

Written Chinese forms the word "crisis" by combining the characters for "danger" and "opportunity." As authors and intercultural consultants Lionel Laroche and Caroline Yang argue, cultural diversity brings both of these: challenges presented by the differences in values and practices across cultures, and opportunities to create competitive advantage by bridging these differences in synergistic ways. Their book, *Danger and Opportunity*, aims to provide analysis and solutions at the individual and organizational level.

Laroche's and Yang's introduction sells the book a bit short by describing its four key messages as giving "people the benefit of the doubt," making it "safe to discuss cultural differences in a constructive way," focusing on "what we each can do to bridge the gap" and remembering that "HR professionals and managers need to lead changes at the organization level." That's all good and true, but there is too much motherhood-and-apple-pie here to make these messages very useful.

Fortunately, the authors dig far deeper than this in the core parts of their book. They identify specific cross-cultural challenges in six areas: technical and soft skills, cross-cultural

communication, cross-cultural feedback, hierarchy, individualism, and risk tolerance. Next, they analyze the underlying cultural factors and norms.

Thankfully, the broadest discussion of the book is dedicated to practical consequences and recommended strategies in four areas that matter to almost every company doing global business: managing a multicultural workforce, working with offshore resources, collaborating with joint venture partners, and competing in the global talent market. Each of these areas receives a separate chapter chock-full with examples and stories, reflection on underlying issues, and comprehensive practical recommendations and advice.

*Danger and Opportunity* is by no means limited to an HR perspective. For instance, when discussing how to collaborate with JV partners, Laroche and Yang go beyond foundational considerations by including aspects such as resolving conflict and managing time, i.e., dealing with different expectations of efficiency and "sense of urgency." Like most of the other aspects covered in the book, these topics matter to global managers everywhere, regardless of their roles.

In short, *Danger and Opportunity* is a useful compendium for anyone looking to achieve what the book's subtitle describes: Bridging cultural diversity for competitive advantage.



Lothar Katz is the founder and principal advisor of Leadership Crossroads. Having worked with numerous organizations in many countries, he has a wealth of experience in achieving productive cooperation across cultures and driving business success on a global scale.

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