

Dutch business consultant Fons Trompenaars and British academician Charles Hampden-Turner long ago established themselves among the most influential intercultural researchers and practitioners in the world. Their 1997 book *Riding the Waves of Culture* introduced a model of culture-specific characteristics that has since been widely adopted, and frequently re-validated, in the field.

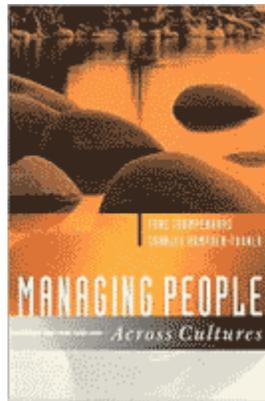
Managing People Across Cultures, a more recent work by the same authors, aims high – and fails gloriously at reaching its stated objective of spelling out 'what Human Resource Management (HRM) can and must do in the twenty-first century'. Truth be told, that may be a bit too much to bite off for anybody to chew. Nevertheless, this book excels at focusing the reader on the crucial questions and strategies for HRM, not as a functional organization but as an integrated, essential discipline that pervades the entire corporation.

The authors adopt a wider meaning for the term 'culture' here than in their previous works, encompassing national values and preferences, as well as corporate and individual ones. They include a brief enough summary of their intercultural findings to then venture far

beyond, presenting models that describe different corporate cultures and leveraging type models (specifically, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) when discussing aspects such as recruitment, selection and assessment. Dedicating a chapter each to such diverse subjects as 'Training managers to achieve strategic goals', 'Building a learning organization', 'Leadership development across cultures' and several others, the authors cover a lot of ground and, respectably, don't shy away from sensitive subjects like internal conflict and problem resolution.

Along the way, they continually confront the dilemmas of creativity and destruction, of human resources and physical resources, of change and continuity, and many others. Illustrating each dilemma with a real-world 'Capsule Case' and using their proven attempt to resolving them, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner stimulate creative thinking and encourage organizational learning at all levels. All of this is set in a context of continuous innovation, where agility and entrepreneurship do not stop at technology but also embrace the people and structures enabling it.

Frequently jumping from fairly straightforward process descriptions to complex and abstract concepts, *Managing People Across Cultures* isn't light reading. It offers a worthy lecture nonetheless for human resource professionals and executive leaders alike.



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