:** The construction of self-administered programmed culture training manuals, called culture assimilators, is described here. These programs provide an apparently effective method for assisting members of one culture to interact and adjust successfully with members of another culture. Culture assimilators have been constructed for the Arab countries, Iran, Thailand, Central America, and Greece. This article describes the steps involved in the development of these programs, and reviews studies validating the culture assimilator programs under laboratory and field conditions.

**Gibson, C & Cohen, S. (2003). *Virtual teams that work; Creating conditions for virtual team effectiveness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.**

**Abstract:** This book focuses on how organizations should go about creating the conditions for effective virtual teamwork. Indeed, virtual teams can be either dramatic successes or dismal failures and anywhere in between. Virtual teams that are designed, managed, and implemented effectively can harness talent from anywhere in the globe to solve business problems, service customers, and create new products. Written by authors of diverse backgrounds themselves, the book’s chapters respond to questions that practitioners face when they decide to implement virtual teams.

**Godar, S. & Ferris, S. (2004). *Virtual and collaborative teams*. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.**

**Abstract:** By breaking down the barriers of space and time, a virtual team fully utilizes the expertise of members of an organization without pulling them from other projects or incurring relocation expenses. Hence, at least notionally, such teams have immense potential for improving organizational effectiveness. This book takes a cross-disciplinary approach about whether, why, and how virtual teams do or do not fulfill their potential. The book is broken down into four sections. Section I describes the make-up of virtual teams; Section II discusses how to effectively lead virtual teams; Section III focuses on communication in virtual teams; Section IV describes the effective uses of virtual teams.

**House, R., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations; The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.**

**Abstract:** The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) Study is an analysis of the cultural, societal, organizational, and leadership differences between 62 different societies around the world. Conducted by the Wharton Business School of the University of Pennsylvania, its team of 170 researchers aim to determine the extent to which the practices and values of business leadership are universal (i.e., are similar globally), and the extent to which they are specific to just a few societies.

**Kerber, K. & Buono, A. (2004). *Leading a team of change agents in a global corporation: Leadership challenges in a virtual world*. Retrieved February 25, 2010 from [http://www.simmons.edu/gradstudies/docs/mcm/bf\\_virtual.pdf](http://www.simmons.edu/gradstudies/docs/mcm/bf_virtual.pdf).**

**Abstract:** The pressures associated with getting new products and services to worldwide markets are prompting organizations to choose the best people for projects, regardless of their location. This development has resulted in a rapid increase in distributed work groups, or virtual teams as they are more commonly known. Like any team, a virtual team is a group of people who work on interdependent tasks guided by a common purpose. But unlike traditional, collocated teams, a virtual team works across space, time, and organizational boundaries that often extend across nations on a global basis (Lipnack & Stamps, 1997). Through advanced communication technologies, global teams are developing the ability to “work together apart” (Grenier & Meters, 1992), completing assigned projects while rarely, if ever, meeting face-to-face. Yet, while a growing number of organizations are increasingly using virtual teams for a variety of different purposes and functions, there are lingering questions about the effectiveness of such teams, the role that team leaders should play, and the types of interventions that change agents can use to launch and sustain these teams over time. This paper examines these questions through a field study of a global virtual team and concludes with recommendations for effectively leading teams in a virtual world.

**Lesser, E. (2007). *Innovation: Shifting the strategic focus of learning*. Retrieved February 25, 2010 from [http://www-935.ibm.com/services/uk/bcs/pdf/innovation\\_shifting\\_strategic\\_focus\\_of\\_learning.pdf](http://www-935.ibm.com/services/uk/bcs/pdf/innovation_shifting_strategic_focus_of_learning.pdf).**

**Abstract:** Learning executives are seeking to drive innovation within their organizations and establish a more active role in the development of new business models, the creation and deployment of new products and services, and the development of new internal services and delivery channels. To accomplish this, they should begin thinking outside their traditional mandate of delivering formal course material and adopt a scope of work that facilitates a more strategic organizational role.

**Pantelli, N. & Chiasson, M. (2008). *Exploring virtuality within and beyond organizations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.**

**Abstract:** This book argues that there has been a limited conceptualization of virtuality and its implications on the management of organizations. Based on illustrative cases, empirical studies, and theorizing on virtuality, the authors go beyond the simple comparison between the virtual and traditional to explore the different types, dimensions, and perspectives of virtuality.

**Rhinesmith, S. (1993). *A manager's guide to globalization*. Burr Ridge, IL: Business One Irwin.**

**Abstract:** Based on his experience training over 5,000 managers from 35 different countries, the author addresses the key questions about what globalization means for jobs, mindsets, and skills. The book shows how to understand the forces driving companies to go global, how to manage the conflicts and contradictions of global matrix organizations, and how to lead multicultural teams comprised of people from many different backgrounds.

**Sadowski-Rasters, G., Duysters, G, & Sadowski, B. (2006). *Communication and cooperation in the virtual workplace*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.**

**Abstract:** This study explores how social, organizational, and institutional factors complement technological factors in the development of computer-mediated communication in teams. Through the use of theory, case studies, and reflection, the authors seek to identify the conditions that enable or constrain the virtual collaboration process.

**Thomas, D. & Inkson, K. (2009). *Cultural intelligence; Living and working globally*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

**Abstract:** This book applies the concept of cultural intelligence broadly to the interactions of people not just in organizations, but also in their daily lives. Simply stated, the book is about becoming more effective in dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds. The authors

first outline the fundamentals of cultural intelligence and then apply the fundamentals of cultural intelligence to a number of common interpersonal challenges in multicultural settings.

**Triandis, H. (2006). Cultural intelligence in organizations. *Group & Organization Management*. 31(1). 20-26.**

**Abstract:** Successful interaction across cultures requires cultural intelligence. Several aspects of cultural intelligence in organizations are described: suspending judgment until enough information about the other person becomes available; paying attention to the situation; cross-cultural training that increases isomorphic attributions, appropriate affect, and appropriate behaviors; matching personal and organizationally attributes; increasing the probability of appropriate organizational practices.

**Weisband, S. (2008). *Leadership at a distance; Research in technologically-supported work*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.**

**Abstract:** This book examines the complex phenomenon of leadership in distributed work settings, or leadership at a distance. Indeed, leaders in all functions head distant teams using a range of technologies. The book begins with an overview of the challenges leaders face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, describes field studies and new ways of thinking about leadership in distributed work settings, experiments with group dynamics and social processes involved in leading distant teams, and ends with a presentation of research on leadership in large-scale distributed collaborations.