

Connecting the Realities of Leadership with the Diverse Global Economy

By Stan Kimer



Expert Forum

3/22/13



When I do an overall presentation about diversity as a key strategic initiative important to any business or organization, I always include a few charts about hot emerging areas within the diversity discussion. I include brief overviews of areas such as generational diversity in the workplace, diversity of thought, and particularly for small business or in the South – LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender). Gone are the days when diversity meant gender and race, though certainly those remains as critical core underpinnings of diversity.

You can [link here to view some short videos](#) of me speaking on these various areas.

One of the hottest areas of recent diversity focus is now cross-cultural global diversity. Over the past twenty years we have seen dramatic changes in the business landscape that has now transformed almost every business endeavor into one with global potential. With the global enabling of world-wide web based applications, companies of all sizes can find customers, employees, business partners and suppliers from anywhere in the world. These changes include:

- Work teams with all employees co-located together in a single location to virtual global workteams which could include people from several different countries
- US centric sales strategy to now growth coming from fast growing economies in Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and South America. The US economy is now in the bottom half of all nations in year to year growth.
- From a white male American workforce to a workforce that includes more women, people of color and people from various countries.
- The internet has enabled global sales to anyone anywhere, and web based supply chain applications have opened up global procurement possibilities.

So what kind of leadership is needed to succeed in this new environment?

About a year ago, I was invited to an all-day Diversity and Inclusion conference and was asked to prepare a new presentation on leadership competencies needed in today's competitive diverse global economy. I was excited to mesh together two areas I am very passionate about – diversity and inclusion; and leadership development.

Leadership is a fascinating area to follow since there are dozens of leadership models and it seems that a new “leadership model du jour” pops onto the scene almost daily. I felt that I could get the best view by studying different leadership competency models across the business, non-profit, religious and educational

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worlds to find the common intersections. The next step was to evaluate their connection with the “leading in this new diverse global world.”

In studying six different management competency models, I have identified eight competencies that appeared in four or more models. A competency is a skill that can be learned and developed. Of those eight competencies, six have a strong global / diversity component:

- Being able to work across boundaries and to embrace multiple dimensions of diversity
- Being able to partner, collaborate and team – especially with diverse, global people
- Empowering, leading, mentoring others – and that includes diverse people and people outside the US that are now in your enterprise.
- Since stepping out of your comfort zone to engage with a diverse global world does involve taking risk.
- Embracing change and being adaptable since you need to be flexible and able to adjust management style when dealing with a wide diversity of people.
- Being a life-long learner, curiosity – since you need to be willing to learn, stretch and grow in interacting globally.

To now successfully compete in this new reality of global cultural diversity, all levels of employees need to be trained to be culturally competent, and senior leaders need to totally understand this dynamic and invest in training themselves and their teams. More opportunities are now emerging, such as offerings from [TMC \(Training Management Corporation\) / Berlitz](#). In fact, I myself am now a certified TMC / Berlitz Cultural Competency Trainer - Practitioner.

So next time you and your team are evaluating diversity strategies and how diversity is pertinent to your enterprise, consider global and cultural diversity.