

A professor of international management at a Canadian university (David C. Thomas), and a professor of management at one in New Zealand (Kerr Inkson), jointly writing a book about cultural intelligence? That reeks of ivory-tower, theory-heavy academic writing, doesn't it?

Actually, far from it: *Cultural Intelligence – People Skills for Global Business* is full of real-life stories depicting what is and is not culturally intelligent behavior in everyday business situations. In addition, the book provides practical guidelines for a variety of international business challenges.



As they introduce the concept of cultural intelligence, the authors make a compelling point that success in cross-cultural environments is based on three components: the **Knowledge** to understand cross-cultural phenomena, the **Mindfulness** to observe and interpret particular situations, and the **Behavioral Skills** required to act appropriately and successfully in a range of situations. They argue that mindfulness means switching off one's "cultural cruise control", the tendency of most humans to follow cultural norms that may no longer make sense when working in a different culture. Doing so

requires becoming aware of how culture affects perceptions and paying careful attention to the challenges presented by cross-cultural situations.

Thomas and Inkson then investigate the relevance of cultural intelligence in practical business situations, reviewing aspects such as decision making, communicating, and negotiating across cultures, analyzing cultural concepts of leadership, and discussing what makes multicultural teams effective. Each of these chapters includes practical case studies, a situational analysis that the authors keep refreshingly brief, and a summary of principles that helps readers raise their own cultural intelligence. Over time, the book will allow readers to develop a valuable repertoire of behavioral skills for intercultural situations that are common in today's global business environment.

In the chapter preceding the book's conclusions, "Managing International Careers", the authors may have become overly ambitious. Attempting to cover a large array of aspects relevant for expatriates temporarily moving to foreign countries, this chapter lacks the depth and practical suggestions that make the rest of the book so valuable. Nevertheless, *Cultural Intelligence* deserves being part of the library of anyone who conducts business internationally and wants to be more successful.

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