

Get with the times and learn to lead globally

By *Melissa Lamson* on August 20th, 2015

Business gone global means that the ability of employees to work effectively together across borders and time zones has become critical. Cultivating **global mindset** in employees and organizations can squash misunderstandings that may hurt business while building team cohesion that can dramatically help. Still, **studies show** that leadership programs are failing at preparing future leaders with the skills needed to excel in this new business world.

Whether you are working locally, globally or virtually, knowing how to lead globally is now a necessity. Even if your business does not work abroad, it is most likely working with people in your own backyard who have come from other cultures and countries. A global mindset is a critical skill parallel to legal, marketing, sales or strategy. We need to take it as seriously as we do other business operations.

Here are the three most important skills for a global manager.

- 1. The ability to transmit values and create culture within a team.** Leaders need to take into account how the various people on their team understand the world and what the meaning is behind their own and others' values. For example, how one person defines integrity could be vastly different than another's definition. Does integrity mean being compassionate to people? Does it mean that you never lie, even if it is difficult? Does it mean you are completely transparent? Or, does it simply mean that you know how to set boundaries? From a global perspective, you will have all sorts of cultural viewpoints depending on where people come from around the world. Setting values and creating team culture is paramount to having a foundation of trust, a good working atmosphere, and high performance. If you take the time to create a solid team culture, you will have cohesion, whether working globally, locally, or virtually.
- 2. The ability to be nimble enough to adapt your style to others.** Understand personalities and culture and be able to adjust to what is needed. For example, if you are working with a personality that is more sensing-oriented and you are more

intuitive, then you will want to make sure you are clearly explaining how things are going to work instead of leading with the excitement over the “what.” You will also need to understand when someone is more process- or results-oriented when approaching a project or desired outcome. Determine what your team members’ expectations are in terms of how to develop relationships with others in the team, partners or customers. Learn about your own preferences and needs, be curious about others. Observe, understand, and adapt. You will be more successful as a people manager.

- 3. The ability to give recognition and deliver effective feedback.** Recognizing others for their good work takes intention. Sometimes we take success and getting results for granted. But people need praise, verbal strokes, and even encouragement. Find creative ways to appreciate your team members, both one to one and in public settings.

Effective feedback is more than just offering positive remarks. It is also knowing how to give constructive criticism. Helping someone improve is the most generous gift a manager can give, or really, anyone can give. But again, ascertain what the other person needs from you. If the person is more or less direct, they may get hurt or react defensively. They may not understand it if it isn’t slapped on the table explicitly. Consider what is the best approach to deliver your message — is it in a group, one to one, or using a peer as a third party? Incorporate clear objectives, prevent surprises, and focus on the reasons behind numbers instead of on the numbers themselves. Be aware of when you need to cheerlead while giving constructive feedback...

In today’s brave, new business world, we are reaching customers and working with employees from around the globe. It takes curiosity and intention, yet being able to master a global mindset will set your personal leadership goals and your company’s success up for years to come.

*Melissa Lamson is president and CEO of **Lamson Consulting**, where she uses her decades of global expertise to help companies and business leaders cultivate a successful global mindset, bridge cultures, and achieve real results.*